Industrial Relations Practices in Rivers State - The Views of Three Host Communities

John Mark
Department of Management,
Faculty of Management Sciences, Rivers State University

Abstract

Industrial relations practices require the demand on the part of the publicist to foresee emerging conflict, communicate same and represent existing organization's interest and as well analyze human industrial issues as required by common sense and ethics. Perpetual outbreak of conflicts, whether between the management and her internal publics or striving communities, remains that the industrial relation officer is incompetent. The paper then intends to investigate into the efficiency role of industrial practice from three selected companies in Rivers State. Three communities were employed to this effect, thus Aluu, Choba and Alakahia. Result shown through the use of Likert's scaling method, revealed that the issue of dishonesty; follow-up and availability of industrial relation officers accounts for the continual outbreak of conflict. It then remains, the paper concludes, that conflicting communities can be rid of crisis if the companies so wish, thus by strategically positioning their industrial relations offers.

Keywords: Industrial relations practice; host communities

Corresponding Author: John Mark

Background to the Study

Industrial relations practice then demands the functions of a trained publicist whose work ranges from that of problem identification, feedback between an existing organization and the host community, open communication on human interest issues; representations of the organization in litigation matters and all such issues that will require collective bargaining. It then flows that the industrial or community peace is solely the role of the industrial manager. As the name implies, he is required to mediate between the management and the employees. In Nicole (2018) this probably is why some scholars refer to it as employee-relations. For one, issues with industrial relations have the tendency to affect an entire economy. What then remains is that an effective organization practice demands the impact of a well-trained publicity (Adeyeye, 2001, 1995; Fajana, 2000).

Going by this then, the continual conflicts between companies and their host communities in Rivers State, calls for the paper. For one again, if it is in the duty of the industrial relation manager to foresee conflicts and check them, it probably means that most of the companies with conflict tone are not really practicing. The paper researched on three communities in view to seeing if the global roles of the individual relations managers are being felt by these communities. Conflict rate in most communities will be greatly checked if indeed the companies are making use of the services of industrial relations managers. For sure, many of these companies have industrial relations unit, but not according to practice. As argued by Nicole (2018) organizations are productive in their host communities when the services of good industrial relations are instantly improved in cases where practitioners perform below global expertise. As well, employees' non-chalance to work can greatly reduce when good work relations exist. Employees would be encouraged as well the external publics of the company. The paper then avers that the continual conflict between companies and their host communities, and sometimes between the internal publics and the management in the cause of the industrial relations manager. The argument that the local chiefs or the youths of the communities or the employees are ingrate and could be conflict involving, is not always the case (Adeyeye, 1995; Fashoyin, 1980).

In a work published by Westfordadmin (2016), besides other roles of the industrial relations managers, there is most importantly the role of labour and customer relation management. The latter requires the place of honesty in transactions; availability of the manager to the issues involved and above all, the issue of follow-up. The absence of these, to a large degree, can engender conflicts. The paper then intends to inquire into the following objectives.

1. Examine the most common problems associated with industrial relations practice in three communities in Rivers State.
2. To see if these problems have any correlation with the continual outbreak between companies and the host communities.
3. To determine if the continual conflicts in the communities is the function of the local chiefs, the youths or the industrial relations managers of the existing companies

Research Questions

The following research questions X-ray the tone of the paper.

1. What are the most common problems associated with the practice of industrial relations in these communities?
2. To what degree do these problems have any correlation with the continual conflicts in the communities selected?
3. Is the continual conflict between existing companies and their host communities the function of the youth, the local chiefs or the industrial relations manager?

Statement of Problem

A number of factors account for the continual conflicts between companies and their host communities. Most often, hand-pointing and gain-sayings are attributed to the function of the youths of the communities and sometimes too, to the local chiefs. This divergence in opinions has continually defiled a united approach to conflicts involving companies and their host communities. The paper then argues that the companies themselves: (their industrial units) are the major cause of conflicts in some host communities. What then is involved, the paper argues is that companies begin to strengthen their industrial relations units as this will go a long way in checking conflicts between them and their work environment.

Conceptual Issues of Industrial Relations Practice

Positions are that industrial relations practice does not exceed that of conflict management; labour and customer relations; analyses of emerging conflicts in host communities; communication, and all such that involve peace-keeping (Nicole, 2018; Leo, 2018). By these roles then, companies can probably keep themselves safe out of trouble from both their external and internal publics. But even at that, conflicts have continually engulfed most industrial communities. This probably stems from the nonchalance of companies: specifically, their industrial relations unit. For one, in Sharma (2000) industrial relations came as a result of the nature of human society and the businesses around. Etimologically, it is the involvement of the term industry and the relations existing between workmen and the management. Knowing the nature of humans, there can be no productivity of labour without adequate compensations. Industrial relations then wide across work related issues, such as collective bargaining; power dominance; commitment of employees; conflict resolutions; pluralism and bilaterialism of labour structure etc. (Kumar, 1961). What then is left over the years is that the human society is industrially inclined and the consequence is the tendency for humans to conflict themselves. The emergence of industrial relations then should be able to check this (Allan, 1970; & Fashoyin, 1992).

It then follows that conflicts have continually defiled occupational knowledge due to nonchalance of industrial practitioners. This is mostly so in third world states where office span does not exceed the role of the general managers. In some companies too, the human resource manager acts as the industrial relations officers but without the basic information or knowledge of the office he occupies. In Nicole (2018), human resource unit is distinctive from the work of the industrial relations officer. Essentially, it does not exceed that of

communication between the management and the external and inter publics. The life of communication according to (Fajana, 2015) is an applied one; which further helps industrial relations manager resolve impending conflict

In labour relations commissions' code, it is stated that the industrial relations officer primarily known as employee relations representative, is saddled with the following responsibilities.
1. Represent members effectively on relations to matters arising within the industry or establishment.
2. Participate in negotiations as established by respective customs
3. Acts in accordance with existing laws and regulations of the union and the industrial relations practice.
4. Having regards for the good and operation of the industry.
5. Maintaining and keeping to job standards; company-rules; disciplinary conditions etc. Source: Section 42 of the Industrial Relations Act (1990).

The above duties then underscore, content wise, the role of the industrial relation manager as the gate keeper of the relations between the establishment and her workmen or the external publics. It then follows that the continuous conflicts in most communities in Rivers State, especially between the communities and companies is due to incompetence on the company's industrial relations unit. It is no doubt true that the youth and the local chiefs, to some degree, contribute to ridden conflicts, but this is not exceedingly beyond the expertise of the industrial relations officer.

Theoretical Framework
Attachment Theory
One major theory that underscores the natural need of conflict is that of attachment theory advanced by Thomas N. Bradbury and Benjamin Kamey (1991). Hence when people conflict they are unconsciously asking for attention, especially where their needs are in the hands of an attachment figure. Attachment theory then argues that humans have attachment behavior towards a system which helps them check how close or distant they can be with another. Thus when they perceive the attachment figure to be responsible, they become relaxed. They become vindictive and aggitational when they feel that the attachment figure is not present and responsive to their needs.

It then follows that the continual crisis in some communities stems from the perception the communities have about the industry relations unit of the companies as being nonresponsive to their needs. Thus then industrial relations experts or publicists must know that people are emotionally attached to their communities. Now he companies not being responsive to their needs or this consciousness engenders conflict

Methodology
Three communities in Obio/Akpor Local Government were adopted for the research. Out of the three communities, fifty youths each, were assessed with a questionnaire. The intention of the researcher in using only the youths was because they are the ones who mainly engage

in conflict with the working companies. Furthermore, the use of Likert's scaling method was used in the analysis of result.

Presentation of Data Analysis

Result of the research then were generated through a questionnaire. Thus: what instrument was used to generate data for the analysis below?

Table 1: RQ1 - What are the problems associated with the practice of industrial relations in your communities

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL	La
The problem in the industrial relations in your community range from that of your community range from that of dishonesty, non-availability of the industrial relations manager, a bsence of follow-up	5 90 450	4 30 120	3 0	2 17 34	1 13 13	15 150 607	4.0

The result from the above table holds through to the objective of the research, which was to find out the major problems associated with the practice of industrial relations in three communities in Rivers State, thus Chiba, Aluu and Alakahia. Hence, the result 4.0

Table 2: RQ2 - Do these Problems contribute to the conflicts in the communities

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL	La
Conflicts continue in the communities because of these problems	5 135 675	4 10 40	3 1 3	2 1 2	1 3 3	15 150 732	3.0 4.9

As well the result in the above table holds through to the fact that the issue of dishonesty lacks of availability of attachment figure (industrial relations manager) to the communities and the issue of follow-up, have continually contributed to the outbreak of conflicts between the companies and host communities.

Table 3: RQ3 - Are the youths and the major cause of outbreak of conflicts in the communities?

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL	La
The industrial relations managers sent to the communities are sometimes the major cause of conflicts in the communities and not necessarily the youths.	5 122 610	4 16 64	3 2 6	2 3 6	1 7 7	15 150 693	3 4.6

Conclusion

Concluding from the results above, it may well be said that conflicts of the communities surveyed often times erupt due to natural allianation. Here as averred by Bransbury in his attachment theory that human is emotionally attached to their environment. Not paying attention to this sort of natural inheritance can engender conflicts, publicists then and public relations officials must work with this consciousness, that conflicts can be checked at least to a large degree, when approached with the consciousness of people's attachment to their environment. The paper then recommends that there must be negotiations that respect thus sort of moral drive for peaceful coexistence between the companies and their host communities. Two following attachment needs, companies should have allowed communities to front one of their own as a sign of involvement. Three companies should build statues of the chiefs in their entrance as a sign of felicitation and ancient ways of solidarity with the land.

Reference

Adeyeye, J. O. (1995). Conflict and conflict resolution in work organization. *Africa Journal of Labour Studies, 3*(1), 25-34.

Adeyeye, J. O. (2001). Industrial relations. Economic development and democracy. *Nigerian Journal of industrial Education and Labour Relations*, 3(1), 31-43.

Bradbury, T. N., & Benjamin, R. K. (2002). Intimate relationship www.wwnorton.com

Cede of practice (1993). Labour relations commission and industrial relations h.ct of 1990 on employee representatives.

Fajana, S. (1995). *Industrial relations in Nigeria: Theory and practice*. Lagos: Labotin

Fajana, S. (2000). *Industrial relations in Nigeria: Theory and features*. Lagos Longman group Ltd.

Fashoyin, T. (1980). *Industrial relations in Nigeria*. Longman Group Ltd.

Fashoyin, T. (1992). *Industrial relations in Nigeria: Development and practice*. Lagos: Longman, Nigeria.

Four pillars of employee-relations, small business.chron.com

Imafidon, J. (1996). *Industrial relations*.

Leo, I. (2018). What is industrial relations? Small business. Chron.com

Management study Ho: Causes of industrial disputes. Small business.chron.com

Nicole, N. (2018). Management employees work schedule small business.chron.com

What is employee relations? Smallbusiness.Chron.com