

**EFFECT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SUNSEED  
NIGERIA LIMITED, ZARIA**

**By**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES,  
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## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation entitled “Effect of Conflict Management on the Performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria” has been carried out by me in the Department of Business Administration. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other institution.

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Name of Student

Signature

Date

## CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled “EFFECT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SUNSEED NIGERIA LIMITED, ZARIA” by Oluwakemi R. AMUSAN meets the requirements of the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Business Administration of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God, the sustainer, provider and giver of life.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Conflict is a natural phenomenon in most organisations as long as human relationships are involved. As such the existence of conflict has become an issue of concern in Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria as a result of employees' welfare. The resulting effect has not only affected the employees but also the organisation as a whole. This study examined the Effect of Conflict Management on the Performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. The study adopts survey design and is cross sectional in nature. The population of the study consists of 112 staff of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. Multiple regression was utilized in analyzing the data. The study found that collaboration strategy and avoidance strategy have positive significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, while compromise strategy has a negative significant effect on the performance of the organisation. The study concluded that there is no one best strategy in managing conflict as the management of conflict depends on the behavioural intentions of the parties to conflict, the time frame and the situation the organisation finds itself. It therefore recommended that management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited should emphasize the adoption of collaboration and avoidance strategies in order to improve the performance of the organisation.*

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

In every aspect of human society and endeavor, conflict is seen as a natural phenomenon that is, inevitable as long as human relationships are involved. It is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about (Robbins, Judge & Vohra, 2012). At home and at work, conflict is very common and in some cases unavoidable (Mughal & Khan, 2013). As a result of people interacting with each other, friction, disagreements or arguments may arise resulting from actual or perceived differences or incompatibilities, thereby escalating to conflict. Thus, conflicts in organisations can take many forms such as interpersonal conflict, task conflict and process conflict which give rise to diverse approaches to conflict management (Budd & Colvin, 2013).

Nigerian Government over the years however has set up various techniques that will guide organisations in the management of conflicts. Some of these management techniques are available in the provision of Labour/Employment Act, 1971; Workmen's Compensation Act, 2010, Trade Dispute Amendment Decree, 1988, No 39 and Trade Dispute Act 18, 2004 which provided five steps for legal management of conflict in organisations in the country (Akinwale, 2011). According to Akinwale, 2011, these policies are voluntary settlements of conflict with the use of internal machinery of grievance procedures and also with the use of external machinery comprising of mediator, conciliator, and reference of disputes to industrial arbitration panel, national industrial court and the constitution of a board of enquiry. In the resolution of conflict, the judgment of the national industrial court is final and binding on the employers and employees from the date of the judgment in the country. Longe (2015) identified that the Trade Union Act,

2005 is also used for managing union-management conflict in organisations and has been adopted by some multinational firms in the country.

Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria is a multinational organisation involved in the production of vegetable oil and sale of poultry feeds for export. The organisation is often faced with the issue of employees' welfare. Employee welfare is an important source of motivation to employees and the lack of it has led to employees having grievances against management which has most times resulted into conflict between both parties and the resulting effect has affected not only the performance of the employees but the organisation. Managing the organisational conflict became necessary so as to improve its performance.

Conflict management involves doing things to limit the negative aspects of conflict and to increase the positive aspects of conflict with the aim of enhancing learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organisational settings (Rahim, 2011). Conflict management is something that managers need to deal with as conflict significantly affects employee morale and turnover, which affects the prosperity of an organisation, either constructively or destructively. Therefore, the effectiveness or otherwise of the management of conflict is largely dependent on how well the causes of the conflict have been understood.

When conflict is well managed, it can bring enormous benefits to people and organisations as conflict management is often one of the biggest drivers of change in any organisational set up. If properly handled, it can create stronger bonds, help people to be more innovative, build effective teams, establish strong working relationship and eventually improve individual as well as organisational performance. The key is to openly face an issue and negotiate a win-win outcome from those parties involved (Garcia, 2013).

Robbins, Judge, Millett and Waters-Marsh (2008); Robbins, Judge, and Vohra (2012) identified five major strategies for managing conflict in organisations based on assertiveness and cooperativeness which, according to Adeyemi & Ademilua as cited in Lazarus (2014), are the internal mechanisms used by the various authorities in resolving conflict. Assertiveness means the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns while cooperativeness means the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns. They include: collaboration, compromise, accommodation, competition/domination and avoidance. In the context of this work, collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies will be considered. This is because the three conflict management strategies provide a satisfactory balance for both parties involved in conflict in terms of assertiveness and cooperativeness. The accommodation and domination strategies will not be considered in the study because they do not provide satisfactory balance to the parties involved in conflict. This is because it leads to one party benefiting at the expense of the other.

Collaboration strategy refers to assertiveness and cooperativeness as it allows both parties' goals to be completely achieved by putting the concerns of both parties into consideration. Mughal and Khan (2013) assumed that collaboration strategy enables people take time to listen to others in order to find the best solution to handle the conflict. Compromise strategy refers to mid-range assertiveness and mid-range cooperativeness as it requires parties to conflict to give up something in order to settle the conflicting problem, as such there is no clear winner or loser. This usually happens when employees get a sense of fear to lose any relationship with their colleagues or with their managers. Avoidance strategy refers to unassertiveness and uncooperativeness and occurs when parties to conflict recognize that conflict exists and want to withdraw from it or suppress it by trying to ignore it. Each of the above techniques is unique in its

own way and will be considered with a view to ascertaining the performance level of the organisation.

Organisational performance is seen as the result of an activity which has been achieved by an organisation related to its authority and responsibility in achieving the goal legally, not against the law, and conforming to the morale and ethics of the organisation (Almajali, Alamro & Al-Soub, 2012). Organisational performance can either be measured financially (earnings per share, return on equity, return on asset) or non-financially (market share, customer satisfaction, employee morale). The appropriate measure selected to assess organisational performance (financial or non-financial) is considered to depend on the type of organisation to be evaluated, and the objectives to be achieved through that evaluation. However, improved organisational performance is dependent on the appropriate conflict management strategy (s) such as, collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy adopted by the organisation in managing conflict. Applying the appropriate strategy will improve employees' performance resulting to an improved organisational performance. On the other hand, the inability of the organisation to apply the appropriate conflict management strategy(s) will lead to a decline in employees' performance which in turn will result in a decline in organisational performance.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

Managers spend approximately twenty percent of their time dealing with conflict situations due to the growing complexity of organisations, use of teams and group decision making, and globalization (Mullins, 2005). This proved the fact that conflict cannot be totally eliminated within an organisation because wherever you find human beings interacting at whatever levels,

there is bound to be conflict. What is however important is the way conflicts are managed to forestall future occurrence.

The existence of conflict is an issue of concern in Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. The organisation is confronted with the issue of negotiation of staff bonuses, usually at the end of the year. The lingering issue results into conflict between management and employees of the organisation which manifested in form of employees nursing grievances against management, change of attitude or behaviour, decrease in effort towards work, physical confrontation between both parties and stoppage of production activities as employees refuse to work. This affected the effectiveness and performance of the individual employees and the organisation as a whole. Attempt by management to resolve the conflict has only led to conflict suppression. This is because management made use of domination strategy which is of benefit to them at the expense of the employees. As a result, there is a need for Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria to devise an effective means of resolving the organisational conflict.

Several studies have been carried out on conflict management; however, most of these studies are qualitative in nature (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011; Garcia, 2013; Kazimoto, 2013; Nwosu & Makinde, 2014; Ebhote & Monday, 2015). They cannot be generalised in all aspects of organisations, because conflict management has to do with human intentions. While some empirical studies in this area were carried out using some or all the major conflict management strategies on other dependent variables such as job stress, organisational effectiveness and turnover intention (El Dahshan & Keshk, 2014; Kanani & Farahani, 2014; Lazarus, 2014; Sima, Gbolamabbas, & Saeed, 2012); others were on organisational performance (Ongori, 2009; Hotepo, Asokere, Abdulazeez, & Ajemunigbohun, 2010; Obasan, 2011; Mughal & Khan, 2013; Ajike, Akinlabi, Magaji & Sonubi, 2015; Awan & Saeed, 2015 and Longe, 2015). Studies

conducted by Ongori (2009), Hotepo, *et al.* (2010), Obasan, (2011) and Mughal and Khan (2013) only identified the conflict management strategies used by the organisations understudied but the studies did not measure the effect of the strategies on organisational performance.

Ajike *et al.* (2015) made use of simple linear regression which does not give room for outlining the proxies of the conflict management strategies such as collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies employed for the study. Awan and Saeed (2015) identified compromise and avoidance strategies as techniques for managing organisational conflict but the significant effect of these strategies on organisational performance was not conducted. Also, Longe (2015) employed some of the major conflict management strategies such as compromise and avoidance strategies (compromise, accommodation, competition, and avoidance) on organisational performance, but the study did not measure collaboration strategy on organisational performance. However, a detailed study using the conflict management strategies such as collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies on organisational performance is yet to be achieved, thus the extent of this effect has not also been ascertained. This study contributes towards filling this gap.

Since conflict is inevitable in an organisation, its management will determine whether it will generate positive or negative effect on organisational performance (Uchendu, Anijaobi & Odigwe, 2013). Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of conflict management using collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

### **1.3 Research Questions.**

The specific research questions to be addressed in this study include:

- i. To what extent does collaboration strategy affect the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria?
- ii. To what extent does compromise strategy affect the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria?
- iii. To what extent does avoidance strategy affect the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study.**

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of conflict management on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the effect of collaboration strategy on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.
- ii. Ascertain the effect of compromise strategy on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.
- iii. Determine the effect of avoidance strategy on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

## **1.5 Statement of Hypotheses.**

In line with the research objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are formulated.

H<sub>01</sub>: Collaboration strategy has no significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

H<sub>02</sub>: Compromise strategy has no significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

H<sub>03</sub>: Avoidance strategy has no significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is of great benefit to the management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, other researchers, general public and lastly, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on conflict management.

This study is of importance to the management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria in understanding the company's conflict management strategies which have an important role in determining the success and failure of the organisation and also enlighten them on the strategies to adopt in the management of conflict so as to improve the performance of the organisation. The research findings and recommendations of this study formed a base to be consulted by other researchers who may wish to make further inquiries into the subject matter. The study is of benefit to the general public as it provides them with adequate information concerning the activities of the organisation as it relates to conflict management in the private sector. This study

also contributes to the existing body of knowledge on conflict management by examining the effect of conflict management strategies on organisational performance.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study was carried out on the effect of Conflict Management on Organisational Performance in Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. The study was carried out on a cross-sectional basis and focus was on the conflict management strategies that contributed to organisational performance. Conflict management being the independent construct was operationalised by the following dimensions: collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy; while the dependent variable was organisational performance.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The study is cross-sectional in nature which captures the effect of conflict management on the organisational performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria at a point in time. Thus, the study cannot prove causal relationship on a longitudinal basis.

This study is limited in the area of sample size which may not give a comprehensive view on the effect of conflict management on organisational performance. Therefore, there is need to conduct a comprehensive study with more sample size to make concrete conclusions on the management of conflict.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This section reviews existing literature on conflict management strategies and their effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited Zaria. It starts by examining the concept of conflict, its causes and its effects on organisational performance. It also explains the signs that the organisation should take note of, the conflict management strategies, and the review of related empirical studies on conflict management and organisational performance. Finally, the chapter explains the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

#### 2.2 Concept of Conflict

Conflict is a necessary and useful part of organisational life. It is inevitable, multi-dimensional, and an integral part of the process of change. According to Mba (2013), there are two sides to conflict, one is destructive, defects cooperation and unhealthy and the other has a problem-solving base where those involved are willing to readdress personality differences, to listen to others' views and to be open and candid to each other, to be supportive and helpful. Managers spend a considerable portion of their time dealing with conflict and as such, conflict management becomes increasingly important to their effectiveness.

Conflict can be referred to as the process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected something that the first party cares about (Thomasas cited in Kondalkar, 2007), which indicates that conflict must be perceived by either of the parties. In the same vein, Robbins et al. (2012) views conflict as a process that begins when one party perceives that

another party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about. This definition is encompassing as it describes that point in any ongoing activity when an interaction crosses over to become an interparty conflict. It encompasses the wide range of conflicts people experience in organisations: such as incompatibility of goals, differences over interpretations of facts, disagreements based on behavioural expectations. The definition is flexible enough to cover the full range of conflict levels starting from overt and violent acts to subtle forms of disagreement. In the words of Oudeh and Oudeh (2006), conflict occurs in every type of relationship. It occurs whenever our assumptions or expectations do not match with someone else's assumptions or expectations. Conflict is perception and so it exists whenever someone believes or feels that another person or group might obstruct his efforts.

Ojo and Abolade (2014) views conflict as a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incomparability of potential future position in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other and views organisational conflict as competition by individuals and groups for organisational resources and organisational rewards. Mullins (2005) affirms that conflict as a behaviour is intended to obstruct the achievement of some other person's goals. According to this author, conflict is based on the incompatibility of goals and arises from opposing behaviours. It can be viewed at the individual, group or organisational level. However, Tjosvold, Dann and Wong as cited in Aina, Awolusi and Odulami (2015) asserts that organisational conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interest, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other.

According to Bisno and Coser as cited in Zafar, Ashfaq, Ali, and Imran (2014) conflict is a process of social interaction involving a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, and other preferences and desires. The aims of the parties in conflict may extend from

simply attempting to gain acceptance of a preference, or securing a resource advantage, to the extremes of injuring or eliminating opponents. Conflict is perceived as any act or situation resulting from disagreement, incompatibility or opposition between project participants within their contractual obligations, whereby such disagreements, incompatibility or opposition have not matured into a dispute requiring intervention of a third party. Rahim (2011) defines conflict as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (individual, group and organisations) and opined that conflict may occur when:

- i. A party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests.
- ii. A party holds behavioral preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person's implementation of his or her preferences.
- iii. A party wants some mutually desirable resource that is in short supply, such that the wants of everyone may not be satisfied fully.
- iv. A party possesses attitudes, values, skills, and goals that are salient in directing his or her behavior but are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes, values, skills, and goals held by the other(s).
- v. Two parties have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint actions.
- vi. Two parties are interdependent in the performance of functions or activities.

This definition is much more inclusive, which implies that conflict can relate to incompatible preferences, goals, and not just activities.

From the above definitions, conflict tends to be associated with negative features and situations which gives rise to inefficiency, ineffectiveness or dysfunctional consequences. But in some

cases, it can actually stimulate creative problem solving and improve the situation for all parties involved. In the context of this study, the definition given by Robbins *et al.*, (2012) will be adopted for the study as it explains the scenario of the conflict obtainable in Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria where the expectation of the employees are not met by the management.

### **2.2.1 Transitions in Conflict Thought**

There are three (widely known) thoughts about conflict identified by different scholars (Robbins *et al.*, 2008; Violetta, 2012) along the history. They bring conflicts over the conception in a group or organisation. They include:

**The Traditional View:**The early approach to conflict assumed all conflicts were bad. Its belief is that all conflict is harmful and must be avoided. Conflict was viewed negatively, and it was used synonymously with such terms as violence, destruction, and irrationality to reinforce its negative connotation. Conflict by definition, was harmful and was to be avoided. The traditional view was consistent with the attitudes that prevailed about group behaviour in the 1930s and 1940s. Conflict was seen as a dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, lack of openness and trust between people, and the failure of managers to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their employees.

The view that all conflict is bad certainly offers a simple approach to looking at the behaviour of people who create conflict. Since all conflicts are to be avoided, managers need to direct their attention to the causes of conflict and correct these malfunctioning in order to improve group and organisational performance. Although research studies now provide strong evidence to dispute that this approach to conflict reduction results in high group performance, many still evaluate

conflict situations utilising this outmoded standard. However, Jeffrey and Pinto as cited in Violetta (2012) concludes that performance declines as the level of conflict increases.

**The Human Relations View:** The human relations view argued that conflict was a natural occurrence in all groups and organisations. Since conflict was inevitable, the human relations school advocated acceptance of conflict. Proponents rationalised its existence that conflict cannot be eliminated and that there are even times when conflict may benefit the performance of groups. This view dominated conflict theory from the late 1940s through the mid-1970. However, Jeffrey and Pinto as cited in Violetta (2012) concludes that performance mainly depends on how conflict is handled. Generally, performance increases to a certain level as conflict level increases, then declines if conflict is allowed to increase further or left unresolved.

**The Interactionist View:** While the human relations approach accepted conflict, the interactionist approach encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, and cooperative group is prone to becoming static, apathetic, and nonresponsive to needs for change and innovation. The main contribution of the interactionist view, therefore, is encouraging group leaders to maintain an ongoing minimum level of conflict-enough to keep the group viable, self-critical and creative.

The interactionist view does not propose that all conflicts are good. Rather, some conflicts support the goals of the group and improve its performance; these are functional, constructive forms of conflict. Also, there are conflicts that hinder group performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive forms of conflict. What differentiates functional from dysfunctional conflict is the type of conflict. They include task conflict-relates to the content of the work, relationship conflict-focuses on interpersonal relationship, and process conflict-relates to how work gets

done. However, Jeffrey and Pinto as cited in Violetta (2012) conclude that certain level of conflict is necessary to improve performance. Performance increases with conflict up to a certain level, then declines, if conflict increases further or remain unresolved.

On the contrary, Robbins *et al.* (2012) came up with the transition to conflict thought to include; the traditional view, the interactionist view, and the resolution focused view of conflict. According to the authors, in the resolution focused view, researchers, including those who had strongly advocated the interactionist view, have begun to recognize some problems with encouraging conflict even though there are some very specific cases in which conflict can be beneficial. Researchers have started focusing more on managing the whole context in which conflict occur, both before and after the behavioural stage of conflict. They suggested that the negative effect of conflict can be minimized by focusing on preparing people for conflict, developing resolution strategies, and facilitating open discussion.

Thus, the research pendulum has swung from eliminating conflict (as proposed by the traditional view), to encouraging limited levels of conflict (as proposed by the interactionist view), and now to find constructive methods for resolving conflicts productively (as proposed by the resolution focused view) so that their destructive influence can be minimized. The view of the resolution focused view is termed conflict management which is the focus of the study.

### **2.2.2 Signs of Conflict**

Ezeanyim (2010); Krataner and Kinieker (2004) explains that conflict can be head off before it gets to a huge problem, In order to be able to do this, one has to understand how to learn the warning signs of conflict. According to the authors, conflict is like water, too much causes damage to people; too little creates a dry barren landscape devoid of life and colour. Just as we

need water to survive, we need an appropriate level of conflict in an organisation to thrive and grow as well. However, organisational leaders do not view the management of conflict as systematically as they do information, human resource, and financial management. Rather, conflict in organisations is viewed and managed in a piecemeal, ad hoc fashion and isolated events instead of looking for patterns and systematic issues. Conflict which is the process of expressing dissatisfaction, disagreement or unmet expectations within any organization shows up or manifests in several ways:

- a) **Disputes** – Grievances, disciplinary actions, complaints, lawsuits, strikes, threatened legal actions, and disagreements (whether with internal parties or outside disputants) are all signs of conflict, they are the by – products of conflict.
- b) **Competition** – Some organisational conflicts manifest themselves more subtly than outright disputes. Competition, particularly within an organisation or between and among individuals within the organisation may also be a sign of emerging conflict.
- c) **Sabotage** – This not so subtle manifestation of conflict can be seen in “turf” battles when competence and integrity issues surface. As such, inefficiency or decreased output can be evidence of conflict. Hidden conflict can lead to dissatisfaction, vital employee refusal to participate efficiently and meaningfully as part of a team effort.
- d) **Low Morale:** Similar to inefficiency or lack of productivity at work and home, low morale is often a reaction to hidden conflict. Often, it is the result of attempting to avoid or deny conflict or of frustration with attempts to protest organisational action or inaction. Employees get weary of being treated poorly with no mechanisms for dealing with their frustrations as such they often lose energy, morale and motivation.

e) **Withholding Knowledge:** Within many organisational cultures knowledge is power, and withholding information is practiced as a form of control. Such behaviour is often a sign of distrust, status hierarchies, and an “information castesystem”. Only certain people are entitled to know certain information, as such, information is shared according to status (title, seniority, or office size and location). A conflict develops with the interaction of independent people who perceive themselves as having goals that are incongruent with each other. Often one individual perceives another as blocking the attainment of his or her goal. Conflict management is a technique which attempts to realign the incongruity between forces to be less damaging and to work on a problem situation.

By spotting the signs of conflict early, the management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria has a better chance of identifying the causes, reaching an agreement and resolving the conflict. Therefore, the organisation under study should take necessary actions when they begin to notice these signs as this will help prevent conflict from escalating. However, the signs of conflict can sometimes be visible - for example, when a meeting turns into a stand-still like the case of the organisation under study. Other conflicts can be harder to discover - for example, there might be an increase in staff absence from work. The management of conflict therefore begins when an organisation recognise its early signs and take necessary actions to tackle the issue as soon as possible in order to guide against future reactions.

### **2.2.3 Causes of Organisational Conflict**

For conflict to be effectively managed, organisations should try as much as possible to look into its root causes. Many organisations in trying to resolve conflict resort to conflict management

techniques without first determining the causes of conflict, which is a key prerequisite for developing an appropriate conflict resolution. Mayer as cited in Tonder, Havenga and Visagie (2008) argued that if the causes of conflict are known and understood, a conflict map can be developed, which could guide conflict management processes. According to the authors, conflict could arise because of the employer's quest to maximise profit while employees are out to ensure continuous improved condition of living. It could also arise as a result of failure to honour agreed items on joint decision made and also due to differences about interpretation of facts or issues involved. As a result, rigid opposition due to incompatibility of organisational goals characterises it. However, Robbins *et al.* (2008) identify that there are many sources of conflict as follows:

**Poor Communication:** Poor communication leads to misunderstanding and strife among employees. Conveying wrong information can lead to projects being incorrectly done and to employees blaming each other for the end result. Problem in the communication process do not act to retard collaboration, stimulate misunderstandings and create conflicts and many conflict attributed to poor communication are on closer examination due to value differences. However, the potential for conflict increases when either too little or too much communication takes place.

**Personality Conflict:** This occurs when no two people are exactly alike. Personality clashes in the workplace are unavoidable because one employee may have a reserved personality while another may be more outgoing and forward. Problems arise when the two do not understand or respect each other's inner nature. Personality clashes can also occur when an individual is highly authoritarian and dogmatic.

**Differing Values:** Value differences are the best explanation of diverse issues such as prejudice, disagreements over one's contribution to a group, therewards one deserves and assessments of

whether a particular thing is of any good. It is important to note that differences in culture, upbringing, race, experience, education, occupation, socio-economic class and other environmental factors can be a source of differing values. Management should set and communicate the values hierarchy for the organisation.

**Limited Resources:** Most organisational resources are limited and individuals and groups have to fight for his share especially when making allocation for next year budget. The greater the limited resources than usual, the greater the potential for conflict. These resources could be financial, human, material and informational resources.

**Environmental Change:** Changes in an organisation's external environment such as shift in demand, increased competition, government intervention, new technology or changing social values can cause major conflict.

**Structural Factors:** Structure include variables such as size, degree of specialization in the tasks assigned to group members, jurisdictional clarity, member-goal compatibility, leadership styles, reward systems and the degree of dependence between groups. Size and specialization act as forces to stimulate conflict. The larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the likelihood of conflict. The potential for conflict tend to be greatest when group members are younger and when turnover is high. The greater the ambiguity in precisely defining where responsibility for actions lies, the greater the potential for conflict to emerge. Such jurisdictional ambiguities increase inter-group fighting for control of resources and territory.

Group within organisations have diverse goals. When groups within an organisation seek diverse ends, there are increased opportunities for conflict. There is some indication that a close style of

leadership-tight and continuous observation with general control of other's behaviour increases conflict potential but the evidence is not particularly strong. Reward systems are also found to create conflict when one member's gain is at another's expense. Finally, if a group is dependent on another group or if interdependence allows one group to gain at the expense of another, opposing forces are stimulated.

From the above, the causes of conflict can be said to arise from personal causes (poor communication, emotions, and differing values) and organisational causes (limited resources, interdependence, environmental change, unfulfilled expectations and structural factors such as reward system and leadership style). Managers are therefore expected to understand the root cause of any conflict situation before making decisions. This is because the effectiveness or otherwise of the management of conflict is largely dependent on how well the causes of the conflict have been understood.

#### **2.2.4 Effects of Organisational conflict**

Kondaldar (2007) posites that conflict is bad as it has adverse effects on the organisational performance. If conflict is beyond control it takes a destructive dimension. When employees do not cope with the conflict situation, there is an increased absenteeism and exit of employees. It can be so disastrous, can bring group functioning to a halt, potentially threaten group survival and can lead to demise of an organisation. As opined by Mullins (2005) extreme cases of conflict in organisations can have very upsetting, or even tragic consequences for some people and have adverse effects on organisational performance. Conflict situations can also give rise to excessive emotional or physical stress, increase employee turnover, increase hostility, aggressive behavior,

retarded communication, mistrust, suspicion, reductions in group cohesiveness and subordination of group goals to the primacy of fighting among members.

On the other hand, Kondaldar (2007) is of the opinion that conflict is good for the organisation as it produces new ideas, increases competitive spirit, cohesiveness in the team and instills an atmosphere of brotherhood in the organisation. This is only possible if ideas are properly channeled and there is proper delegation of authority, empowerment and autonomy in functioning.

However, conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. If properly managed, it can have potentially positive outcomes. It can be an energising and vitalising force in groups and in the organisation. Conflict can be seen as a 'constructive' force and in certain circumstances it can be welcomed or even encouraged. For example, it can be seen as an aid to incremental improvement in organisation design and functioning, and to the decision-making process. Conflict can be an agent for evolution, and for internal and external change. Properly identified and handled, it can help to minimise the destructive influences of the win-lose situation.

### **2.3 Concept of Conflict Management**

Conflict management is seen as a broad concept including conflict resolution, the transforming of the nature of conflict to be good and the fostering of peaceful coexistence (Mohammed, 2006). According to the author, it is a long term arrangement involving official organisation and institutions for stopping and preventing the conflict whenever it is about to arise. In other words, conflict management is the label for the variety of ways by which people handle grievances, standing up for what they consider to be right against what they consider wrong.

Conflict management requires a combination of analytical and human skills. It influences individual wellbeing, group performance and organisational effectiveness (Carsten, Arne, Bianca, Esther, & Aukje as cited in Yusuf & Anuar, 2014). As such, conflict management involves doing things to limit the negative aspects of conflict and to increase the positive aspects of conflict with the aim of enhancing learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organisational setting (Rahim, 2011). Conflict management is deemed to be successful if it has achieved its goal by reaching a win-win approach-approach or consensual agreement which is acceptable by both parties. .

Onwuchekwa as cited in Ezeanyim (2010) reports that conflict management is a way of managing organisational conflict so as to keep it at a level where it will not result in disorganizing the activities of an organisation thereby resulting in not allowing effective attainment of organisational objectives. Shanker (2013) opines that conflict management is the ability to work under stress and continued to be productive. According to the author, it is a process of supportive confrontation management of the organisational conflict, which is considered one of the most important and responsible job of managers.

The Foundation Coalition (n.d), and Usoro, Ekpenyong and Effiong (2014) views that conflict management is the principle that all conflicts cannot necessarily be resolved, but learning how to manage conflicts can decrease the odds of nonproductive escalation. It involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in one's environment. Usoro *et al.* (2014) further explains that it is a process that embraces all articulated strategies, interventions and institutional mechanisms in controlling the escalation of conflict.

Omisore and Ashimi (2014), posits that dealing with conflict between and among individuals can be one of the most frustrating and uncomfortable experiences for an administrator. Thus, any attempt by an administrator to alter a specific conflict position requires that he or she be knowledgeable of its origin. An understanding of the source improves the probability that the proper resolution or stimulation technique will be selected (Robbins as cited in Omisore & Ashimi, 2014). Violetta (2012) argues that the most important element of conflict management strategy is not only the early recognition of the conflict but the keeping of attention to the conflicting parties as these elements are important when a manager deals with functional or dysfunctional conflicts. Therefore, the effectiveness or otherwise of the management of conflict is largely dependent on how well the causes of the conflict have been understood.

### **2.3.1 Strategies for Conflict Management**

Whenever conflict occurs, it is important for managers to seek for ways of resolving it. Adeyemi and Ademilua as cited in Lazarus (2014) views conflict management strategies as the internal mechanisms used by various authorities in resolving conflict. Conflict researchers have identified a number of conflict management strategies that can be employed in the constructive management of conflict situations. Locke (2009) identifies techniques for handling conflict as follows: mediation (intervention of third party) and negotiation (distributive/win-lose and collaborative/win-win). Conflict between parties can also be resolved by five different modes such as: avoidance, competing, collaborating, accommodating, and compromising (Kondalkar, 2007). Ginnett and Curphy as cited in Kinnander (2011) have also describes five common approaches for managing conflict: competition, accommodation, sharing, collaboration, and avoidance.

In the same vein, Robbins *et al.* (2008), identifies conflict handling intentions or techniques using two dimensions-cooperativeness (the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns) and assertiveness (the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns). However, the five conflict handling intentions or techniques are: competing, accommodation, collaboration, compromise and avoidance. For the purpose of this research, collaborating, compromise and avoidance strategies which are the independent variables for the study will be used and explained extensively. This is because the researcher sees them as the middle belt strategies based on assertiveness and cooperativeness; collaborating (Assertive and Cooperative), compromising (Mid-range of both Assertiveness and Cooperativeness), and avoiding (Unassertive and Uncooperative) and also because the three conflict management strategies provide a satisfactory balance for both parties involved in the conflicting problem. The success or effectiveness of the strategies adopted by an organisation can be determined by the extent to which they limit conflict behavior and the extent to which they can help to achieve a satisfactory solution. However, any of the five conflict management strategies may be appropriate and effective depending on the specific situation, the parties' personality styles, the desired outcomes, and the time available.

### **2.3.1.1 Collaboration Strategy**

There is cooperation and the search for a mutually beneficial outcome, when each party to conflict desire to fully satisfy the concerns of all parties, that is, high concern for self and others (Ezeanyim, 2010). As such, the intentions of the parties is to solve the problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various points of view through openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach a solution acceptable to both parties. This

strategy builds a friendly environment of an organisation where both employers and employees feel confident and free to share their knowledge or perceptions in order to make a single point, that is, reach a single decision in order to combat conflict. Prein as cited in Rahim (2001) is of the opinion that this style has two distinctive elements: confrontation and problem solving. Confrontation involves open communication, clearing up misunderstanding, and analyzing the underlying causes of conflict. This is a prerequisite for problem solving, which involves identification of, and solution to, the real problem(s) to provide maximum satisfaction to concerns of both parties. Rahim (2011) asserts that collaboration strategy is useful for effective dealing of complex problems especially when one party alone cannot solve the problem. Friedman et al. as cited in Ajike *et al.* (2015) found that individuals who use integrative (collaborative style) conflict handling style experience lower level of work conflict and stress at job. The strategy is appropriate for dealing with the strategic issues pertaining to an organisation's objectives and policies, strategic planning and so on. It is inappropriate when task or problem is simple or trivial, when the other parties do not have adequate training and experience for problem solving or when they are unconcerned about the outcome. According to Kilman and Thomas (2008), collaboration strategy is the best method of handling conflict, as it strives to satisfy the needs of both parties. It is integrative and has high concern for personal goals as well as relationship. The Foundation Coalition (n.d) explained that some people will profess that the collaboration strategy is always the best conflict strategy to use, but collaborating takes a great deal of time and energy. Therefore, the collaborating strategy should be used when the conflict warrants the time and energy.

### **2.3.1.2 Compromise Strategy**

It is a traditional method for resolving intergroup conflicts and it is also referred to as the middle-of-the-road approach. Ezeanyim (2010) opines that when each party to the conflict seeks to give up something, sharing occurs, resulting in a compromised outcome, as such there is no clear winner or loser. Rather, there is a willingness to ration the object of the conflict and accept a solution that provides incomplete satisfaction of both parties' concerns. The distinguishing characteristic of compromising therefore, is that each party intends to give up something. Victor as cited in Violetta (2012), sees it as a "give-and-take" approach with moderate levels of both assertiveness and cooperativeness. Compromise can be identified as bargaining or trading. This approach can be applied when the goals and the power of both sides are of equal importance, and when it is necessary to find a temporary, timely solution. Rahim (2011) asserted that the strategy is inappropriate when dealing with complex problems needing a problem-solving approach, but unfortunately, very often, management practitioners use this style to deal with complex problems and as a result fail to formulate effective, long-term solutions. However, compromise is a good "back up" strategy which conflicting parties can fall back on if their attempts at problem solving (collaboration) and other strategies are unsuccessful. It may involve third party interventions such as higher managerial authority, mediation, or arbitration.

### **2.3.1.3 Avoidance Strategy**

A person may recognise that a conflict exists and wants to withdraw from it or suppress it (Ezeanyim, 2010). It is also known as withdrawing style and in this style, assertiveness and cooperativeness are low, that is, neither of the parties considers their interest in the management of conflict. People who fear conflict use the avoiding style to escape from conflict situations.

Friedman et al. as cited in Ajike *etal.* (2015) found that people using avoiding style were facing more conflicts and work stress. When this style of conflict management is used, everyone loses. The biggest disadvantage is that the issue is never directly addressed or resolved. Victor as cited in Violetta (2012) opines that this style is appropriate to use in the situation where there is no chance of winning or when disruption would be very costly. Examples of avoidance include trying to ignore a conflict and avoiding others with whom you disagree.

Each of the above techniques is unique in its own way. No one is best in managing conflict as it depends on the parties to conflict, the timeframe and the particular situation at hand. Conflict Management techniques should be changed according to the demands and time of the situation. However, when managers are faced with excessive conflict and need to reduce it, the following guidelines should be followed (Robbins *etal.*, 2008):

**Use Collaboration** when the concerns of both parties are too important to be compromised; when objective is to learn, when the insights from people are to be merged from different perspectives; when commitment is to be gained by incorporating concerns into a consensus; when feelings that have interfered with a relationship are to be worked out, when there is a high level of trust; when a person doesn't want to have full responsibility and when it is necessary to build long-term relationships.

**Use compromise** when goals are important but not worth the effort of potential disruption of more assertive approaches; when opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals; to achieve temporary settlements to complex issues; to arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure, as a backup when collaboration or competition is unsuccessful and can be the first step when parties do not know each other well or haven't yet developed a high level of mutual trust, so it can help to improve relationships between two sides.

**Use avoidance** when an issue is trivial or more important issues are pressing; when there is no chance of satisfying one's concerns; when potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution; when others can resolve the conflict more effectively; when issues seem symptomatic to other issues; when it takes too much time to deal with it; when it is not the right time or place to discuss the issues and when time is needed to think and collect information in order to be prepared before dealing with the issue.

### **2.3.2 Criteria for Conflict Management**

Rahim (2011) identified the following criteria for conflict management:

- a) **Organisation Learning and Effectiveness:** Conflict management strategies should be designed to enhance organisational learning, as it is expected that organisational learning will lead to long term effectiveness. In order to attain this objective, conflict management strategies should be designed to enhance critical and innovative thinking to learn the process of diagnosis and intervention in the right problems.
- b) **Needs of Stakeholders:** Conflict management strategies should be designed to satisfy the needs and expectations of the stakeholders to attain a balance between them. Sometimes multiple parties are involved in a conflict in an organisation and the challenge of conflict management would be to involve these parties in a problem solving process that will lead to collective learning and organisational effectiveness. It is expected that this process will lead to satisfaction of the relevant stakeholders.
- c) **Ethics:** A wise leader must behave ethically, and to do so the leader should be open to new information and be willing to change his or her mind. By the same token subordinates and other stakeholders have an ethical duty to speak out against the

decisions of supervisors when consequences of these decisions are likely to be serious. To manage conflict ethically, organisations should institutionalise the positions of employees' advocate, customers' and suppliers' advocate, as well as environmental and stakeholders' advocate. Only if these advocates are heard by decision makers that organisations may hope for an improved record of ethically managed organisational conflict.

Thus, in order for conflict management strategies to be effective, organisations should satisfy the above stated criteria which are not only useful for conflict management, but also for decision making in management.

## **2.4 Concept of Organisational Performance**

Continuous improved performance is the objective of any organisation because only through performance, organisations are able to grow and progress. Zeitun and Tian (2007), explains performance as a controversial issue in the financial strategy of most corporate organisations due to its multi-dimensional meanings. The concept is used to analyse the performance of a business that possess the quality of an organisation having a legal status. To explain the concept therefore, a precise and satisfactory description of the context in which it is used should be made in order to have a sense of direction.

However, the concept of organisational performance is very common in the academic literature, as it is one of the most widely used variable in organisational research today, yet at the same time, it remains one of the most vague and loosely defined constructs (Rogers et al. as cited in Jahanshahi, Reraei, Nawaser, Ranjbar & Pitamber, 2012). Its definition is difficult as there are many definitions of organisational performance and no two definitions agree on the precise

characteristics (Abusa, 2011). According to Griffin (2003), organisational performance is described as the extent to which the organisation is able to meet the needs of its stakeholders and its own needs for survival. Organisational performance according to Iravo (2011) is rapidly becoming more accepted as necessary to enhance the productivity and profitability of organisations and is consequently expanding.

Almajali *etal.* (2012) views that organisational performance is seen as the result of an activity which has been achieved by an organisation related to its authority and responsibility in achieving the goal legally, not against the law, and conforming to the morale and ethics of the organisation. Lebens and Euske (2006) define organizational performance as a set of financial and non-financial indicators which offer information on the degree of achievement of organizational objectives and results. In the words of Javed and Javed (2013), organizational performance and its goals achievement depend upon the will and motivation of employees to achieve the personal goals aligned with the achievement of organizational goals. These authors linked the performance of an organization to the will and determination of individual employees to succeed which account for either the success or failure of organizational performance.

In measuring organisational performance, different approaches may be adopted depending on the perspective of the study. Organisational performance according to Hansen and Mowen (2005) can be measured either financially or non-financially and it is important to note that the measurement of organisational performance may be affected by the objective of an organisation which in turn affects the choice of the performance measures. Financial performance measures such as profit maximization, maximizing profit on asset, and maximizing shareholders benefits are the core of firms' effectiveness (Chakravarthy, 1986). While non-financial performance measures such as growth in sales and growth in market shares, provide a broad definition of

performance which focus on the factors that ultimately lead to financial performance (Hofer & Sandberg, 1987; as cited in Zeitun & Tian, 2007). Abusa (2011) expresses organisational performance in eight measurement variables which includes; customer satisfaction (how a products or services supplied by a company meet or surpass customers' expectation), employee morale (description of emotions, attitude, job satisfaction, overall outlook and well-being an employee has within a workplace environment), defects as a percentage of production volume (decrease as a percentage of production volume), sales growth (the amount by which the average sales volume of a company's products or services has grown over a particular period of time), profit improvement (excess of revenues over expenses in a business enterprise over a given period of time, usually a year), export growth (increase in the export of an organisation over a period of time), production performance improvement (increase in production capacity of an organisation), overall business performance compared with an excellent competitor in the same industry (ability of an organization to outperform its competitors and exploit its resources relative to its competitive environment). The study drops defect as a measurement because of the nature of the company's product which might not bring about a decrease in the production volume.

Heng and San (2011) identify ways of measuring organisational performance, such as productivity, profitability, growth or even customer satisfaction. Mubaraq (2005) views that there are many measures of performance based on non-financial information as not all activities of an enterprise are capable of being expressed in monetary terms. As such, only financial statements are not adequate to measure all aspect of performance. According to Mubaraq (2005), the following are non-financial measures of performance; number of customers and suppliers, staff turnover, training time per employee, number of production stoppage through staff, output

per employee, adherence to quality and product, absenteeism and accidents, number of complaints received and production lead time. For the purpose of this study, the measurement proposed by Abusa (2011) was used as a measurement of the dependent variable. This is because the measurement is suitable for the measurement of an organisational performance.

## **2.5 Conflict Management and Organisational Performance**

Many people automatically assume that conflict is related to lower group and organisational performance. This assumption is frequently incorrect (Robbins *et al.*, 2008). Conflict can either be constructive or destructive to the functioning of a group or unit. The levels of conflict can either be too high or too low. Either extreme hinders performance. An optimal level is one at which there is enough conflict to prevent stagnation, stimulate creativity, allows tensions to be released and initiate the seeds for change, yet not so much as to be disruptive or to deter coordination of activities. Inadequate or excessive levels of conflict can hinder the effectiveness of a group or an organisation, resulting to reduced satisfaction of group members, increased absence and turnover rates, and, eventually, lower productivity. However, when conflict is at an optimal level, complacency and apathy should be minimized, motivation should be enhanced through the creation of a challenging and questioning environment with a vitality that makes work interesting, and there should be the amount of turnover needed to rid the organisation of misfits and poor performers.

Managing conflict to increase organisational performance is to ensure that the level of conflict is not too high or too low but rather, it should be encouraged at the optimal level. Brown as cited in Iravo (2011) posits that the role of conflict management in organisational performance depends

on a circumstance that is, contingency. Thus, Contingency Theory recognizes the influence of a given solution on organisational behaviour patterns. According to Rivers as cited in Zafar, Ashfar, Ali and Imran (2014), the hidden costs of unresolved conflict in organisations are enormous and finding effective ways to manage and resolve organisational conflicts can have a significant impact on productivity and hence organisational performance. Individual and organisational performance suffer when people are consumed emotionally, mentally and behaviourally by conflicts. Management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited should therefore ensure that conflict within the organisation is well managed, otherwise, it can affect the organisational performance negatively and the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organisation which can in the long run hinders organisational continuity.

## **2.6 Review of Previous Studies**

Ongori (2009) conducted a research survey to examine the main cause of organisational conflict and its effect on organisational performance. Using a survey research design with a convenience sample of 130 managers selected from government departments, parastatals and private companies in Gaborone, Boswana, the findings indicated that most conflicts in organisations are resolved by compromising with parties involved and by encouraging open communication in organisations. However, the study did not focus on the empirical testing of the strategies on organisational performance, thus, the study only identified the strategies used by the case study.

Hotepo *et al.*(2010) carried out an empirical study to examine the effect of conflict on organisational performance in some selected service organisations in Nigeria. The study employed descriptive research design and uses questionnaire to collect data from 96 managers in some selected Airlines, Road Transport and Insurance companies in Lagos Metropolis. The

research revealed that the most used means of managing conflict among the managers in Nigerian service industry is bargaining, collaboration, and avoidance. The significant effect of the conflict management strategies on the dependent variable was not empirically done, thus, the study only identified the strategies used by the case study.

A study conducted by Obasan (2011) examined the impact of conflict management on organisational performance in First Bank of Nigeria Plc Lagos branch. Using a student t-distribution to test the significance of response and purposive sampling techniques to administer a self-design questionnaire to 50 respondents, it was revealed that managers prefer the compromise, problem solving, and dominating strategies. The result also showed that the conflict management strategies in place at the organisation have been relatively useful in minimizing the incidence of disruptive conflicts and that conflict management strategies have a positive impact on workers' productivity. However, the strategies are not empirically tested.

Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) conducted a research on conflict and conflict management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The paper concluded that maintaining a cordial relationship between students and school authority and involving students in decision making process in school appeared to be the most effective strategies for resolving crisis in tertiary institutions. However, the study is qualitative and does not show the empirical effect of the variables.

Garcia (2013), carried out a research on organisational conflict and organisational performance. It was concluded that people must learn to maintain harmonious relationships and discuss issues openly, respectfully and rationally to make their conflicts productive. Therefore, it is the duty of the management and the employees to develop ways on how to promote cohesiveness in organisations and if possible, conflicts should be resolved at their stages to enhance

organisational performance. However, the study is not empirically tested as it is a qualitative study which might not give a true result of how conflict can be managed in organisations.

Furthermore, Kazimoto (2013) carried out a research to analyse the sources of conflict, process of conflict management, leadership and organisational change. It was concluded that the key to resolving conflict with a positive outcome includes looking for a win-win situation, cutting losses when necessary, formulating proactive conflict management strategies, using effective negotiation and communication, and appreciating cultural differences among people or workers. It is a qualitative research and the conclusion from the study cannot be generalised since it is not empirically tested.

In a study conducted by Mughal and Khan (2013) on the impact of conflict and conflict management on organisational performance in Pakistan, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Survey respondents from the eight corporate sector organisations are selected for the study and 120 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the study respondents. Result showed that out of the five most popular conflict management strategies, three strategies came out to be the most adopted ones by the managers and other employees; these includes: integrating, dominating and compromising. However, the strategies are not empirically tested.

Nwosu and Makinde (2014) carried out a research to understand the concept of conflict and how it can be managed in private institutions. It was concluded that managers should employ the use of conflict management strategies and also encourage negotiations to ensure peaceful working environment so that organisational goals and objectives can be achieved. Enabling environment should be created to promote healthy expression of opinions, feelings, values, needs and

positions. Management of organisations should be quick to identify situations that are pointers to suppressed opinion or values that are predisposing factors to conflict in an organisation. However, the strategies are not empirically tested, and cannot give a true generalisation of the study.

Ebhote and Monday (2015) conducted a qualitative research on conflict management, a managerial approach towards improving organisational performance. It was concluded that managers on their part having resolved the conflict efficiently can use the techniques or the approaches adopted to resolve further conflict which might ensue the future. It is a qualitative study.

A study was carried out by Rabinarayan (2004) to examine the relative effectiveness of conflict management strategies (withdrawing, smoothing, compromise, forcing and problem solving) in the frame work of superior-subordinate relationships in India. Questionnaire was obtained from 345 managers in steel and paper industries and data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation as well as multiple regression. The study revealed that problem solving was the most effective method of conflict management followed by smoothing behaviours. The study recommended that there is a need to make reduction in the excessive use of compromising strategy as being made in the present. The study was conducted on a different dependent variable.

Oparanma, Hamilton and Ohaka (2009) conducted an investigation on managerial strategies to conflict management of not for-profit organisations in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the descriptive study pattern with the use of questionnaire and personal interview. A total of 80 copies of questionnaire were distributed to both the junior and senior staff and it was concluded that conflicts in non-profit making organisations can be resolved where administrators indulge

in collective bargaining agreement, understanding of employees and acceptance of subordinate goals.

Sima *et al.* (2012) examined the effects of conflict management strategies on job stress of the staff of emergencies in Mashhad hospitals, Iran. Using descriptive design with copies of questionnaire distributed to 55 employees, the study found that avoidance strategy has a negative and meaningful effect on job stress, solution-oriented strategy has a positive and meaningful effect on job stress, and control has a positive and meaningful effect on staff's job stress. The study was conducted on a different dependent variable.

Mba (2013) also carried out a research on conflict management and employees' performance in Julius Berger Nigeria Plc Bonny Island, Bayelsa State. A descriptive research design was used in executing the study using 50 purposively selected sample respondents consisting of 25 managerial employees and 25 non-managerial employees of Julius Berger. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result from analysis indicated that significant relationship exists between conflict management strategies and employees' performance which have been relatively useful in minimising the incidence of disruptive conflicts while impacting positively on employees' productivity. However, the study makes use of employees' performance which is an aspect of organisational performance.

El Dahshan and Keshk (2014) conducted a study to determine the main conflict management styles from both nurse managers and their staff nurses' points of view and investigating its effect on nurses' turnover intention. Descriptive correlation research design was used to analyse data with questionnaires distributed to 30 nurse managers and 150 staff nurses. The findings of the study revealed that the most used conflict management style was avoidance while the least used

style was competing. It was concluded that there were statistically significant positive correlation between turnover intention and the three conflict management styles (collaboration, compromise and avoidance) while, there was statistically significant negative correlation between turnover intention and competing style. However, the study considers a different dependent variable.

Kanani and Farahani (2014) conducted a study on the evaluation of relationship between conflict management styles and organisational effectiveness of Southern Oil Company in Iran. Using a descriptive sample, data was collected from 90 employees via questionnaires and interview. The study found that there is a significant relationship between strategies of conflict management (avoidance, compromise, compatibility, competition and collaboration) with aspects of effectiveness. The study used a different dependent variable as against the one considered for this study.

Lazarus(2014) employed 240 respondents from four ministries in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service to examine the role of conflict management strategies on employees' productivity in a Nigerian civil service. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression to analyse the hypotheses, the study found that collective bargaining and negotiation showed a significant positive contribution to employees' productivity while avoidance and imposing were significantly negative. And also that collective bargaining and negotiation were significantly related positively to employees' productivity. However, the study considers an aspect of organisational performance which is employees' productivity.

Ojo and Abolade (2014) investigated the impact of conflict management on employees' performance in Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). This study adopted the survey research design and a total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to respondents using stratified

sampling technique. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and hypotheses were tested through regression analysis and correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that effective conflict management enhance employee's performance in an organisation and that organisation's conflict management system influences employee performance in the organisation. It was recommended that organisation should embark on training and retraining of its employees in area of conflict management so as to create a conducive working environment for the employees and that there should be efficient and effective communication between and among all categories of the employees in the organisation. This will reduce conflicting situations in the organisation. The study considers an aspect of organisational performance which is employees' performance.

A study conducted by Ajike *etal.* (2015), examined the effect of conflict management on organizational performance of banks in Nigeria using Access Bank Plc as a case study. A sample size of eighty-one (81) out of the numerous employees of the bank was administered with questionnaires in three branches of the bank located in Lagos state. A descriptive and regression analysis with the aid of SPSS was used to analyze the relationship between conflict management and organisational performance. The result found that there was a significant positive relationship between conflict management and organizational performance. The significant effect of conflict management strategies were not shown as the study made use of simple regression.

Awan and Saeed (2015) conducted a study to examine the causes of conflict as well as the possible solution to improve working environment (organisational performance) in Askari Bank Limited, Pakistan. The study adopted survey method using descriptive techniques such as frequency, percentages, mean, standard deviation, variance and factor analysis to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that conflict stems from incompatibility of goals and

interest and that there is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female respondents regarding the causes of conflict. The study concluded that there is a significant effect of conflict on organisational performance. The study recommended that management must adopt conflict management strategies that improve organisational performance and also promote interpersonal relationships among co-workers to boost their morale. The study only identified the strategies used by the organisation in managing conflict.

Longe (2015) investigated the impact of workforce conflict management on organisational performance in Nigerian manufacturing firm, using 250 employees selected through stratified random sampling techniques and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result showed that there is significant positive relationship between integrated conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, compromise and accommodation) and organisational performance, while non-integrated conflict management strategies (competition, domination and avoidance) had a negative statistical determinate effect on organisational performance. The study did not consider the effect of collaboration strategy on organisational performance

In summary of the findings in the review outlined above, studies on the effects of conflict management showed a wide range of results depending on situations. Studies were of the view that integrative conflict management strategies are positive and significantly related while the non-integrative conflict management strategies are negative and insignificantly related.

## 2.7 Theoretical Framework

The theory underpinning this study is the Contingency Theory. This theory is a behavioural theory developed by Fred Fiedler in 1964. The assumption of the theory is that there is no universal or one best way to manage an organisation and that an organisational/leadership style that is effective in some situations may not be successful in others. The theory argued that a manager's effectiveness is based upon the interplay of task, or relation, motivation and the circumstance. In other words, certain circumstances require different management approaches with a focus either on motivating for task completion or maintaining harmonious group relations.

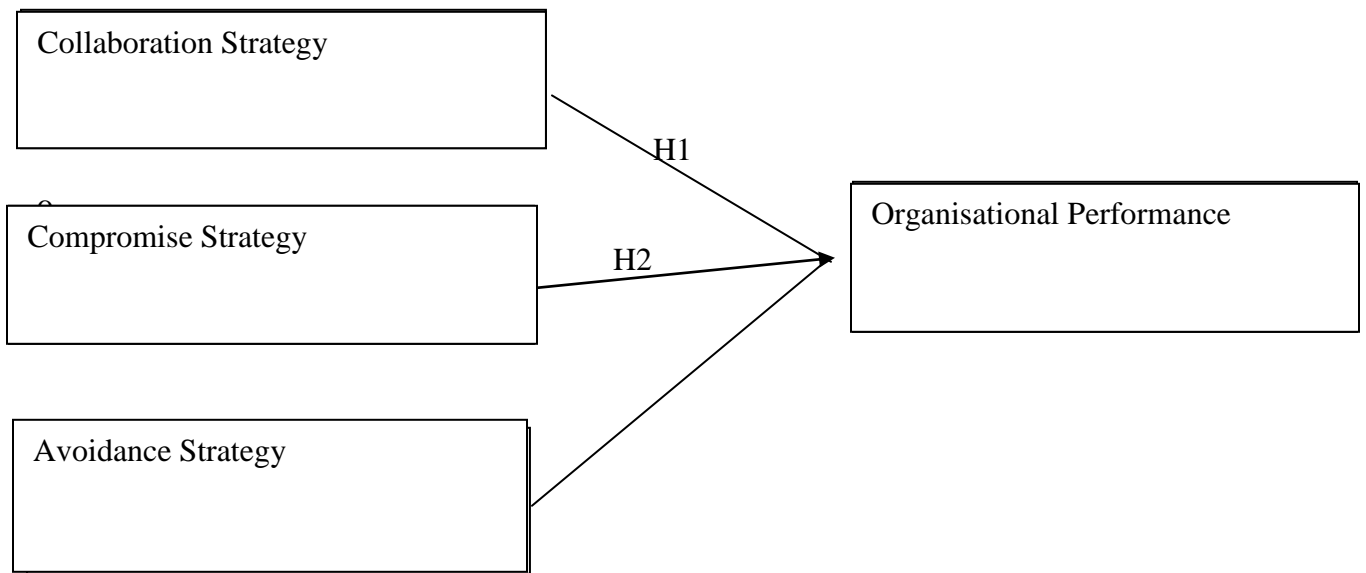
It can be summarized as an “it all depends” approach. The appropriate management actions and approaches depend on the situation. Managers with a contingency view use a flexible approach, draw on a variety of theories and experiences, and evaluate many options as they solve problems. In the contingency perspective, managers are faced with the task of determining which managerial approach is likely to be most effective in a given situation. It is a recognition of the extreme importance of individual manager performance in any given situation and the contingency approach is highly dependent on the experience and judgment of the manager in a given organisational environment. Contingency theory is however made of six independent constructs (strategy, task, technology, organisational size, structure and culture) and two dependent constructs (efficiency and organisational performance). The study looks at the aspect of strategy being the independent variables and organisational performance being the dependent variable.

The decision to base the study on this theory was informed by the fact that there is no one best strategy in resolving organisational conflict. A strategy is considered appropriate for a conflict

situation if its use leads to effective formulation and/or solution to a problem (Rahim, 2011). The theory relates to the independent variables in the sense that collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy represent the organisational strategies which the management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria can adopt for the management of their conflict; while the dependent variable relates to organisational performance which is the outcome of the conflict management strategy(s) adopted. Collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy which are the independent variables considered for this study, can be best suitable depending on the parties to a conflict, the timeframe and the situation the organisation finds itself. Thus, there is a need for managers to identify and understand the situation before choosing the appropriate style of conflict management. The adoption of collaboration strategy, compromise strategy, and avoidance strategy has the ability to improve or decrease the performance of a firm and their outcomes will determine the level of performance the organisation will find itself. In other words, if the right conflict management strategy(s) is adopted, organisational performance will improve, otherwise, organisational performance will decline.

In view of the above, the theoretical framework of the study is depicted as follows:

## **Figure 2.2: Model of Conflict Management**



**Source: Field work, 2015**

Figure 2.2 is the proposed research framework which shows the independent variables of the study (collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies) while the dependent variable is organisational performance. Thus, the proposed research framework provides a way of linking the variables of the study.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study examined the effect of conflict management on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. In order to achieve the stated objective, this chapter outlines and explains the methodological issues relating to the study. It gives explicit explanation in respect to the basic research design, population of the study, sampling technique, source and method of data collection, variables measurement and the techniques used in analysing data with their justification. The validity and reliability of data and also the model specification used in the study were also discussed.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed survey design to describe the basic features of the data in the study and is cross sectional in nature. This study is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions, prevailing practices, beliefs, attitudes, on-going process, effects that are felt or trends that are developing (Vincent, Olaegbe & Sobona, 2008). The design adopted helped in describing the relevant aspects of the phenomena under consideration and provided detailed information about each relevant variable.

### **3.3 Population of the Study.**

The population of this study consisted of 112 staff of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, obtained from the electronic time card of the organisation. It included 28 management staff comprising of the general manager, human resource manager, chief engineer (electrical manager, fire and safety manager and utility manager), financial controller (account manager and IT manager), commercial manager (marketing manager and material handling manager), process engineer and

fifteen other managers. It also included 36 junior staff comprising of 23 machine operators and 13 clerks. And also 48 casual staff comprising of 20 sweepers, 15 gardeners and 13 minor operators.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

The study made use of census sampling technique in order to get adequate response by collecting information from all levels in the population. Thus, 112 of the questionnaire were distributed.

### **3.5 Source and Method of Data Collection**

The study used primary source of data to examine the effect of conflict management on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. Data was collected using questionnaire which was self-administered to the staff of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

### **3.6 Techniques of Data Analysis**

In analysing the data for this study, multiple regression analysis was used as a tool of analysis to assess the extent to which the independent variables affect the dependent variable with the aid of SPSS version 20. It was also used to test the research hypotheses at 5% level of significance (95% confidence level). The rationale for the choice of multiple regression technique is that it shows clearly the actual effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. In this case, it is a better tool to bring out clearly, the effect of conflict management on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

### 3.7 Measurement of Variables for the Study

**Table 3.1: Measurement of Variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Adapted from</b>
Conflict Management	Collaboration strategy	Mean of responses for the eight items testing the extent of collaboration strategy on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria	De Drew, Evers. Beersma, Kluwer & Nauta (2001) and Farooqi, Khan and Arshad (2014)
	Compromise Strategy	Mean of responses for the eight items testing the extent of compromise strategy on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria	De Drew, Evers. Beersma, Kluwer & Nauta (2001) and Farooqi, Khan and Arshad (2014)
	Avoidance Strategy	Mean of responses for the seven items testing the extent of avoidance strategy on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria	De Drew, Evers. Beersma, Kluwer & Nauta (2001) and Farooqi, Khan and Arshad (2014)
Organisational performance	Financial Performance and non-financial performance (production volume, sales level, export volume, profit, employee morale, customer satisfaction, business performance level compared with competitors)	Mean responses for the seven items testing the extent of conflict management on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria	Abusa (2011)

Source: Field work, 2015.

The items formed the questions for the variables in the questionnaire. All questions were in close ended form and all responses were measured using five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” (1), “agree” (2), “undecided” (3), “disagree” (4) and “strongly disagree” (5). The use of Likert scale is often necessary because it is an interval scale that enables a researcher to analyse questionnaire responses using parametric tools.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability of Data**

Instrument validity is very vital in any survey. It was used in this study in order to ensure that the construct making of the items in the instrument actually measured what they were supposed to measure on both the dependent and independent variables. The instrument has been proven valid by experts and supervisors and has been used for this study.

Also, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained through pilot sample of 35 staff responses in Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. The reliability statistics in the study using cronbach alpha for the independent variables were: 0.753 for collaboration strategy, 0.614 for compromise strategy and 0.70 for avoidance strategy. While the reliability for dependent variable is 0.695 which is approximately 0.70 for organisational performance. The value of 0.60 is considered acceptable for internal consistency of questionnaire for newly developed scale (Nunnally, 1978), as in appendix C.

### **3.9 Model Specification**

The model employed for examining the effect of conflict management on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria is specified thus:

$$OP_i = \alpha_i + \beta_1 ColS_i + \beta_2 ComS_i + \beta_3 AvS_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where:

OP = Organisational Performance

ColS = Collaboration strategy

ComS = Compromise strategy

AvS = Avoidance strategy

$\alpha$  = Intercept/Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  = Coefficients of the independent variables

$\varepsilon$  = Error term

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents analyses and discusses the data collected for the study. It covers the summary of responses, representation and analysis of the primary data collected from Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, using questionnaire. The hypotheses formulated are tested to determine the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The aim is to find out whether conflict management has significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. Finally, the research findings of the study are also stated.

#### 4.2 Responses

A total of 112 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 98 copies were returned, out of which 91 were valid and usable. This equals to a response rate of 81.3 percent. This is considered sufficiently large for statistical reliability and generalization.

**Table 4.1: Summary of Response Rate**

S/N	Items	Number of Questionnaire	Percentage
1	Copies of Questionnaire distributed	112	100%
2	Returned copies of Questionnaire distributed	98	88%
3	Copies of Valid Questionnaire	91	81.3%

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**Field work, 2015.**

### 4.3 Data Presentation

The variables for the study comprised of organisational performance as dependent variable while collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies are independent variables. The study is cross-sectional producing ninety one valid response rates from the returned questionnaire. Data was presented using descriptive statistics and correlation matrix.

#### 4.3.1.Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

This section presents the descriptive statistics of the main variables in the study. These variables are: collaboration, compromise, avoidance strategies and organisational performance. The rule for this analysis is that any mean responses of 1-2.49, 2.50-3.49 and 3.50-5.00 are rated below average, average and above average performance respectively.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics on Organisational Performance**

S/N		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	There has been an improvement in the production volume	91	1.00	5.00	4.2088	.96051
2	There is an increase in the sales level	91	2.00	5.00	3.7253	1.20246
3	There is an increase in the export volume	91	1.00	5.00	2.7473	1.17939
4	There is an improvement in profit	91	1.00	5.00	3.7912	1.00572
5	There is an increase in employee morale	91	1.00	5.00	2.5714	1.17514
6	There is an increase in customer satisfaction	91	1.00	5.00	3.2857	1.18590
7	There is an increase in the business performance level of the organisation compared with the competitors	91	1.00	5.00	3.6374	1.13055
	Valid N (listwise)	91				

Source: Field Work, 2015.

Table 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics for organisational performance. The mean average variable of the questions from question one (1) to seven (7) are all within and above average that is, above the value of 2.50 and above 3.49 with minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 5. The response on organisational performance had the highest mean score of 4.2088 representing the mean score of question 1 “There has been an improvement in the production volume”. This implies that majority of the staff agreed that there have been an improvement in the production volume of the organisation. The lowest mean score for organisational performance is question 5 “There has been an increase in employees’ morale” This question has the lowest mean score signifying that staff have not been motivated in anyway. Even though the organisation has increase in its production level, with increase in sales and profit level, the welfare of the employees has not been adequately taken care of, which makes their morale to remain low, However, if the staff are well motivated most especially in the area of their welfare, they will put in their best in the activities of the organisation, thereby improving its performance. The scores of the standard deviation is within the range of 0.96051-1.20246 respectively.

**Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics on Collaboration Strategy**

S/N		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I seek co-workers opinion to discover solution to problems	91	1.00	5.00	4.2198	.87942
2	I equally weigh my views as well as co-workers' views to arrive at solution	91	1.00	5.00	3.8462	.86824
3	I explore co-workers' differences to find out the mutual solution to problems	91	1.00	5.00	4.0769	1.04595
4	I appreciate factual information from the co-workers during meetings	91	1.00	5.00	4.2967	.97176
5	I stand for my own and others' goals and interests	91	1.00	5.00	3.8022	1.01346
6	I merge others' idea to come up with a joint decision	91	1.00	5.00	4.2747	.93174
7	I like to discuss all concerns openly	91	1.00	5.00	3.5604	1.11762
8	I try to find out mutually acceptable solutions to problems	91	1.00	5.00	4.2198	.96381
	Valid N (listwise)	91				

**Source: Field Work, 2015.**

Table 4.3 shows the descriptive statistics for collaboration strategy. The standard deviation with scores of low and high standard deviation is 0.86824-1.11762 respectively. The mean average variable of all the questions from question one (1) to eight (8) are all above average that is, above the value of 2.50-3.49. The analysis has a minimum score of 1 and maximum score of 5. Question 4 “I appreciate factual information from my co-workers during meetings” had the highest mean score of 4.2967. This implies that most of the respondents appreciate factual information from their co-workers. The respondents might have adhered to this because facts are necessary in the resolution of conflict and as such all facts leading to the resolution of conflict is

presented by co- workers during meetings. The lowest mean score for collaboration is question 7 “I like to discuss all concerns openly” which is 3.5604. Though the mean score is the lowest, but is above average. This implies that staff may want to discuss all concerns openly especially during meetings in order to improve organisational performance.

**Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on Compromise Strategy**

S/N		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I give up my desires in exchange for others to reach an agreement	91	1.00	5.00	3.9341	1.08323
2	I insist we both sacrifice a little	91	1.00	5.00	3.6923	.99658
3	I concentrate on conciliation to minimize co-workers' differences	91	1.00	5.00	4.0220	1.04326
4	I adopt half-way approach to overcome deadlock	91	1.00	5.00	3.4176	1.10620
5	I compromise to find out solution to difficult problems	91	1.00	5.00	3.7692	1.13605
6	I prefer negotiation to reach an agreement	91	1.00	5.00	4.2857	.84703
7	I try to adopt a mid-way approach in the solution to problems	91	1.00	5.00	3.4396	1.33507
8	I forfeit my own needs to get out of complex situations	91	1.00	5.00	3.2418	1.34446
	Valid N (listwise)	91				

**Source: Field Work, 2015.**

Table 4.4 shows the descriptive statistics for compromise strategy. The mean average variable of the questions from question one (1) to eight (8) are above average, that is, above the value of 2.50-3.49 with minimum score of 1 and maximum score of 5. The response on compromise strategy had a maximum mean score of 4.2857 which was the mean score on question 6 “I prefer negotiation to reach an agreement”. The high mean score for this response signifies that more

staff would prefer to negotiate whenever they are in conflict situation. The lowest mean score was question 8, “I forfeit my own needs to get out of complex situations” which implies that most of the staff would not want to give up their own needs for conflict to be resolved. This is because their welfare is very much important to them. The standard deviation have scores of low and high standard deviation of 0.84703-1.34446

**Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics on Avoidance**

S/N		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I keep working environment pleasant rather than creating tension	91	1.00	5.00	4.2308	1.03362
2	Disagreed issues are avoided to discuss in open meetings	91	1.00	5.00	3.2637	1.08357
3	I try to refrain from critical issues that will cause division during meetings	91	2.00	5.00	4.1868	.95350
4	I try to avoid open discussion about mutual differences	91	1.00	5.00	3.6484	1.12915
5	I keep my opinion to myself rather than imposing it on my colleagues	91	1.00	5.00	2.6703	1.22070
6	I try to refrain from odd feelings during meetings	91	1.00	5.00	3.0330	1.23334
7	I try to make differences look less severe	91	1.00	5.00	3.4066	1.09522
	Valid N (listwise)	91				

**Source: Field Work, 2015.**

Table 4.5 shows the descriptive statistics for avoidance strategy. The mean average variable of all the questions from question one (1) to two (7) are above average, that is, within and above the value of 2.50-3.49 with minimum score of 1 and maximum score of 5. Question 1 “I keep

working environment pleasant rather than creating issues that will lead to tension in the working environment” has the highest mean score of 4.2308 which implies that employees prefer to keep working environment pleasant. The lowest mean score for avoidance strategy is question 5 “I keep my opinion to myself rather than imposing it on my colleagues” with the mean score of 2.6703. This implies that though staff would like to avoid conflict by keeping working environment pleasant, they would still like their colleagues to view their opinions in a bid to resolve conflict. The standard deviation have scores of low and high standard deviation of .95350 -1.23334.

### 4.3.2 Correlation Matrix

A correlation analysis was performed to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable.

**Table 4.6: Correlations of Variables**

		Collaboration Strategy	Compromise Strategy	Avoidance Strategy	Organisational Performance
Collaboration Strategy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1			
Compromise Strategy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.106 .317	1		
Avoidance Strategy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.091 .391	.496** .000	1	
OP	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.249* .017	-.214* .041	.213* .043	1

(\*) Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

(\*\*) Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Source: Field work, 2015.**

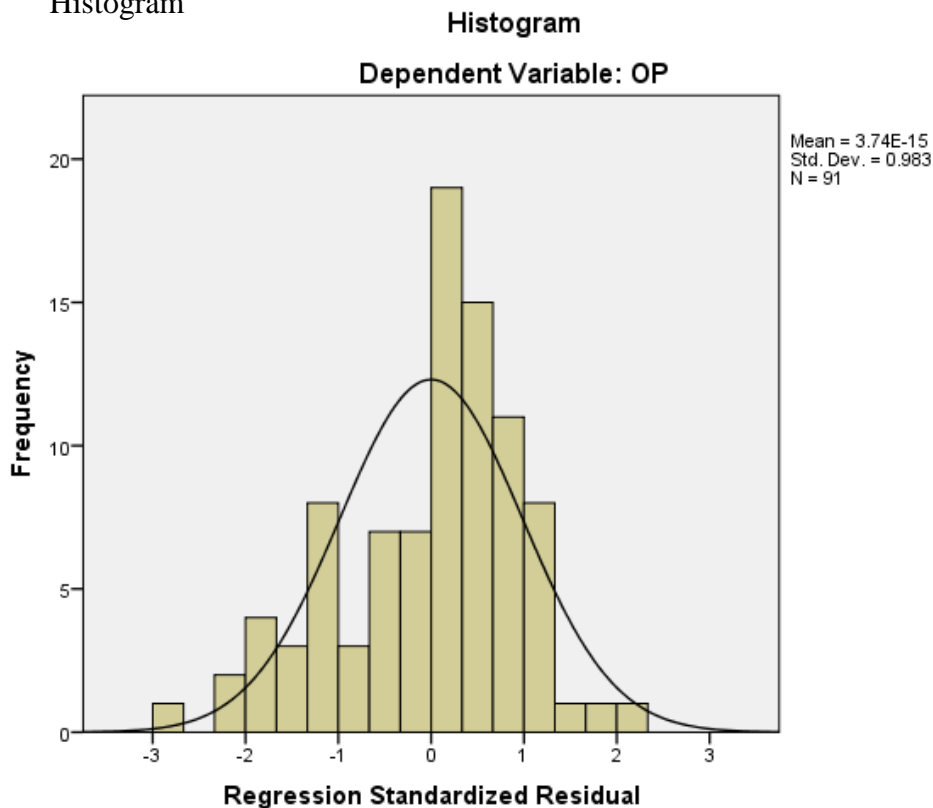
The relationship between the variables was examined using Pearson correlation analysis. Table 4.6 presents the correlation of the variables. It shows that organisational performance has a positive correlation with collaboration strategy and avoidance strategy and is significant at 5%

respectively. Also, it shows that organisational performance has a negative correlation with compromise strategy and is significant at 5%. The result also shows that collaboration strategy has a positive correlation with compromise strategy and avoidance strategy but is insignificant. On the other hand, compromise strategy has a positive correlation with avoidance strategy and is significant at 1%. The strongest positive correlation was the relationship between collaboration strategy and organisational performance ( $r = 0.249$ ,  $p < 0.017$ ) while the lowest correlation was between compromise strategy and organisational performance. This implies that an increase in the collaboration and avoidance strategies with an exception of compromise strategy will lead to an improvement in organisational performance.

### 4.3.3 Normality Test

This study employed histogram for normality test.

Fig 4.1 Histogram



Source: Field work, 2015

Figure 4.1 shows that the normality assumption is achieved since all the bars of the histogram are moving towards the center of the normal curve.

#### 4.3.4 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity often helps in measuring the variance of regression coefficient.

**Table 4.7: Tolerance and VIF Values for Independent Variables**

Independent variables	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(constant)		
Collaboration strategy	0.987	1.013
Compromise strategy	0.750	1.333
Avoidance strategy	0.752	1.329

**Source: Field Work, 2015.**

Table 4.7 shows the values of tolerance which are 0.987, 0.750 and 0.752 for the independent variables used in the study (collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy). This result indicates absence of multicollinearity. The VIF values for the independent variables are 1.1013, 1.333 and 1.329. This result also indicates the absence of multicollinearity. This is because the tolerance and VIF values are within acceptable region of not less than 0.1 and not more than ten(10).

#### 4.4 Test of Hypotheses

Multiple regressions were conducted to examine the effect of conflict management (collaboration, avoidance and avoidance strategies) on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

**Table 4.8: Multiple Regression Result (Model Summary) between** conflict management (collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies) and the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
1	.498	.248	.222	.64327	9.550	.000	1.610

**Source: Field work, 2015.**

Table 4.8 shows that the coefficient of determination, R<sup>2</sup> is 24.8% and the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is 22.2%. This indicates that about 24.8% of the total variation in the dependent variable (organizational performance) is jointly explained by variation in the independent variables (collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies). Collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy are jointly explained by 24.8% of the variance in the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. The F-statistics which measures the adequacy and fitness of the model used in the study has a value of 9.550 which is significant 0.000, 1% level of significance. This

implies that the model is well fitted. The Durbin Watson statistics of 1.610 indicates the absence of harmful auto correlation in the multiple regression model.

**Table 4.9: Multiple Regression Result (coefficient) between conflict management (collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies) and the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.**

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.466	.733		3.364	.001
1 COS	.407	.147	.259	2.769	.007
CMS	-.611	.147	-.446	-4.152	.000
AVS	.456	.119	.411	3.831	.000

Dependent variable: organisational Performance

Source: Field work, 2015.

**Hypothesis 1**

H<sub>01</sub>: Collaboration strategy has no significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

Table 4.9 shows that multiple regression analysis between collaboration strategy and the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria is positively significant (beta=0.407, p=0.007 at 1% level) which shows that the p value is less than the level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) is rejected. This implies that the higher the adoption of collaboration strategy by management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited Zaria, the higher the organizational performance.

## **Hypothesis 2**

H<sub>02</sub>: Compromise strategy has no significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

Table 4.9 shows that regression analysis between compromise strategy and performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria is negatively significant (beta= -0.611, p=0.000 at 1% level) which shows that the p value is less than the level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>) is rejected. This implies that an increase in the adoption of compromise strategy will lead to a decrease in the performance of the organization.

## **Hypothesis 3**

H<sub>03</sub>: Avoidance strategy has no significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

Table 4.9 shows that regression analysis between avoidance strategy and the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria is positively significant (beta=0.456, p=0.00 at 1% level) which shows that the p value is less than the level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>) is rejected. This implies that the higher the adoption of avoidance strategy by the management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, the higher the organizational performance.

## **4.5 Findings and Discussion**

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of conflict management (collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies) on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

The results indicate that collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies jointly explained 24.8% of the variance of organisational performance. Thus, the remaining percentage account for other variables that are not covered by the study. Two predictor variables; collaboration strategy and avoidance strategy were found to be positively statistically related with organisational performance while compromise strategy was found to be negatively related with organisational performance.

The finding showed that collaboration strategy has significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. This implies that both management and employees' effort to find out mutually acceptable solutions to problems or trying as much as possible to discuss all concerns openly especially during meetings will improve the performance of the organisation. Thus, the higher the adoption of collaboration strategy by management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, the higher the organizational performance. This result is in line with the work of Hotepoet *al.* (2010), Mugal and Khan (2013) which shows that there is a significant relationship between collaboration strategy and organisational performance.

The finding indicates that compromise strategy has negatively significant effect on organisational performance. This implies that both management and employees' adoption of a mid-way approach in deriving solutions to problems by both parties agreeing on the grounds that they both sacrifice a little, that is, give up some of their demands will not improve the performance of the organisation. This is because the adoption of compromise strategy in managing conflict will lead to a decrease in the performance of the organisation. Thus, the more Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria adopts compromise strategy the less the performance of the organisation. This could be as a result of the long run effect. The more employees give up their demands the less motivated they become. As such their efforts towards their job begin to reduce

leading to decrease in the performance of the organisation. This result contradicts the findings of Ongori (2009),Mugal and Khan (2013) and Longe (2015), which state that compromise has a positive significant link with organisational performance.

The finding also showed that avoidance strategy has significant effect on organisational performance. This implies that both management and employees attempt to keep working environment pleasant rather than creating tension and also their ability to refrain from critical issues that will cause division during meetings will improve the performance of the organisation. Thus, the higher the adoption of avoidance strategy by the management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited Zaria, the higher the organisational performance. This finding is consistent with the work of Hotepoet *al.* (2010) which revealed that avoidance strategy is mostly used by managers in the organization and contrary to the work of Ongori (2009), and Longe (2015), which states that avoidance strategy has no significant impact on organisational performance.

However, there is no one best strategy in managing conflict as the management of conflict depends on the behavioural intentions of the parties to conflict, the time frame and the situation the organisation may find itself. As long as the morale of employees are low, managing conflict effectively via these strategies will be a bone of contention.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The effective management of conflict through its strategies is required to bring about enormous benefits to employees and organisations as a whole. As a result, knowing the best conflict management strategy(s) to adopt is an important factor that organisations have to take into consideration in order to improve their performance level. The study investigates the effect of conflict management (collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies) on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

The findings of the study showed that collaboration strategy has significant effect on the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria. Thus, the higher the adoption of collaboration strategy by management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, the higher the organizational performance. Compromise strategy has negatively significant effect on organisational performance which implies that the adoption of compromise strategy in managing conflict will lead to a decrease in the performance of the organisation. Thus, the more Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria adopts compromise strategy the less the performance of the organisation. Also, avoidance strategy has significant effect on organisational performance which signifies that the higher the adoption of avoidance strategy by the management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited Zaria, the higher the organisational performance. Thus, collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies can be suitable for conflict management depending on parties to conflict, the time frame and the situation the organisation finds itself.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Based on the research hypotheses and the research objectives the conclusion was drawn that collaboration strategy in terms of finding out mutually acceptable solutions to problems or trying as much as possible to discuss all concerns openly especially during meetings will improve the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria.

For the purpose of improving the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, both management and employees' have shown that the adoption of a mid-way approach in deriving solutions to problems by both parties agreeing on the grounds that they both sacrifice a little, that is, give up some of their demands have not improved the performance of the organisation. Also, the ability of management and employees to avoid issues that will cause division when the need arises have improved the performance of the organisation.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

In line with the above conclusion, the study recommends that the Management of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria should create an enabling environment where employees can openly communicate and discuss issues affecting them. In doing so, management should try as much as possible to find out mutually acceptable solutions to problems and implement any joint decision taken by putting the organisational goals as well as employees' interest into consideration.

Also, given the significant level of avoidance strategy in improving the performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria, management and employees should try as much as possible to avoid any critical issues that will cause division in the organisation. Such issues should be left alone to be

discussed in the open during meetings. By so doing, it will help to remove tension in the working environment, thereby keeping it peaceful.

In a bid to improve the performance of the organisation, management should not emphasise the adoption of compromise strategy on the management of critical issues such as employees welfare, this is because of the negative effect it has on the organisation's performance.

### **5.8 Suggestion for Future Study**

Based on the limitation of the study, this research has suggested the need for further study. It is recommended that a comprehensive study with more sample size should be conducted in order to make concrete conclusions on the management of conflict.

This study concentrates on conflict management strategies (collaboration, compromise and avoidance strategies) that provide satisfactory balance to parties involved in conflict. Further studies should concentrate on a comparative study between conflict management strategies that provides satisfactory balance and those that do not provide satisfactory balance (accommodation and domination strategies) to parties involved in conflict.

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## **Appendix A**

Department of Business Administration,  
Faculty of Administration,  
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.  
Kaduna State.

28<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.

The Management,  
Sunseed Nigeria Limited,  
Zaria.

Dear Sir,

### **LETTER OF CONSENT**

I am a postgraduate student of the above named institution and department. I am currently working on my research project titled “Conflict Management and the Performance of Sunseed Nigeria Limited, Zaria”.

This work is in partial fulfillment of requirement for the award of M.Sc. in Business Administration.

Kindly help by completing this questionnaire as accurately as possible. Please note that your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and would be used purely for academic purposes. We highly appreciate your co-operation.

Thank you in anticipation for your response.

Yours faithfully

Amusan Oluwakemi  
Research Student

## Appendix B

### General guidelines for the survey

1. In the questions, you are required to tick [ ] your answers in the space provided.
2. We would appreciate your honest and complete response to help us understand your views.

**We would like to re-assure you that the information you give will be treated confidentially.**

**SA = strongly agree      A = agree      UD= undecided**

**D = disagree      SD= strongly disagree**

#### A. Collaboration strategy

S/N	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	I seek co-workers opinion to discover the solution of problems.					
2	I equally weigh my views as well as co-workers' views to arrive at solution.					
3	I explore co-workers' differences to find out the mutual solution to the problems.					
4	I appreciate factual information from the co-workers during meetings.					
5	I stand for my own and other's goals and interests.					
6	I merge other's idea to come up with joint decision.					
7	I like to discuss all concerns openly.					
8	I try to find out mutually acceptable solution to problems.					

#### Compromise strategy

S/N	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	I give up my desires in exchange for others to reach an agreement					
2	I insist we both sacrifice a little.					
3	I concentrate on conciliation to minimize co-workers differences.					

4	I adopt half-way approach to overcome dead lock.					
5	I compromise to find out solution to difficult problems.					
6	I prefer negotiation to reach an agreement.					
7	I try to adopt a mid-way in the solution to problems.					
8	I forfeit my own needs to get out of complex situations.					

**C Avoidance strategy**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	I keep working environment pleasant rather than creating tension.					
2	Disagreed issues are avoided to discuss in open meetings.					
3	I try to refrain from critical issues that will cause division during meetings.					
4	I try to avoid open discussion about mutual differences.					
5	I keep my opinion to myself rather than imposing it to my colleagues.					
6	I try to refrain from odd feelings during meetings.					
7	I try to make differences look less severe.					

**D Organisational performance**

s/n	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	There have been an improvement in the production volume.					
2.	There is an increase in the sales level.					
3.	There is an increase in the export volume					
4.	There is an improvement in profit					
5.	There is increase in employee morale.					
6.	There is an increase in customer satisfaction					
7.	There is an increase in the business performance level of the organisation compared with the competitors.					

## Appendix C

### Reliability

#### Scale: collaboration strategy

##### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	35	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
Total		35	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

##### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.753	8

#### Scale: compromise strategy

##### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	35	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
Total		35	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

##### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.614	8

**Scale: Avoidance strategy**

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	35	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	35	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.700	7

**Scale: organisational performance**

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	35	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	35	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.695	7

## Appendix D

### Descriptives: COLLABORATION STRATEGY

#### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I seek co-workers opinion to discover solution to problems	91	1.00	5.00	4.2198	.87942
I equally weigh my views as well as co-workers' views to arrive at solution	91	1.00	5.00	3.8462	.86824
I explore co-worker's differences to find out the mutual solution to problems	91	1.00	5.00	4.0769	1.04595
I appreciate factual information from the co-workers during meetings	91	1.00	5.00	4.2967	.97176
I stand for my own and other's goals and interests	91	1.00	5.00	3.8022	1.01346
I merge other's idea to come up with joint decision	91	1.00	5.00	4.2747	.93174
I like to discuss all concerns openly	91	1.00	5.00	3.5604	1.11762
I try to find out mutually acceptable solution to problems	91	1.00	5.00	4.2198	.96381
Valid N (listwise)	91				

**Descriptives: COMPROMISE STRATEGY**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I give up my desires in exchange for others to reach an agreement	91	1.00	5.00	3.9341	1.08323
I insist we both sacrifice a little	91	1.00	5.00	3.6923	.99658
I concentrate on conciliation to minimise co-workers' differences	91	1.00	5.00	4.0220	1.04326
I adopt half-way approach to overcome dead lock	91	1.00	5.00	3.4176	1.10620
I compromise to find out solution to difficult problems	91	1.00	5.00	3.7692	1.13605
I prefer negotiation to reach an agreement	91	1.00	5.00	4.2857	.84703
I try to adopt a mid-way approach in the solution to problems	91	1.00	5.00	3.4396	1.33507
I forfeit my own needs to get out of complex situations	91	1.00	5.00	3.2418	1.34446
Valid N (listwise)	91				

**Descriptives: AVOIDANCE STRATEGY**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I keep working environment pleasant rather than creating tension	91	1.00	5.00	4.2308	1.03362
Disagreed issues are avoided to discuss in open meetings	91	1.00	5.00	3.2637	1.08357
I try to refrain from critical issues that will cause division during meetings	91	2.00	5.00	4.1868	.95350
I try to avoid open discussion about mutual differences	91	1.00	5.00	3.6484	1.12915
I keep my opinion to myself rather than imposing it on my colleagues	91	1.00	5.00	2.6703	1.22070
I try to refrain from odd feelings during meetings	91	1.00	5.00	3.0330	1.23334
I try to make differences look less severe	91	1.00	5.00	3.4066	1.09522
Valid N (listwise)	91				

**Descriptives: ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
There has been an improvement in the production volume	91	1.00	5.00	4.2088	.96051
There is an increase in the sales level	91	2.00	5.00	3.7253	1.20246
There is an increase in the export volume	91	1.00	5.00	2.7473	1.17939
There is an improvement in profit	91	1.00	5.00	3.7912	1.00572
There is an increase in employee morale	91	1.00	5.00	2.5714	1.17514
There is an increase in customer satisfaction	91	1.00	5.00	3.2857	1.18590
There is an increase in the business performance level of the organisation compared with the competitors	91	1.00	5.00	3.6374	1.13055
Valid N (listwise)	91				

## Appendix E

### Correlation Output

		Correlations			
		COS	CMS	AVS	OP
COS	Pearson	1	.106	.091	.249*
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.317	.391	.017
	N	91	91	91	91
CMS	Pearson	.106	1	.496**	-.214*
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.317	.000	.041	
	N	91	91	91	91
AVS	Pearson	.091	.496**	1	.213*
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.391	.000	.043	
	N	91	91	91	91
OP	Pearson	.249*	-.214*	.213*	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.041	.043	
	N	91	91	91	91

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix F

### Regression Output

#### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.498 <sup>a</sup>	.248	.222	.64327	1.610

a. Predictors: (Constant), AVS, COS, CMS

b. Dependent Variable: OP

#### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.855	3	3.952	9.550	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	36.000	87	.414		
	Total	47.855	90			

a. Dependent Variable: OP

b. Predictors: (Constant), AVS, COS, CMS

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.466	.733		3.364	.001
	COS	.407	.147	.259	2.769	.007
	CMS	-.611	.147	-.446	-4.152	.000
	AVS	.456	.119	.411	3.831	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OP

**Residuals Statistics<sup>a</sup>**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.6299	4.1565	3.4239	.36294	91
Residual	-1.81467	1.29186	.00000	.63246	91
Std. Predicted Value	-2.188	2.019	.000	1.000	91
Std. Residual	-2.821	2.008	.000	.983	91

a. Dependent Variable: OP

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	2.466	.733		3.364	.001		
	COS	.407	.147	.259	2.769	.007	.987	1.013
	CMS	-.611	.147	-.446	-4.152	.000	.750	1.333
	AVS	.456	.119	.411	3.831	.000	.752	1.329

a. Dependent Variable: OP

**Collinearity Diagnostics<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	COS	CMS	AVS
1	1	3.958	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.024	12.759	.04	.16	.01	.58
	3	.012	18.221	.00	.14	.84	.41
	4	.006	26.527	.96	.69	.15	.00

a. Dependent Variable: OP

