

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN SELECTED SERVICE ORGANISATIONS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between conflict management practices and service delivery in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. The growing need for organisations to maintain harmonious workplace relationships while delivering high-quality and responsive services has increased the importance of effective conflict management practices. Conflict management practices were examined using negotiation and grievance handling, while service delivery was measured using service quality and service responsiveness. The study was anchored on the Dual Concern Theory and adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 448 management and non-management employees drawn from 10 purposively selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria, with a sample size of 205 determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. A total of 205 copies of the questionnaire were distributed; 196 (95.61%) were successfully retrieved, 9 (4.39%) were not returned, none (0.00%) was invalid, and 196 (95.61%) valid copies were used for the analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that negotiation and grievance handling each had strong positive and statistically significant relationships with service quality and service responsiveness. The study concludes that effective conflict management practices significantly enhance service delivery by improving service quality and responsiveness. It recommends that service organisations strengthen negotiation processes, establish effective grievance handling mechanisms, promote open communication, and encourage employee participation to sustain excellent service delivery and organisational effectiveness.

Keywords: Conflict Management Practices, Negotiation, Grievance Handling, Service Quality, Service Responsiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The manufacturing sector operates in an increasingly competitive environment characterized by technological advancements, globalization, and changing labour market conditions. These developments have heightened the need for stable labour-management relationships that foster cooperation and organisational sustainability. Collective bargaining remains a fundamental mechanism for promoting workplace harmony by facilitating dialogue, protecting employees' interests, and ensuring mutually beneficial employment conditions (Müller et al., 2018). Effective collective bargaining enables organisations to resolve workplace issues proactively, thereby minimizing conflicts that can disrupt productivity and organisational performance.

Collective bargaining is the formal process through which employers and employees, usually represented by labour unions, negotiate employment terms, working conditions, wages, and dispute settlement procedures. It also promotes industrial democracy, organisational justice, and mutual trust between employers and employees (Müller et al., 2018). A key dimension of collective bargaining is negotiation effectiveness, which reflects the ability of both parties to engage in constructive, transparent, and mutually beneficial negotiations. Effective negotiation encourages collaboration and reduces misunderstandings that may lead to workplace disputes (Hamberger,

2018). Another important dimension is grievance resolution, which refers to the procedures established for addressing employee complaints fairly and promptly. Effective grievance resolution strengthens employees' confidence in organisational justice and prevents minor disagreements from escalating into serious workplace conflicts (Hamberger, 2018).

The effectiveness of collective bargaining is reflected in its ability to achieve workplace conflict reduction. Workplace conflict, though inevitable, can negatively affect employee morale, productivity, and organisational efficiency if not properly managed (Zhang et al., 2018). One important measure is interpersonal conflict reduction, which refers to minimizing disagreements and tensions among employees and between employees and supervisors through constructive communication and collaborative problem-solving (Zhang et al., 2018). Another measure is industrial dispute reduction, which involves reducing strikes, lockouts, work stoppages, and other forms of labour unrest through structured negotiations, effective communication, and adherence to collective agreements (Müller et al., 2018).

Despite the importance of collective bargaining, many manufacturing firms in Nigeria continue to experience labour-management disagreements arising from wage disputes, poor working conditions, ineffective grievance procedures, and delayed implementation of negotiated agreements. These challenges often result in interpersonal conflicts and industrial disputes that undermine organisational performance. Although previous studies have examined industrial relations and workplace conflict, limited empirical evidence exists on how negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution influence interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. This gap underscores the need for the present study.

Statement of the Problem

Service organisations depend largely on the quality and responsiveness of their employees to satisfy customers and remain competitive. However, workplace conflict has become a persistent challenge in many organisations, often resulting from communication breakdowns, interpersonal differences, role ambiguity, and perceived organisational injustice. When conflicts are not effectively managed through appropriate practices such as negotiation and grievance handling, they can weaken employee cooperation, reduce morale, delay service processes, and ultimately impair service quality and service responsiveness (Wang et al., 2024; Auh et al., 2024).

Negotiation provides employees and management with opportunities to resolve disagreements collaboratively before they escalate into serious disputes, while effective grievance handling ensures that employee complaints are addressed fairly and promptly. Organisations that fail to institutionalize these practices are more likely to experience unresolved conflicts, poor communication, diminished trust, and reduced employee commitment, all of which adversely affect service delivery (Nytse & Zamani, 2024; Mogotloane & Louw, 2024). Consequently, customers may experience delayed responses, inconsistent service quality, and dissatisfaction, thereby weakening organisational competitiveness and long-term sustainability (Heintzman & Marson, 2024).

In Rivers State, Nigeria, service organisations operate in an increasingly dynamic business environment characterized by heightened customer expectations, technological changes, workforce diversity, and intense competition. Despite the adoption of various conflict management mechanisms, complaints relating to delays in service, inconsistent service quality, slow responsiveness, and employee dissatisfaction remain evident across many service organisations. These concerns suggest that existing conflict management practices may not be sufficiently effective in promoting superior service delivery.

Although previous studies have examined conflict management in relation to employee performance, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and organisational productivity, relatively few have investigated how negotiation and grievance handling influence service quality and service responsiveness, particularly within selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. This empirical gap limits understanding of how specific conflict management practices contribute to improved service delivery in the service sector. It is against this background that this study investigates the relationship between conflict management practices and service delivery in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between conflict management practices and service delivery in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the relationship between negotiation and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the relationship between negotiation and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the relationship between grievance handling and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- iv. Determine the relationship between grievance handling and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the relationship between negotiation and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between negotiation and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between grievance handling and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- iv. What is the relationship between grievance handling and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- H01: There is no significant relationship between negotiation and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between negotiation and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H03: There is no significant relationship between grievance handling and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H04: There is no significant relationship between grievance handling and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

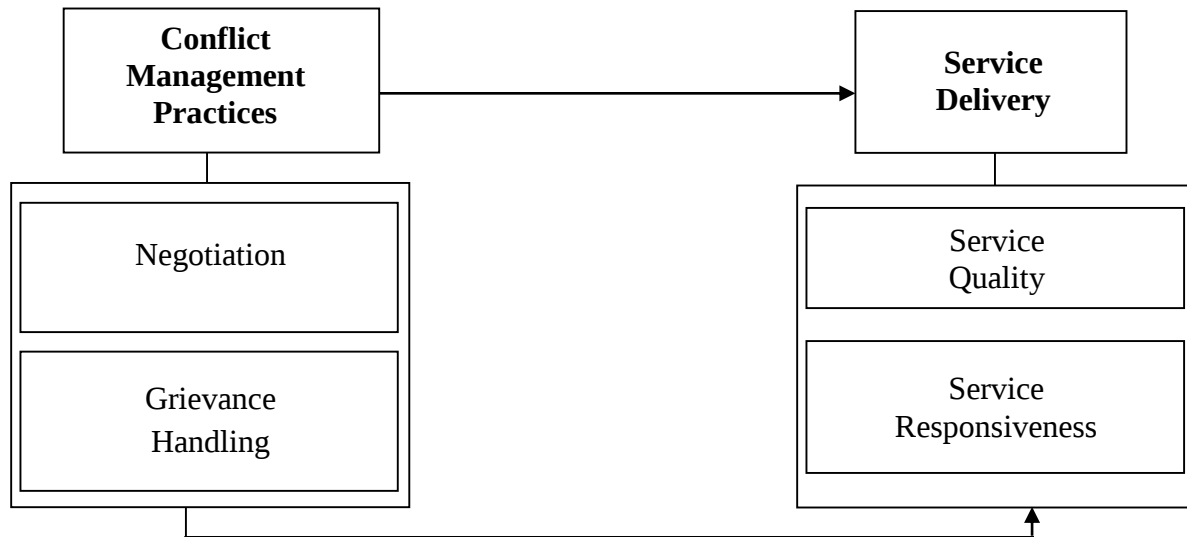


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Conflict Management Practices and Service Delivery in Selected Service Organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria

Source: The dimensions of Conflict Management Practices (Negotiation and Grievance Handling) were adapted from International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2024) and supported by Rahim (2017) and De Dreu and Gelfand (2008). The measures of Service Delivery (Service Quality and Service Responsiveness) were adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) and supported by Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2018) and Wirtz and Lovelock (2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Conflict Management Practices

Conflict management practices refer to the strategies and procedures organisations employ to prevent, minimize, and resolve workplace disagreements while maintaining positive working relationships and organisational effectiveness. Rather than eliminating conflict completely, effective conflict management seeks to transform conflict into constructive outcomes that enhance collaboration, trust, and employee performance. Contemporary organisations increasingly view conflict management as a strategic human resource function because effective conflict resolution contributes to employee well-being, operational efficiency, and organisational sustainability (Rahim, 2017; Wang et al., 2024).

Effective conflict management encourages open communication, fairness, mutual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving among organisational members. Organisations that institutionalize appropriate conflict management practices experience improved employee commitment, reduced interpersonal tension, and better organisational outcomes, particularly in service organisations where employee interactions directly influence customer experiences (Auh et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024).

Negotiation

Negotiation is a collaborative conflict management process through which parties communicate, exchange information, and reach mutually acceptable agreements. It emphasizes dialogue, compromise, and consensus-building, enabling conflicting parties to resolve disagreements before they escalate into more serious disputes. Negotiation is regarded as one of the most effective conflict

management approaches because it promotes trust, cooperation, and long-term working relationships (Rahim, 2017).

In service organisations, negotiation improves communication between employees and management, minimizes workplace tension, and facilitates teamwork. Effective negotiation enables organisations to maintain harmonious employee relations, which ultimately enhances customer service outcomes. Studies have shown that constructive negotiation and conflict resolution improve customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, and organisational performance (Auh et al., 2024; Ndubisi et al., 2015).

Grievance Handling

Grievance handling refers to the formal procedures established by organisations to receive, investigate, and resolve employee complaints fairly, promptly, and transparently. An effective grievance handling system promotes organisational justice by ensuring employees have legitimate avenues for expressing dissatisfaction without fear of victimization. Fair grievance management strengthens employee trust, reduces workplace tension, and prevents conflicts from escalating into industrial disputes (Nytse & Zamani, 2024).

Organisations with effective grievance handling systems generally experience improved employee morale, stronger organisational commitment, and enhanced service performance because employees perceive that management values fairness and accountability. Research also indicates that complaint and grievance handling significantly improve organisational relationships, customer satisfaction, and service recovery effectiveness (Mogotloane & Louw, 2024; Ateke et al., 2019).

Service Delivery

Service delivery refers to an organisation's ability to provide services efficiently, effectively, and consistently in ways that satisfy customer expectations. It encompasses the processes through which services are produced and delivered while ensuring customer satisfaction, timeliness, reliability, and value creation. In today's competitive business environment, service delivery has become a major determinant of organisational competitiveness because customers increasingly evaluate organisations based on their service experiences rather than products alone (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2022).

Employee behaviour significantly influences service delivery. Consequently, organisations that effectively manage workplace conflict create supportive work environments that encourage employee cooperation, commitment, and customer-oriented behaviour, thereby improving overall service performance (Heintzman & Marson, 2024).

Service Quality

Service quality refers to customers' overall evaluation of the excellence of services received compared with their expectations. It reflects the extent to which services are reliable, accurate, consistent, professional, and capable of satisfying customer needs. Although the SERVQUAL model was originally developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), it continues to underpin contemporary service quality research and has been refined by recent service marketing scholars (Zeithaml et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2022).

High service quality depends largely on employees' commitment, communication, and collaboration. Organisations that manage workplace conflicts effectively often achieve superior service quality because employees work within harmonious environments that promote productivity and customer satisfaction. Recent studies similarly emphasize that responsiveness and reliability remain essential

dimensions of service quality in both traditional and electronic service environments (Ighomereho et al., 2022).

Service Responsiveness

Service responsiveness refers to the willingness and ability of employees to provide prompt assistance, respond quickly to customer requests, and resolve service-related issues efficiently. Responsiveness is a critical component of service delivery because customers increasingly expect timely, accurate, and personalized services. Organisations that maintain effective internal communication and conflict management systems enable employees to respond more efficiently to customer needs and changing market demands (Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Workplace conflicts can significantly reduce responsiveness by delaying decision-making, disrupting communication, and weakening employee cooperation. Conversely, effective negotiation and grievance handling create supportive work environments where employees communicate openly, coordinate effectively, and respond promptly to customer expectations. Recent literature continues to identify responsiveness as a critical determinant of organisational service performance and customer satisfaction (Heintzman & Marson, 2024; Ighomereho et al., 2022).

Conflict Management Practices and Service Delivery

Conflict management practices are essential for improving service delivery because they promote harmonious workplace relationships, effective communication, and employee cooperation. In service organisations, where employees interact directly with customers, effective conflict management enhances both service quality and service responsiveness by creating a supportive work environment (Rahim, 2017; Wang et al., 2024).

Negotiation enables employees and management to resolve disagreements through dialogue and mutual understanding, reducing workplace tensions and improving collaboration. Effective negotiation has been associated with improved employee engagement, service performance, and customer satisfaction (Auh et al., 2024; DeChurch et al., 2017). Similarly, grievance handling ensures that employee complaints are addressed fairly and promptly, strengthening organisational justice, employee commitment, and service effectiveness. Poor grievance management, however, can result in dissatisfaction, low morale, and poor service outcomes (Nytse & Zamani, 2024; Mogotloane & Louw, 2024).

Service management literature also suggests that organisations with effective employee relations are more likely to deliver reliable, high-quality, and responsive services because employees communicate better, coordinate tasks efficiently, and respond promptly to customer needs (Zeithaml et al., 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2022). Supporting this view, Auh et al. (2024) found that constructive conflict resolution improves service performance, while Wang et al. (2024) concluded that effective conflict management enhances employee collaboration and overall service outcomes.

Finally, the literature indicates that effective negotiation and grievance handling contribute significantly to improved service quality and service responsiveness. This study therefore examines the relationship between conflict management practices and service delivery in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Dual Concern Theory of Conflict Management

This study is anchored on the Dual Concern Theory of Conflict Management, developed by Dean G. Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (1986) and subsequently refined by Rahim (2017). The theory explains that individuals and organisations manage conflict based on two fundamental concerns: concern for

self and concern for others. The interaction of these concerns determines the conflict management strategy adopted, including integrating (collaborating), obliging, dominating, avoiding, or compromising. The theory posits that conflict can be managed constructively when parties seek solutions that satisfy both their own interests and those of others, thereby promoting cooperation and organisational effectiveness (Rahim, 2017).

The Dual Concern Theory is particularly relevant to this study because it emphasizes negotiation and grievance handling as collaborative mechanisms for resolving workplace disagreements. Negotiation reflects a high concern for both self and others by encouraging open communication, mutual understanding, and consensus building. Likewise, effective grievance handling provides employees with fair and transparent procedures for expressing and resolving complaints, thereby fostering trust, organisational justice, and harmonious workplace relationships. These practices help minimize destructive conflicts and promote positive employee behaviour.

The theory further posits that organisations adopting collaborative conflict management approaches are more likely to improve organisational outcomes. In service organisations, effective negotiation and grievance handling encourage employee cooperation, commitment, and teamwork, which enhance service quality through reliable and customer focused service delivery and improve service responsiveness by enabling employees to respond promptly and effectively to customer needs. Thus, the theory provides a logical explanation for how conflict management practices influence service delivery.

The choice of the Dual Concern Theory is justified because it aligns directly with the variables of this study. It explains how the dimensions of conflict management practices, namely negotiation and grievance handling, influence the measures of service delivery, namely service quality and service responsiveness. Consequently, the theory provides a suitable framework for examining the relationship between conflict management practices and service delivery in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Auh et al. (2024) examined the relationship between conflict resolution and service performance among frontline service employees using a quantitative research design and structural equation modelling. The findings revealed that constructive conflict resolution significantly improved service performance by enhancing employee cooperation and customer interactions.

Nyitse and Zamani (2024) investigated the impact of employee grievance management on organisational performance using a descriptive survey design and regression analysis. The study found that effective grievance handling had a significant positive influence on employee commitment, workplace harmony, and organisational performance.

Mogotloane and Louw (2024) explored customer complaints management and service excellence in South African public organisations using a qualitative approach. The findings showed that prompt and fair complaint handling enhanced service responsiveness and customer satisfaction.

Wang et al. (2024) conducted a systematic literature review on conflict management in the hospitality industry. The review concluded that effective conflict management practices improved employee collaboration, organisational effectiveness, and service performance.

Heintzman and Marson (2024) examined service delivery improvement in public organisations and found that effective internal management systems, employee cooperation, and organisational communication significantly enhanced service quality and service responsiveness.

Ateke et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between customer complaint handling and relationship quality among Nigerian service firms using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between effective complaint handling and relationship quality, resulting in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Finally, the reviewed studies demonstrate that effective conflict management practices positively influence organisational performance and service outcomes. However, limited empirical attention has been given to the relationship between negotiation and grievance handling as dimensions of conflict management practices and service quality and service responsiveness as measures of service delivery, particularly among selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. This gap justifies the present study.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between conflict management practices and service delivery in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. The correlational design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between the study variables without manipulating them.

The population of the study comprised 448 management and non-management employees drawn from 10 purposively selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. The organisations were selected from the banking, insurance, telecommunication, hospitality, healthcare, and logistics sectors because they are highly service-oriented and depend extensively on employee interactions to deliver quality and responsive services. Furthermore, these organisations have formal organisational structures, established human resource policies, and operational conflict management procedures, making them suitable for investigating the relationship between conflict management practices and service delivery. The selection of 10 organisations was considered adequate to provide representation across major service sectors while ensuring accessibility, organisational cooperation, and effective management of the study within available time and resources.

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. For a population of 448, the recommended sample size is 205 respondents. A proportionate sampling technique was employed to allocate the sample across the selected organisations, while simple random sampling was used to select respondents within each organisation to ensure that every employee had an equal chance of participating in the study.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire titled Conflict Management Practices and Service Delivery Questionnaire (CMPSDQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A captured respondents' demographic characteristics, while Section B measured the study variables using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). Conflict management practices were measured using two dimensions: negotiation and grievance handling, while service delivery was measured using service quality and service responsiveness. The measurement items were adapted from established and validated instruments reported in previous studies and modified to suit the context of the present study.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by experts in Human Resource Management, Organisational Behaviour, and Measurement and Evaluation. Their observations and recommendations guided the revision of the instrument before administration. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study involving respondents from service organisations outside the study area. Internal consistency was determined

using Cronbach's Alpha, and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable in line with the recommendation of Hair et al. (2019).

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. A total of 205 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents. Out of this number, 196 copies, representing 95.61%, were successfully retrieved, while 9 copies, representing 4.39%, were not returned. No questionnaire was invalid or improperly completed; consequently, all 196 retrieved copies were used for the analysis. The high response rate of 95.61% was achieved through personal administration and follow-up visits and was considered adequate for reliable statistical analysis.

Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and responses to the questionnaire items. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at the 0.05 level of significance. Pearson correlation was considered appropriate because it determines the strength and direction of the relationship between continuous variables measured on composite Likert-scale scores and has been widely applied in behavioural and management research.

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Permission was obtained from the management of the selected service organisations, and participation was voluntary with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage. All data were used solely for academic purposes and handled in accordance with established ethical standards.

Population of the Study

Table 1: Population, Sample Size Allocation and Questionnaire Distribution among Selected Service Organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Service Organisation	Service Sector	Population (N)	Sample Size (n)
1	Zenith Bank Plc	Banking	52	24
2	Access Bank Plc	Banking	48	22
3	United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc	Banking	46	21
4	MTN Nigeria Communications Plc	Telecommunications	45	21
5	Airtel Nigeria	Telecommunications	44	20
6	AXA Mansard Insurance Plc	Insurance	42	19
7	Niger Insurance Plc	Insurance	41	19
8	Hotel Presidential Port Harcourt	Hospitality	44	20
9	Save A Life Mission Hospital	Healthcare	43	20
10	ABC Transport Plc	Logistics/Transportation	43	19
Total			448	205

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2026); Official Records of the Selected Service Organisations.

Table 2: Variable Measurement and Reliability Coefficients of the Study Variables

S/N	Variables	Dimensions / Measures	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Conflict Management Practices	Negotiation	5	0.882

		Grievance Handling	5	0.874
2	Service Delivery	Service Quality	5	0.891
		Service Responsiveness	5	0.879
Overall Reliability Coefficient			20	0.882

Source: Adapted from Rahim (2017); International Labour Organisation (2024); Zeithaml et al. (2018); Wirtz and Lovelock (2022); and Wang et al. (2024).

The reliability analysis indicates that all the study constructs are internally consistent and reliable. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.882 for negotiation, 0.874 for grievance handling, 0.891 for service quality, and 0.879 for service responsiveness. These values exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), indicating that the questionnaire items consistently measured their respective constructs. Furthermore, the overall reliability coefficient of 0.882 demonstrates a high level of internal consistency for the research instrument, confirming its suitability for data collection and statistical analysis.

Table 3: Response Rate of Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Number of Copies Distributed	205	100.00%
Number of Copies Retrieved	196	95.61%
Number of Copies Not Returned	9	4.39%
Number of Copies Invalid	0	0.00%
Number of Copies Used for Analysis	196	95.61%

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2026).

Table 3 shows that 205 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to employees of the selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. Out of this number, 196 copies, representing 95.61%, were successfully retrieved, while 9 copies, representing 4.39%, were not returned. No questionnaire was invalid or improperly completed; therefore, all 196 retrieved copies were used for the analysis. The response rate of 95.61% is considered very high and adequate for statistical analysis, indicating strong respondents' participation and enhancing the reliability and credibility of the study findings.

DATA RESULTS

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Negotiation

S/N	Negotiation Items	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Management and employees engage in open and constructive negotiations.	196	1.0	5.0	808.0	4.122	0.781
2	Negotiation processes are conducted fairly and transparently.	196	1.0	5.0	803.0	4.097	0.796
3	Negotiated agreements reflect the interests of both parties.	196	1.0	5.0	814.0	4.153	0.769

4	Negotiated decisions are implemented as agreed.	196	1.0	5.0	807.0	4.117	0.784
5	Negotiation promotes mutual trust between management and employees.	196	1.0	5.0	817.0	4.168	0.752
	Valid N (listwise)	196					

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Grievance Handling

S/N	Grievance Handling Items	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Employees have access to formal grievance procedures.	196	1.0	5.0	806.0	4.112	0.789
2	Employee grievances are addressed promptly.	196	1.0	5.0	812.0	4.143	0.772
3	Grievance decisions are fair and unbiased.	196	1.0	5.0	804.0	4.102	0.798
4	Management encourages employees to report workplace concerns.	196	1.0	5.0	815.0	4.158	0.764
5	Grievance handling reduces workplace misunderstandings.	196	1.0	5.0	820.0	4.184	0.746
	Valid N (listwise)	196					

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Service Quality

S/N	Service Quality Items	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Services provided consistently meet customers' expectations.	196	1.0	5.0	809.0	4.128	0.776
2	Employees deliver services accurately and professionally.	196	1.0	5.0	816.0	4.163	0.758
3	Customers are satisfied with the quality of services received.	196	1.0	5.0	807.0	4.117	0.783
4	The organisation provides reliable services.	196	1.0	5.0	813.0	4.148	0.768
5	Employees maintain high service standards.	196	1.0	5.0	820.0	4.184	0.744
	Valid N (listwise)	196					

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Service Responsiveness

S/N	Service Responsiveness Items	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Employees respond promptly to customers' requests.	196	1.0	5.0	810.0	4.133	0.779
2	Customer complaints are handled without unnecessary delays.	196	1.0	5.0	815.0	4.158	0.761
3	Employees willingly assist customers when needed.	196	1.0	5.0	808.0	4.122	0.781

4	Service requests are processed within reasonable time.	196	1.0	5.0	816.0	4.163	0.756
5	The organisation responds effectively to changing customer needs.	196	1.0	5.0	821.0	4.189	0.742
Valid N (listwise)		196					

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Interpretation of Descriptive Results

The results presented in Tables 4–7 indicate that respondents generally agreed that conflict management practices contribute positively to service delivery in the selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. Negotiation recorded high mean scores ranging from 4.097 to 4.168, while grievance handling ranged from 4.102 to 4.184, indicating positive perceptions of the organisations' conflict management practices. Similarly, service quality recorded mean scores ranging from 4.117 to 4.184, and service responsiveness ranged from 4.122 to 4.189, reflecting high levels of service delivery. Broadly, the findings suggest that effective negotiation and grievance handling are important determinants of service quality and service responsiveness in the selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Inferential Statistical Analysis

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was employed to examine the relationship between conflict management practices (negotiation and grievance handling) and service delivery (service quality and service responsiveness) among employees of selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis was performed using SPSS Version 27 at a 0.05 level of significance.

Table 8: Negotiation and Service Quality

Pearson Correlation		Negotiation	Service Quality
Negotiation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.768
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	196	196
Service Quality	Correlation Coefficient	0.768	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	196	196
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Table 9: Negotiation and Service Responsiveness

Pearson Correlation		Negotiation	Service Responsiveness
Negotiation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.782
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	196	196
Service Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	0.782	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	196	196
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Table 10: Grievance Handling and Service Quality

Pearson Correlation		Grievance Handling	Service Quality
Grievance Handling	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.751
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	196	196
Service Quality	Correlation Coefficient	0.751	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	196	196
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Table 11: Grievance Handling and Service Responsiveness

Pearson Correlation		Grievance Handling	Service Responsiveness
Grievance Handling	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.789
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	196	196
Service Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	0.789	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	196	196
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

Interpretation of the Results

The results presented in Tables 8–11 reveal strong positive and statistically significant relationships between conflict management practices and service delivery among employees of selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Specifically, Table 8 shows that negotiation has a strong positive relationship with service quality ($r = 0.768$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that effective negotiation between management and employees significantly enhances the quality of services delivered to customers.

Table 9 indicates a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between negotiation and service responsiveness ($r = 0.782$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that organisations with effective negotiation practices are better able to respond promptly and efficiently to customer needs. Similarly, Table 10 reveals that grievance handling has a strong positive relationship with service quality ($r = 0.751$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that prompt and fair resolution of employee grievances contributes significantly to improved service quality.

Finally, Table 11 shows that grievance handling has a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with service responsiveness ($r = 0.789$, $p < 0.01$). This finding indicates that effective grievance handling mechanisms improve employees' responsiveness to customer requests by fostering a harmonious and supportive work environment.

Broadly, the findings demonstrate that conflict management practices, through negotiation and grievance handling, significantly enhance service delivery by improving both service quality and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

S/N	Hypothesis	Result	Decision
H01	There is no significant relationship between negotiation and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.	$r = 0.768$, $p = 0.000$	Reject H01 since $p < 0.05$
H02	There is no significant relationship between negotiation and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.	$r = 0.782$, $p = 0.000$	Reject H02 since $p < 0.05$
H03	There is no significant relationship between grievance handling and service quality in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.	$r = 0.751$, $p = 0.000$	Reject H03 since $p < 0.05$
H04	There is no significant relationship between grievance handling and service responsiveness in selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria.	$r = 0.789$, $p = 0.000$	Reject H04 since $p < 0.05$

Source: Researcher's Field Survey and SPSS Output (Version 27, 2026).

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that conflict management practices have a significant positive relationship with service delivery among employees of selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, negotiation and grievance handling showed strong positive relationships with both service quality and service responsiveness. These findings support Rahim (2017), who emphasized that collaborative conflict management enhances organisational effectiveness, and Wang et al. (2024), who found that effective conflict management improves employee collaboration and service performance.

The study found a strong positive relationship between negotiation and service quality ($r = 0.768$), indicating that effective negotiation enhances communication, cooperation, and the consistency of service delivery. This finding agrees with Auh et al. (2024), who reported that constructive conflict resolution significantly improves service performance and customer satisfaction. Similarly, negotiation showed a strong positive relationship with service responsiveness ($r = 0.782$), suggesting that organisations with effective negotiation practices respond more promptly to customer needs.

The findings also revealed strong positive relationships between grievance handling and service quality ($r = 0.751$) and between grievance handling and service responsiveness ($r = 0.789$). These findings are consistent with Nyitse and Zamani (2024), who found that effective grievance management enhances employee commitment and organisational performance, and Mogotloane and Louw (2024), who concluded that prompt complaint handling improves service responsiveness and customer satisfaction. The findings also support the Dual Concern Theory of Pruitt and Rubin (1986), which posits that collaborative conflict management promotes cooperation, organisational harmony, and improved performance.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that conflict management practices have a significant positive relationship with service delivery among employees of selected service organisations in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the findings revealed that negotiation and grievance handling each have strong positive and statistically significant relationships with service quality and service responsiveness. This

indicates that organisations that effectively manage workplace conflicts through constructive negotiation and efficient grievance handling are more likely to deliver high-quality services and respond promptly to customer needs. The study therefore concludes that strengthening conflict management practices is a strategic approach for enhancing customer-focused service delivery, promoting harmonious workplace relationships, and improving overall organisational effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Management of service organisations should strengthen negotiation by promoting open communication, mutual trust, and collaborative problem-solving between management and employees to enhance service quality and responsiveness.
2. Service organisations should establish and strengthen effective grievance handling systems that ensure employee complaints are addressed promptly, fairly, and transparently to improve employee commitment and service delivery.
3. Management should encourage continuous employee participation, regular dialogue, and conflict management training to foster harmonious workplace relationships and sustain high-quality service delivery.
4. Service organisations should periodically review and evaluate their conflict management policies and grievance handling procedures through employee feedback and organisational assessments to ensure continuous improvement in service quality and service responsiveness.

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