

## Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study will assess the effect of arbitration and avoidance techniques on employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria. As employee performance is regarded as a fundamental element contributing to an organizations growth and development; motivation and assisting employee in carrying out their duties efficiently a primary goal, necessitating a positive and harmonious working relationship among employees. Despite the inevitability of conflicts in the working, effective conflict management is crucial to prevent destructions and achieve organizational goals. The study adopts a survey method of data collection, where primary data was used. A well structured questionnaire was distributed to 281 respondents (i.e academic, technician and nonacademic staff) of Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, out of which 241 copies were retrieved and used for the analysis. The data collected was subjected to multiple regression analysis/ ordinary least square (OLS) aided by statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-25). The study findings reveal that there is a positive significant effect of avoidance strategy while arbitration strategy has no significant effect on the employee performance in the study area. The study concluded that actively avoiding conflicts or in collaborative conflict resolution approaches may positively influence the performance of employees in the study area. The study therefore recommended that the Federal Polytechnic Damaturu should create a more supportive, evaluate and update existing conflict resolution policies at the Polytechnic to ensure they align with the study's findings which will influence employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness and among others.*

**Keywords:** Arbitration, Avoidance, techniques, Employee, Performance

## 1. Introduction

Employees are a major resource hired by organizations to perform tasks, under certain conditions, to meet the various organisational goals. One of the major concerns of any organisation is focus on improving employee performance (Jauro, Bello, Garba & Bature, 2023). Employee performance is vital building block of an organization, it is considered as one of the key factors that lead to the growth and development of any organisation (Sanni, 2018). Employee performance is primarily focused on motivating and assisting staff in carrying out their duties effectively and efficiently as feasible in accordance with organisational needs (Sutia et al., 2020). However, achieving this goal relies heavily on fostering a positive and harmonious working relationship among employees within the organisation. While conflicts are a natural and unavoidable aspect of people working together, it is essential to manage them effectively to prevent disrupting the organisation's activities and hinder the accomplishment of its goals and objectives (Hutchins, Rose & Manongsong, 2020). Conflict in a work environment will reduce employee satisfaction, insubordination, decreased productivity, and ultimately poor employee performance, which leads to adverse effects on the organisation. Ahmed and Aijaz (2021) asserted that workplace conflict is now a very common factor in organizations that leads to deterioration in employee's performance because of human interactions in today's work environment.

Disputes in organizations can take different forms, such as interpersonal conflict, task conflict, and process conflict, giving rise to a variety of conflict management techniques (Budd & Colvin, 2013). Conflict situations have

an impact on the overall efficacy on employee performance because they produce discord among employee, which has a negative impact on their performance. This is because of the fact that valuable time and resources are squandered during conflicts. However, any attempt to control or regulate conflict using a variety of means is referred to as conflict management. The internal processes employed by various authorities to resolve disagreement are referred to as conflict management methods (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012).

Various conflict management techniques exist, but the academic literature does not have a unanimous agreement on how individuals choose a specific approach, some suggest that people tend to adopt a conflict management techniques they believe suits a particular situation best (Rahim, 2015). On the other hand, other researchers' experiments have shown that individuals' preference for a conflict-handling technique is relatively consistent across different conflict situations and is primarily influenced by their personality traits and characteristic, hence, the literature offers differing views on whether conflict management style selection is situational or more dependent on individual personality traits (Antonioni, 1998; Moberg, 1998). While according to Omene, (2021); Mponsah, (2020); Furlong, (2020); Kazimoto, (2013); and Rahim, (2000) Arbitration, avoidance, accommodating and collaboration are effective techniques to be used in managing conflict in most organisation.

Hence, for the purpose of this research **arbitration** is operationalize as a process which involved parties agree to present their dispute to one or more arbitrators who will make a decision that both parties must abide by, and this approach plays a crucial role in promoting peaceful resolutions to conflicting interests within an organisation (Unwin, 2021). On the other hand, **avoidance** refers to the act of

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

withdrawing from or ignoring conflict altogether, by adopting an avoidance strategy, individuals hope to delay or overlook the conflict, anticipating that the issue will resolve itself without the need for confrontation (Omene, 2021).

Employee dissatisfaction is an unpleasant experience that drives employees to seek solutions for their problems. In many cases, this discontent arises due to mishandling of issues affecting the employees and ineffective organisational practices. Unhappy employees may feel reluctant to work quit the organisation or sometime stay in the organisation but applies certain mechanisms to curb their dissatisfaction. It is therefore, imperative on the management's part to identify the cause and effect of employee dissatisfaction and provide best resolutions (Hu et al., 2017).

As a result, institutions like Federal Polytechnic Damaturu are no longer regarded as quiet enclaves free from conflicts that may arise in all hierarchical organisations. Conflict can arise from a variety of factors, including different aims or plans for allocating resources, misunderstandings or uneven application of institutional rules, power struggle among others (Lacity & Willcocks, 2017). Furthermore, employees who perceive their conflicts as being poorly managed in an organisation are more likely to experience lower job satisfaction and have a stronger intention to leave the organisation (Samrahet al., 2022).

Objectives of the Study:

- i. Examine the effect of arbitration technique on employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu.
- ii. Assess the effect of Avoidance technique on employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu.

**Research Questions:**

- i. To what extent arbitration technique affect employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu?
- ii. To what extent avoidance technique affect employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu?

**Research Hypothesis:**

- i. **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant effect of arbitration technique on employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu.
- ii. **H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no statistically significant effect of avoidance technique on employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu.

This research will complement and improve on the previous studies that are been conducted on conflict management techniques and employee performance equally, the findings will contribute to business management literature that is useful for learning purposes and future research engagements. The study will have an equal and valuable impact on the practical understanding within public organisations regarding the most effective technique for conflict management, by aligning with management principles and standards so as to avoid negative impacts on performance.

The study will focus on the effect of Conflict Management Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria. Arbitration and avoidance will be used as dimension for managing conflict.

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Issues**

#### **Concept of Employee Performance**

Different authors defined the term employee performance in different ways, Sutia et al., (2020) view Employee performance as the assessment and evaluation of an employee's work-related activities, successes, and contributions within an organisation are referred to as employee performance. It focuses on evaluating how well employees are fulfilling or exceeding the requirements and benchmarks established for their jobs (Suma & Budi, 2021). The idea of employee performance has also been backed by literature with evidence from reviews. Campbell et al. (2013) put forward the notion that employee performance refers to the actions and behaviors demonstrated by employees to enhance organisational effectiveness, encompassing factors such as operational outcomes, turnover, efficiency, and service effectiveness. Employee performance was similarly described by Hargadon and Fuller (2018) as behaviours or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organisation. Consequently, employee performance is not a singular, uniform concept but rather a multifaceted one, comprising more than one type of behaviour. Additionally, Layard, Nickell, and Jackman (2010) suggest that skilled employees tend to excel when they can work autonomously, and their performance may suffer in situations where they lack such independence. Similarly, Aguinis (2009) shared the perspective that employee performance is primarily related to employees' behaviors and actions, rather than solely focusing on the tangible outcomes or results of their work. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) added that employee performance is the evaluation and measurement of an employee's activities related to their job, accomplishments, and behaviors

within an organisation. It involves assessing how effectively an employee fulfills their duties, meets performance expectations, and contributes to the overall goals and objectives of the company. They emphasized that performance should not solely be focused on employees' actions or outcomes but also on the manner in which they accomplish their tasks.

#### **Concept of Conflict**

The ongoing discussion about the nature of conflicts is a persisting issue, given that the term "conflict" is derived from Latin words that signify "striking together." However, according to Afzalur Rahim (2001), conflict can be defined as a social interaction process involving struggles for control over resources, power, status, and beliefs in relation to individual preferences and desires. Furlong (2020) conceptualized the term conflict as a condition characterized by disagreement, opposition, or discord that emerges when individuals, groups, or entities hold divergent interests, objectives, values, or viewpoints. It involves a clash or collision between these conflicting elements, leading to tension, hostility, or competition. Conflict occurs when there is a difference of opinion between two parties. As a result, a conflict situation is one in which the parties involved are unable to resolve their differences. Conflict is an unavoidable aspect of organisational existence. The well-being of an organisation can be depicted on a continuum, stretching from an organisation completely free from conflicts to one that is heavily burdened by conflicts (Omene, 2021).

As stated by Panda (2020), conflicts are likely to exist in all organisations, influenced by factors such as the organisation setting and the nature of the products or services provided. Therefore, regardless of the degree of trust and dependability among individuals, it is human

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

nature to foreclose the instances of conflicts amongst partners, coworkers, and groups. The most effective approach is to implement specific techniques for managing and dealing with conflict situations both inside and outside the organisation (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020).

In support of that, Oden (2020) asserts, conflicting interests have been present in every spare of human endeavors since ancient times. Conflicting interests refer to clashes or disagreements that arise among individuals, groups, or subunits within larger organisations, resulting from incompatibility when two or more parties cannot simultaneously achieve their objectives. In a similar vein, Unwin (2021) notes that conflicts arise when there are contradictory moments involving divergent interest groups, differing ideologies, social orientations, and other workplace inclinations. Therefore, every instance of disagreement in the workplace can be attributed to clashes of interests, reflecting the nature of relationships among individuals, groups, and hierarchical structures as they pursue incompatible goals (Oden, 2020). Thus, the term "conflicts in organisations" pertains to the presence of confrontational situations arising from the diverging personal interests of employees and employers, which have the potential to hinder effective performance. These scenarios are evident when employee misuses their official working hours or resources for personal gains (Columbia, 2021). An instance of conflict might refer to an instances where employees' personal interests' conflict with their official duties or responsibilities, leading to a situation that compromises organisational interests and undermines public trust, confidence, and the integrity required for effective communication and achievement of performance objectives within the working environment.

In many public organisations, conflicts may arise when employees' personal interests intertwine with the organisation's objectives, potentially influencing their core duties for personal gains rather than official purposes. Afzalur Rahim (2001) maintains that relationships in public workplaces often lack consistency due to the scarcity of certain resources, which can lead to contention among individuals with differing behavioral preferences during joint actions or possessing distinct skills, attitudes, values, and belief systems. Nevertheless, conflicts can arise in public organisations regardless of employees' intentions, posing a risk of perceived or actual instances of discord in the workplace. Therefore, managers must take preventive measures to address conflict situations in order to foster employees' performance within the organisations.

In order to establish effective ethical standards in the workplace, accurate information disclosure is crucial when it comes to potential, perceived, or actual conflict scenarios. According to Columbia (2021), a perceived conflict situation arises when an employee's personal interests intersect with the performance objectives of the organisation while carrying out their responsibilities in the workplace.

### **Concept of Arbitration Strategy**

Arbitration is a process where a disagreement is presented to one or more arbitrators who reach a legally binding decision on the matter with the consent of the involved parties. Instead of opting for a court trial, the parties opt for arbitration as a private method for resolving their disputes. It involves entrusting the decision-making power to one or more individuals, either with or without an umpire, to resolve the issues in contention between the parties (Mohammed, 2020). For arbitration to occur, both parties must mutually agree to it. When drafting a contract,

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

the parties can include an arbitration clause to address any potential future disputes that may arise. Alternatively, if a dispute is already ongoing, the parties can agree to refer it to arbitration through a submission agreement. Unlike mediation, a party cannot unilaterally withdraw from arbitration once the process has begun (Hill-Grey et al., 2020).

Furthermore, arbitration is frequently utilized to settle business disputes, particularly when dealing with multinational business deals, it is also applied in certain countries, like the United States, for settling disputes involving consumers and employment, where it may be required by the terms of employment or business contracts and may include a waiver of the right to file a class action lawsuit. Consensual arbitration, especially commercial arbitration, should be distinguished from mandatory arbitration for consumer and employee disputes (Colvin, 2014).

### **Concept of Avoidance Strategy**

Avoidance strategy aims to put off conflict indefinitely, by putting off or neglecting the confrontation, the avoider hopes that the issue will resolve itself without the need for direct engagement. Individuals who frequently choose to avoid conflict may have low self-esteem or lack significant influence or power. In certain situations, avoiding conflict can be an effective conflict management techniques, such as when dealing with the termination of a popular but unproductive employee. Bringing in a more competent replacement for the position can help ease much of the conflict (Umana, 2019). This strategy is employed when both parties decide to ignore their concerns by not addressing the underlying problem. The avoiding strategy is characterized by the belief that any attempt to discuss or challenge the behavior of the other

party would be futile and ineffective (Olang, 2017).

According to authors like Kalagbor and Nnokam (2015), conflict avoidance occurs when one party involved in a potential conflict chooses to overlook the conflicting issues or downplays the significance of the conflict in their life. It is a way of avoiding direct confrontation with the conflict or a tactical approach to delaying the conflict, in case a more opportune time for resolution arises, if at all. Kilman and Thomas (2007) share a similar perspective, stating that the avoidance style involves withdrawing from situations that may lead to unpleasantness for oneself. Omene (2021) also asserts that the avoidance strategy aims to indefinitely postpone the conflict by delaying or ignoring it, with the hope that the problem will somehow resolve itself without direct confrontation.

### **2.2 Empirical Literature**

Several studies were carried out on conflict management technique by different author. Samrah, et al., (2022) conducted a study to investigate the effects of conflict management practices on employee performance within the banking industry in Karachi, Pakistan. Competing, collaborating, avoiding, compromising, and accommodating are were used in the study as a conflict management techniques. The data for the study was obtained from the employees of the banks in Karachi, Pakistan. The study used five point likert scale questionnaire to obtain the data from the respondents. Multiple regression was used to analyze the data. The result of their study revealed that competing, collaborating, avoiding, compromising, and accommodating have a significant positive relationship with employee performance in the banking industry.

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, the study limitation is Lack of Generalizability this is because the study's scope was limited to collecting data from banks in Karachi, Pakistan. Consequently, generalizing the results to other industries or regions may not be possible. On the other hand, Gulyamov, (2022) conducted research on the digitalization of international arbitration and dispute resolution through artificial intelligence. The study's primary objective was to offer insights into the current technological capabilities for arbitrators concerning the application of AI. The research was conducted in the United Kingdom. The study revealed that the development of an arbitrator based on AI depend only on the simplicity or complexity of the dispute. Nevertheless, the limitation of the study is that the study may not have fully addressed the potential biases that could be present in AI algorithms used for dispute resolution. AI systems can inherit biases from the data on which they are trained, leading to unfair outcomes in certain cases

Contrary to this, a study on conflict management techniques was conducted by Omene in 2021 as a requirement for successful organisational performance. Employing an explanatory approach, the research drew insights from a comprehensive review of existing literature, including various studies, periodicals, and books related to the topic. The findings of this review demonstrated that adept conflict management techniques have a significant influence on decision outcomes and enhance productivity levels within organisations. The study emphasized that effective conflict resolution strategies contribute to improved communication, time management, cooperation, and overall organisational productivity. Furthermore, the research highlighted the

positive impact of conflict resolution on strengthening interpersonal relationships between management and staff, resulting in increased employee morale, fewer disruptions in production activities, and enhanced service quality. The limitation of this study is that the study relied solely on a comprehensive review of existing literature, which means it did not collect new primary data from actual organisations. Depending solely on secondary sources may limit the depth and accuracy of the findings. Also since the research drew from various sources, the findings might lack specific contextualization to particular industries or organisational settings. Different sectors or organisational cultures might require tailored conflict management approaches.

Jauro, Garba, Garba and Bature (2023) carried out a study on Moderating Effect of Servant Leadership on the Relationship between Conflict Management Styles and Employee Performance of Manufacturing Sector in Kano State, Nigeria. The study is based on conceptual approach, following a comprehensive review of literature on employee performance, conflict management, and servant leadership, it was determined that servant leadership plays a moderating role in the connection between conflict management styles and employee performance. Consequently, the study's findings emphasize the significance of servant leadership in enhancing employee performance. In light of these findings, the researcher suggests that manufacturing companies should consider implementing conflict management styles and adopting servant leadership practices to positively impact and improve overall employee performance. The study is focused on the manufacturing sector in Kano State, Nigeria. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other industries or regions, limiting its generalizability. In addition, the

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

study is based on a conceptual approach, which means it may lack empirical data. It would be more robust if it included practical case studies or actual data to support its claims.

Yetunde, Yetunde, Igbinoba and Adejumo, (2021) conducted a study at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) to examine the impact of conflict management style on employee performance. Their research utilized a descriptive research design and included a sample of 169 workers out of a total population of 561 employees in the institution. The data was analyzed using regression models to ascertain the connection between the primary conflict management style and the employees' work quality. The results showed a positive correlation between the dominant conflict management style and the quality of the workers' output, indicating that this approach has a beneficial effect on their performance. Consequently, the study concluded that utilizing a dominant conflict management style positively affects work quality within the organisation. Additionally, the research highlighted that organisational conflict can serve as a catalyst for enhancing performance in organisations. But the study concentrated on the dominant conflict management style without exploring or comparing other styles, thus limiting the comprehensive understanding of different approaches' effects on employee performance

Morsesio, Hasim, Dahlan, and Iriawan (2021) conducted a study aimed at assessing conflict management and employee performance in the Regional Government of Barru Regency. They opted for quantitative research methods for their evaluation. The results indicated that conflict management within the Barru District Government was rated at an impressive 77.86 percent, falling within the excellent category. Additionally, the staff performance was also

excellent, scoring 79.78 percent. The study shed light on conflict management and performance among the workers in the Barru Regency government, which could be beneficial in addressing workplace conflicts of interest.

Tariq and Rehman (2020) conducted a research endeavor to explore the mediating effects of conflict management on the effective performance of construction companies in Pakistan. They opted for a survey research methodology, sampling 450 respondents from construction firms in Lahore and Karachi. The data was collected through well-structured field questionnaires. The study utilized descriptive statistics and mediation analysis on a five-factor organisational performance model to examine the mediation variables using partial least squares structural equation model (SEM). The research findings revealed persistent performance setbacks in the construction companies over the years, with workforce productivity being adversely affected. The study also highlighted the importance of administrative professionalism and a service-oriented workforce in managing conflicts effectively. Additionally, it identified internal socio-economic and political factors that significantly influence the quality of the companies' outputs. The study concluded with recommendations for public-reform guidelines to enhance stakeholders' and policy-makers' involvement in addressing the conflict-related issues and improving the overall performance of construction companies productivity.

Babarinde (2018) conducted a study investigating the Public Relations Strategy and Conflict Management at the University of Lagos. The research employed both primary and secondary sources of data. Two hundred and fifty (250) staff respondents from various departments were purposively sampled for

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*



questionnaire administration, along with three hundred and fifty (350) students purposively selected across faculties and departments at the University of Lagos. Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, tables, frequency distribution, and regression. The results indicate that problem-solving, avoidance, and preventive strategies are found to be less effective in managing conflict.

Ajike et al. (2015) conducted a study focusing on the impact of conflict management on the performance of Access Bank Nigeria PLC. The research involved a total of 81 respondents selected from the study area. The researchers used both descriptive and regression analysis to examine the relationship between bank performance and conflict containment and settlement, utilizing SPSS version 20.0 for data analysis. The study's findings revealed a positive and significant correlation between conflict containment and settlement and organisational performance. Based on these results, the researchers recommended that bank management should implement various appropriate techniques to address and manage conflicts promptly when they arise, preventing them from escalating within the bank.

The study's findings indicated that principals tended to utilize collaboration and compromising strategies more frequently than teachers. In their discussions, the principals expressed a preference for the integrating strategy, citing its effectiveness in motivating students, fostering a sense of belonging, and ensuring a fair hearing. Additionally, the integration strategy was favored by principals as it allowed them to reduce negative student behavior, improve administrative effectiveness, and enhance students' academic performance.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

Numerous management and social theories focus on conflict resolution. Some of these theories describe how conflict impact both employee and organisational performance. In fact, conflict management theories explain how conflict of interest situations are profiled in modern organisations. Leadership must actively seek equilibrium among individuals, as it is the route toward achieving performance objectives. Three theories provided the framework for the research, these included Behavior Theory, Stakeholder Theory and Human Relations Management Theory.

### **2.3.1 Behavior Theory**

Behavior Theory was profound by Morton Deutsch in 1973 he was a prominent American social psychologist who made significant contributions to the field of conflict resolution and the development of theories related to conflict. Behavioral theory, which focuses on how behavior is influenced by external factors and consequences, can be valuable for examining how specific conflict management techniques influence the behavior and performance of employees (Osabiya, 2015). Behavior acknowledges the common existence of conflicts among individuals and groups within organizations and admits that conflict is an unavoidable aspect of organizational life. Behavior Theory emphasizes the importance of studying observable behaviors. In the context of conflict management, it examine how employees' behaviors change when conflict arises and how these behaviors are influenced by the conflict resolution techniques used (Jones, Gorge & Hill, 2000).

Behavior Theory provides a framework for predicting how employees are likely to respond

to specific conflict management techniques. This predictive aspect is valuable for organizations as it allows them to proactively design and implement strategies that are more likely to yield desired behavioral responses and, ultimately, improved performance (Fajana, 2006).

### **2.3.2 Stakeholder Theory**

Edward Freeman in 1984 introduced the stakeholder theory which centers on addressing concerns related to the stakeholders of an organisation. According to this theory, an organisation strives to achieve a balance between the interests of its various stakeholders to ensure that each one receives some level of satisfaction. However, some argue that the theory has a limited scope as it only identifies shareholders as the sole interest group within a corporate entity, neglecting other relevant parties (Coleman, 2008).

According to contemporary business models, a company converts the contributions of its shareholders, suppliers, and employees into marketable products or services, resulting in profits that are then distributed to shareholders and investors. This approach considers the interests of shareholders, suppliers, customers, and employees. In relation to the situation described, stakeholder theory suggests that the entities involved should encompass political entities, government organisations, industry associations, labor unions, affiliated firms, potential employees, local communities, and the broader public. This theory has gained traction since academics and researchers have understood how a company's actions affect its surrounding environment. The entire corporation must be held accountable for these acts to a more educated and diverse audience than just the shareholders (Coleman, 2008).

### **2.3.3 Human Relation Management Theory**

Mayo, (1933) introduced the theory of Human Relations Management, which examines the impact of social interactions, employee contentment, and drive on organisation productivity. Mayo highlighted the potency of informal groups, favoring social dynamics over rigid organisational structures. The theory underscores the need for reciprocal communication, both from employees to management and vice versa. It also underscores the importance of strong leadership to convey objectives, ensure coherent decision-making, and maintain effectiveness (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). Ebhote and Monday (2015) stated that organisations expect their employees to possess essential skills in effective communication, interpreting colleagues' emotions, being sensitive to their emotional state, and resolving conflicts. The theory highlights that conflict, when managed constructively, can be a source of creativity and innovation. By developing these competencies, both management-level staff and clients can foster better and more harmonious relationships. The theory also aligns with conflict containment and resolution strategies, wherein mutual information exchange and concern for others and oneself are emphasized. In contrast to avoidance strategies, this theory perceives conflict not as a problem or negative but as an opportunity for growth. It is closely related to the first objective of accommodating strategies (Hasim, Dahlan, & Iriawan 2021).

Therefore, Human relation management theory also promotes a positive organisational culture that embraces challenges and seeks constructive solutions. Overall, this perspective supports a conducive work environment where employees are empowered with the skills to navigate conflicts successfully, ultimately contributing to

a more harmonious and productive workplace. Therefore, the study adopted this theory.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Background of the study Area

Damaturu is the capital city of Yobe State in the North-Eastern Nigeria with total land area of 2,306sqkm<sup>2</sup> and a population of 88,014 as at Census, 2006. The Federal Polytechnic is situated in Damaturu; it was established in 1992 by the then Military Government of Gen Ibrahim Babangida. The institution is one of the federal government institutes of higher education located in the North-East. The personnel of Polytechnic were made up of academics, technician and non-academics, which make it a suitable choice of study area to this study.

Due to its unique location in the northeastern region of Nigeria and adjacent to Niger republic together with its diverse composition, the Federal Polytechnic, Damaturu has drawn employees both within and outside the State. Finally, the growth of student admission and personnel across academic, administrative, and technical department within the Damaturu Polytechnic has been notably substantial.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey research design. Survey research is a widely used method for collecting data from a large number of participants in a systematic and standardized manner. It is particularly useful when the aim is to gather information on people's opinions, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences (Rumsey, 2012).

#### 3.3 Population of the Study

The study population comprises of 296 academic staff, 81 technician and 264 non-academic staff of Federal Polytechnic Damaturu. As such, the combined academic, technician and nonacademic staff, totaling 641 individuals, represent population of this study.

The selection of this population is grounded in the diverse composition of the workforce within the polytechnic.

#### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of 234 was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Similarly, a multistage sampling technique was employed. The first stage will be through stratification based on academic, technician and nonacademic staff. The second stage will be proportionate sampling method which will be used to allot the value of samples to each stratum.

**Table 3.4.1 Sample Frame**

S/No	Cadre	Population	Sample Size	Percentage %
1	Academic Staff	296	108	46.1
2	Technician	81	30	12.8
3	Non-Academic Staff	264	96	41.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>641</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Personnel Department Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, (2023).**

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

**3.5 Sources of Data**

The primary source of data was used for the study. Were structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents, that enable the researcher to administer and collected the completed questionnaires within short period of time. Scale from previous study will be adapted in designing the questionnaire, past questions prepared by researchers M’mbwanga, (2021), Kalagbor and Nnokam, (2015) and Kodikal et al., 2014 was adapted with modifications.

**3.6 Methods of Data Collection**

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The researcher distributed and retrieved the questionnaire personally. A five point Likert scale was used to measure the level of the effect of conflict management techniques on employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu. A rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 was employed to assess the level of agreement or disagreement among participants regarding the given statements. The following ratings scale will be used: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

**3.7 Method Data Analysis**

Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the variables under study. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents. Multiple regressions was used to test the hypothesis. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 24.0 Was employed to analyzed data obtained.

**3.7.1 Model Specification**

The variables of the study was fitted into the Regression Equation Model, as represented in mathematical terms

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \epsilon$$

..... 1

$$EMP = \beta_0 + \beta_1ABR_1 + \beta_2AVO_2 + \epsilon$$

..... 2

Where;

EMP = Employee Performance

$\beta_0$  = intercept coefficient

$\epsilon$  = Error term (extraneous variables)

ABR<sub>1</sub> = Arbitration strategy

AVO<sub>2</sub> = Avoidance strategy

**4. Results Presentation, Analysis and Discussions**

**4.1 Response Rate Analysis**

**Table 4.1 Response Rate of the Questionnaires**

Questionnaires Distributed	Res pon ses	Perce ntage (%)
Number of retrieved questionnaires	241	85.7
Number of Questionnaires not retrieved	40	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, (2023).**

A total of 281copies of questionnaires were distributed to respondents out of which 241were correctly filled and retuned valid for analysis which yield 85.7% respond rate.

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

#### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

**Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	152	63
Female	89	37
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 25	23	9.5
25 – 39	81	33.6
39 – 45	93	38.5
45 – 59	35	14.5
59 above	09	3.9
<b>Qualification</b>		
PhD.	19	7.8
M.Sc/MBA	81	33.6
B.Sc/HND	91	37.7
NCE/ND	33	13.6
SSCE	17	7.3
<b>Carder</b>		
Academic Staff	109	45.2
Technician	48	19.9
Non Academic	84	34.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, (2023).**

Table 4.2 presents the sample characteristics of the respondents, analyzed using frequency distribution. The study reveals that 152 respondents, constituting approximately 63% of the total respondents, were male, while only 89 respondents, accounting for 37% of the total respondents, were female. Regarding the age distribution of the respondents, individuals between the ages of 18 to 25 comprised 23 (9.5%), those aged 25 to 39 were 81 (33.6%), respondents aged 39 to 45 were 93 (38.5%), those between the ages of 45 to 59 were 35 (14.5%), and those above 59 were (3.9%).

Concerning academic qualifications, 19 respondents, representing about 7.8% of the total respondents, held a Ph.D. as their qualification, 81 (33.6%) had M.Sc./MBA, 91 respondents (37.7%) held B.Sc./HND, 33 (13.6%) had NCE/ND, and only 17 respondents, accounting for about 7.3% of the total, possessed SSCE as their academic qualification.

Finally, respondents were asked about their occupational carder. Out of the 241 respondents, 109, constituting approximately 45.2% of the total, identified as academic staff, 48 (19.9%) as technicians, and 84 respondents, representing

about 34.9% of the total, categorized themselves as non-academic staff.

**4.3 Normality and Multicollinearity Test**

The assessment of normality in residuals is essential, signifying that their distribution should align with a normal distribution. Typically, this evaluation is carried out through statistical or graphical methods. The fundamental parameters for the statistical test of normality include skewness and kurtosis values. The outcomes of the tests consequently indicate that the research

data does not exhibit a significant departure from a normal distribution, as evidenced by the characteristics of the standardized residual histogram.

**Multicollinearity** was tested using tolerance and variance inflation factor (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, the tolerance level should be 0.20 and above whereas VIF values should be below 5 (Hair et al., 2017). The results from the table 4.3 indicated tolerance level of all the independent variables are above 0.20, and the values of VIF are below 5, indicating that nonexistence of multicollinearity in the study.

**Table 4.3 Normality Test: Skewness and Kurtosis Statistics**

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Arbitration	241	-.429	.157	-.384	.312
Avoidance	241	-.254	.157	-.379	.312
Employee performance	241	-.232	.157	-.358	.312

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

**4.4 Arbitration Strategy**

**Table 4.4 Arbitration Strategy**

S/N	Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA
ABR1	Arbitration provides a fair and impartial method for resolving disputes	59(24.5%)	22(9.1%)	23(9.5%)	65(27%)	72(29.9%)
ABR2	My head of Department/unit uses interaction to settle disputes amongst staff.	13(5.4%)	50(20.7%)	54(22.4%)	62(25.7%)	62(25.7%)
ABR3	My HOD settle conflicts between staff in my department/unit	24(10%)	51(21.2%)	51(21.2%)	58(24.1%)	57(23.7%)
ABR4	Arbitration allows	25(10.4%)	41(17%)	29(12%)	66(27.4%)	80(33.2%)

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

parties to have more control over the selection of the arbitrator and the process, enhancing their confidence in the outcome

ABR5	During conflict head of department/unit ensures that both parties in conflict apologize to each other.	45(18.7%)	55(22.8%)	34(14.1%)	52(21.6%)	54(22.4%)
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**Source: Field Survey, (2023). \*ABR: Arbitration**

Table 4.4 sought to determine the effect of arbitration strategy on employee performance. Respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement in a 5 point Likert scale. To begin with, respondents were asked if arbitration provides a fair and impartial method for resolving disputes, 24.5% strongly disagree, 9.1% disagree, 9.5% undecided, 27% agree, 29.9% strongly agree, respondents were asked if head of department/unit uses interaction to settle disputes amongst staff, 5.4% strongly disagree, 20.7% disagree, 22.4% undecided, 25.7% agree, 25.7% strongly agree. Respondents were also asked if arbitration allows parties to have more control over the selection of the arbitrator and the process, enhancing their confidence in the outcome, 25 respondents which represent about 10.4% were strongly disagree, 17% disagree,

12% undecided, 27.4% agree and 33.2% strongly agree. Finally, on the issues if during conflict head of department/unit ensures that both parties in conflict apologize to each other, 45 respondents which represent about 18.7% were strongly disagree, 55 respondents which represent 22.8% of the total respondent were disagree, 14.1% undecided, 21.6% agree, and 54(22.4%) were strongly agree.

From the table 4.4 it can be inferred that there is a positive perception of arbitration fairness and confidence, there are mixed views on the role of department heads and differing opinions on specific practices in conflict resolution. This information can be valuable for organizational leaders seeking to understand and improve conflict resolution processes.

#### 4.5 Avoidance Strategy

**Table 4.5 Avoidance Strategy**

S/N	Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA
AVO1	I try to avoid conflicts so as to maintain a harmonious work	72(29.9%)	43(17.8%)	40(16.6%)	41(17%)	45(18.7%)

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

environment						
AVO2	Staff do not forgo their conflicts to avoid disciplinary action by the school Management	37(15.4%)	38(15.8%)	35(14.5%)	62(25.7%)	69(28.6%)
AVO3	Avoidance of conflicts can influence the growth and development of an employee	54(22.4%)	40(16.6%)	47(19.5%)	61(25.3%)	39(16.2%)
AVO4	Staff are afraid of following up on issues against the school Management but instead seek for leniency	28(11.6%)	48(19.9%)	44(18.3%)	69(28.6%)	52(21.6%)
AVO5	Conflicting staff issue were set aside due to pressing administrative and academic issues	20(8.3%)	53(22%)	47(19.5%)	63(26.1%)	58(24.1%)

**Source: Field Survey, (2023).**

**\*AVO: Avoidance**

Table 4.5 sought to examine effect avoidance strategy on employee performance, respondents were asked if they try to avoid conflicts so as to maintain a harmonious work environment, 72 respondents which represent about 29.9% of the total respondents were strongly disagreed, 43(17.8%) were disagreed, 40 respondent which is 16.6% were undecided, 41(17%) were agreed and 45 respondents which represent about 18.7% of the total respondents were strongly agreed.

Also respondents were asked if staff do not forgo their conflicts to avoid disciplinary action by the school Management, 37 respondents which represent about 15.4% were strongly disagreed, 38(15.8%) disagreed, 35(14.5%) were undecided, 62 respondents which is 25.7% were agreed and 69 respondents which represent

about 28.6% of the total respondent were strongly agreed that staff do not forgo their conflicts to avoid disciplinary action by the school Management. Equally, the respondents were asked if Avoidance of conflicts can influence their growth and development, 54 which is 22.4% of the total respondents were strongly disagreed, 40(16.6%) were disagreed, 47(19.5%) were undecided, 61 respondents which represent about 25.3% of the total respondents were agreed and finally 39(16.2%) were strongly agreed.

Furthermore, respondents were asked whether staff are afraid of following up on issues against the school Management but instead seek for leniency, 28(11.6%) respondents were strongly disagreed, 48 respondents which represent about

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*



19.9% of the total respondents were disagreed, 44(18.3%) were undecided, 69 respondents which 28.6% of the total respondents were agreed and 52(21.6%) were also strongly agreed. Finally respondents were asked to assess if conflicting staff issue were set aside due to pressing administrative and academic issues, 20(8.3%) were strongly disagreed, 53(22%) were disagreed, 47 (19.5%) were undecided, 63 (26.1%) were agreed and 58 respondents which represent about 24.1% of the total respondents were strongly agreed that if conflicting staff

issue were set aside due to pressing administrative and academic issues.

From the table 4.5 it can be deduced that respondents commonly use avoidance strategies to maintain a harmonious work environment. There is also an acknowledgment that conflicts may not be addressed due to fears of disciplinary action or seeking leniency. However, opinions vary regarding the impact of conflict avoidance on employee growth and whether conflicting staff issues are set aside due to other pressing concerns.

#### 4.6 Model Summary

**Table 4.6 Model Summary**

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.283 <sup>a</sup>	.080	.065	.608	.080	5.139	2	237	.001

**a. Predictors: (Constant), ABR, AVO.**

**b. Dependent Variable: EMP**

Table 4.6 shows the model summary, the R square indicate the variance of the dependent variable as explained by the model of the research. In other words, the R square provide information on the extent to which the independent variables in a model predict changes in the dependent variable. Therefore, from the table 4.13 depict the R square result of the research model. Where R = 0.283, R square = 0.080, adjusted R square = 0.065 and the standard error = 0.608. Hence, the model, including predictors (ABR & AVO), explains a modest amount of variance in Employee Performance (8%), while the he Adjusted R Square takes into account the model's complexity, providing a more conservative estimate of the explained variance (6.5%). The

model's predictions have a standard error of approximately 0.608, indicating a moderate level of precision and the addition of predictors significantly improved the model fit, as indicated by the F Change statistic and its associated p-value of 0.001.

#### 4.7 Test of Hypotheses

Linear regression analysis using SPSS 25 was employed to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the study. Specifically, the strength of the relationship among the variables is indicated by the proximity of the coefficient value to 1. The detailed regression results are presented in the table 4.7

**Table 4.7 Test of Hypotheses**

Variables	Beta	t- Value	Sig. Level	Decision
Arbitration	-.011	-.166	0.868	Accepted
Avoidance	.214	3.356	0.001	Rejected

**Dependent Variable: Employee Performance**

Table 4.7 shows the coefficients and p-value of the linear regression model used to examine the effect of arbitration, avoidance, accommodating and collaboration on the employees' performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu. Arbitration was found to have no significant effect on employee performance in federal polytechnic Damaturu with P-value of 0.868 and t-value of -.166. However, the t-value is small, and the p-value (0.868) is much greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is not statistically significant. Avoidance strategy found to have a Beta value of 0.214, t-Value of 3.356 and a p-value of 0.001. The positive beta coefficient for Avoidance suggests a positive relationship with Employee Performance. The t-value is relatively large, and the p-value (0.001) is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. The decision is to accept the null hypothesis, suggesting that Avoidance has a statistically significant positive effect on Employee Performance.

#### 4.8 Discussion of Findings

This study assess the effect of conflict Management techniques on employee performance in federal polytechnic Damaturu. Conflict management techniques adopted in this study were arbitration and avoidance strategy. Two (2) research hypotheses were stated and tested. Hypothesis one tested shows that arbitration has no statistically effect on

employee performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, this finding contradict the findings of Muriuki et al. (2017), who found that board strategies of managing conflict using arbitration is crucial factor in conflict resolution among board members and in state corporations. The findings do not align with that of Gulyamov (2022), who uncovered that the evolution of an AI-based arbitrator relies solely on the simplicity or complexity of the dispute and its ability to effectively manage conflict situations.

Second hypothesis tested in this study revealed that avoidance strategy has a positive and significant effect on employee performance in federal polytechnic Damaturu. This finding corroborate the findings of Samrah, et al., (2022) who found that avoidance has a positive and significant impact on the performance employee in the banking industry. This finding also supports the findings of Kagucia and Poipoi (2014) which revealed that avoidance strategy had a positive effect on employee performance. Avoidance conflict resolution strategy affects employee performance and that organizational factors moderate the relationship between avoidance and employee performance and it should be used when dealing with trivial matters and a win-win or a lose-lose orientation is required.

#### 5. Conclusions

*Effect of Arbitration and Avoidance Techniques on Employee Performance in Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria*

Conclusively, the findings indicate that arbitration strategy do not exhibit a statistically significant effect on employee performance. In contrast, avoidance is found to have a significant positive impact. This suggests that, in this particular setting, relying on arbitration strategy may not lead to noticeable improvements in employee performance, hence actively avoiding conflicts or engaging in collaborative conflict resolution approaches may positively influence the performance of employees at the study area.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- ❖ Federal Polytechnic Damaturu should evaluate and update existing conflict resolution policies at the Polytechnic to ensure they align with the study's findings. Consider emphasizing and promoting avoidance and collaboration as preferred conflict management strategies, reflecting the statistically significant impact these approaches have on employee performance.
- ❖ The school management should establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of conflict management strategies over time. Regular assessments can help identify any shifts in the organizational dynamics and enable adjustments to strategies as needed.
- ❖ Finally, the management of the polytechnic should foster a positive work environment by recognizing and rewarding positive behavior and collaboration. This can contribute to a culture where employees are motivated to work together harmoniously,

ultimately improving overall performance.

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