



Research Paper

# Gauging the effect of diversity on team members' conflict: A case study of mining sector in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of diversity on team members' conflict, a case study of mining sector in Nigeria. The study objectives were to ascertain how various measures of diversity affect conflict among team members. The study employed the use of primary data collected through questionnaires which were distributed among staff in Delta Steel Company's Warri plant, also known as Premium Steel and Mines Limited (PSML), which is a significant steel manufacturing facility in Nigeria. The study was anchored on the unitary and conflict theory. Data analysis involves the use of simple percentages and frequencies to characterize responses, as well as descriptive and inferential statistics to examine research hypotheses. The findings revealed that demographic diversity, education and work experience diversity and cognitive and personality diversity maintained significant effect on team members' conflict. While language and religion diversity recorded an insignificant effect on team members' conflict in the mining sector in Nigeria. The study therefore recommended that mining sector firms in Nigeria adopt a proactive approach to diversity management. However, organizations should also invest in training and communication strategies that help bridge differences in education, work experiences, cognitive styles, and personality traits among team members. By promoting effective conflict resolution skills and creating an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated, these firms can harness the richness of diversity while minimizing potential sources of discord, ultimately enhancing teamwork and productivity in the mining sector.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The mining sector in Nigeria is a crucial contributor to the economy, significantly impacting income generation, employment, and industrial advancement. The plethora of mineral resources draws a varied workforce from multiple areas, ethnicities, and backgrounds (Ogaga, 2017). This diversity presents distinct issues for conflict management and resolution within the sector. The workforce in Nigeria's mining sector embodies the country's diverse cultural heritage, with personnel originating from many regions, each contributing unique cultural norms, values, and viewpoints to their work environments. The sector also employs individuals with diverse educational backgrounds, experiences, and talents, hence augmenting worker diversity (Chika-Anyanwu & Oparanma, 2020; Ogaga, 2017). This diversity is essential, but it sometimes leads to disputes arising from various perspectives and expectations among team members. Conflicts in the mining sector can arise in multiple ways, including disputes over resource distribution, power conflicts, and variations in safety protocols (Elmagri & Eaton, 2011; Hotepo et al., 2010). Conflicts may arise among team members, between individual employees and management, or among various groups within the industry. Comprehending the fundamental origins and dynamics of these conflicts is essential for preserving a happy workplace and guaranteeing sustained industry growth (Hotepo et al., 2010). Internal conflict within teams and organizations in the mining sector can result in significant repercussions, such as operational disruptions, diminished production, weakened safety protocols, and the potential loss of competent personnel. Therefore, the mining industry must adeptly manage and alleviate problems related to diversity to secure its ongoing prosperity.

Conflict circumstances substantially affect the productivity of business organizations, resulting in discontent among members, which adversely impacts organizational performance (Agbo, 2020; Ojo, 2005). Conflicts lead to the squander of essential time and resources in businesses. Recognizing that no organization is exempt from internal conflict due to varying interests, objectives, ideas, and personalities, it is crucial to reconcile these disparate elements (Hener, 2010). Given the prevalence of conflicts in business environments, conflict resolution is a crucial aspect of efficient corporate management (Richard, 2011). The aim of conflict management is not to create an ideal corporate environment, due to the inherent differences in individual goals and viewpoints, but to systematically implement conflict resolution strategies and develop an effective mechanism for managing conflicts within corporate organizations. Certain businesses may possess pre-existing frameworks for conflict resolution, whilst others, guided by reactive

management, may tackle these issues as they arise (Madubuegwu et al., 2022). Considering the importance of diversity and the likelihood of disputes in the mining sector, there is an increasing demand for effective conflict resolution solutions specifically designed for the industry's distinct attributes (Obasan, 2011; Richard, 2011). This study seeks to examine these conflicts, their root causes, and the techniques utilized by mining firms to mitigate them. The research seeks to illuminate these difficulties, offering useful insights for stakeholders in the mining sector, so enhancing the sector's sustainability and its capacity to leverage the advantages of diversity among team members.

The Nigerian mining business, distinguished by its varied workforce, has a distinct problem in resolving conflicts among team members. Although conflicts are frequently perceived unfavorably, there is an increasing acknowledgment that they can possess both adverse and advantageous elements inside businesses. The prevailing view of conflicts as exclusively harmful has led to a tendency to repress or evade them, potentially neglecting their beneficial aspects (Ugwuzor, 2010). The issue stems from the widespread belief that conflict is intrinsically "negative," resulting in efforts to stifle it within the mining sector. This suppression-focused strategy may unintentionally inhibit diversity, obstruct growth, and sustain an atmosphere of homogeneity and stagnation. Furthermore, conventional work ethics and hierarchical frameworks prevalent in this sector may intensify conflict rather than manage it efficiently (Saduman, 2010). Consequently, firms in Nigeria encounter a substantial challenge in leveraging the potential advantages of conflict, including the promotion of democracy, diversity, growth, and self-actualization, while concurrently mitigating the adverse effects of unmanaged or suppressed conflicts (Madubuegwu, Ugwuzor, Onwe & Nkiruka, 2022; Agbi, 2020; Ogaga, 2017). Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the effect of diversity on team members conflict in the mining sector in Nigeria.

### 1.1 | Objectives of the Study

- Ascertain the effect of Demographic Diversity on Team Member Conflict
- Examine the effect of Education and Work Experience Diversity on Team Member Conflict
- Assess the effect of Cognitive and Personality Diversity on Team Member Conflict
- Investigate the effect of Language and Religion Diversity on Team Member Conflict

## 2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 | Overview of Conflict

Nigeria is confronting a multitude of intricate difficulties that have resulted in violent conflicts, including economic ones. The economy of the nation has struggled to meet the demands of its increasing population. This economic strain can be ascribed to several factors, including a mismanaged and declining economic framework inherited from previous administrations, excessive dependence on oil revenue, restricted foreign investment, an overextended public sector, and pervasive corruption at the highest echelons of government (Awonbiogbon, 2011). The repercussions of these macroeconomic issues have been especially catastrophic for economically disadvantaged urban areas and oil-producing towns (Aderibigbe, 2010; Anumah, 2010). Furthermore, communal conflicts driven by competition for economic resources, including agricultural land and grazing territories, have become more common (Olofinlua, 2011). Simultaneously, economic anger persisted in inciting violence, disrupting the nation's economy. The Niger Delta, the nation's economic center owing to its oil output, persisted in facing significant upheaval. The region's oil-derived wealth has historically been a point of dispute. A significant portion of this income was diverted from the destitute local populace, fostering a persistent sense of injustice (Umenilorah, 2015; Gbadamosi, 2011). Nigerian youth reacted to these adversities with both nonviolent and violent protest methods. The nation had violent confrontations exacerbated by economic concerns, frequently ignited by trivial incidents. In 1991, a conflict in the Tafawa Balewa local government region of Bauchi state originated from the selling of roasted beef, ultimately leading to considerable loss of life and property (Umenilorah, 2015). Over time, these conflicts assumed racial and religion dimensions, opposing various ethnic and religion groups against one another. Nonetheless, underlying these confrontations were pre-existing economic pressures, such as pervasive poverty and unemployment that plagued the nation (Ogaga, 2017; Gbadamosi, 2011; Olofinlua, 2011). In conclusion, Nigeria confronts a multifaceted array of economic, social, and political challenges that foster diverse forms of conflict. These confrontations, whether initiated by economic inequities or intensified by them, highlight the necessity for comprehensive policies to tackle the root issues, foster economic equity, and avert violent escalations with significant and extensive repercussions.

### 2.2 | Types of Conflict

Individual versus Group Conflict in organizations is disputes arising from disagreements among several persons within a team or group context, which can present considerable obstacles. Such conflicts arise from divergent perspectives, preferences, or disputes regarding established working practices, team dynamics, or group decisions. These disagreements may have consequences that extend beyond mere differences of opinion, potentially resulting in diminished productivity and strained relationships among colleagues (Awonbiogbon, 2011). In collaborative settings, disputes may emerge from differing work methodologies or preferences among team members, impeding cooperation and obstructing the team's capacity to accomplish its objectives efficiently. Furthermore, disputes between employees and their supervisors or managers can undermine trust, communication, and collaboration inside the organization (Akpokiniovo-Uwawah, 2022; Akram et al., 2025). Extended group disagreements can profoundly affect workplace dynamics and productivity, resulting in diminished job satisfaction, decreased motivation, and potential employee attrition. Managers and team leaders should utilize conflict resolution tools, including open communication, mediation, and team-building exercises, to tackle these difficulties. Proactive efforts, such as the establishment of conflict prevention and resolution policies and staff training, are essential for controlling and averting these disagreements in organizations (Awonbiogbon, 2011; Akpokiniovo, 2018).

Interdepartmental disputes within organizations are a distinct type of conflict that can profoundly affect overall organizational performance. These conflicts frequently arise from communication breakdowns, leading to misconceptions, inefficiencies, and productivity disruptions. Departmental conflicts may emerge from ambiguity in duties and responsibilities, misalignment of objectives, or inadequate dissemination of information and resources. These disputes may encompass disagreements regarding resource allocation, project priorities, and decision-making power, highlighting divergent interests, priorities, and objectives among the participating departments (Olofinlua, 2011). Addressing interdepartmental conflicts presents difficulties owing to the participation of various parties, each possessing distinct viewpoints and interests. Effective settlement necessitates a collaborative approach, wherein managers and executives from different departments convene to engage in discourse, comprehend each other's problems, and investigate alternative solutions. Leaders are essential in alleviating interdepartmental problems by fostering a culture of transparent communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Implementing explicit mechanisms for resolving disagreements and promoting

interdepartmental collaboration through training initiatives and frequent meetings helps mitigate conflicts and guarantee the organization operates cohesively (Otiye & Albert, 2016). Identifying possible interdepartmental conflicts and instituting proactive strategies is crucial for sustaining organizational efficiency and unity.

Inter-organizational conflict denotes a multifaceted discord that emerges when organizations, each possessing own cultures, customs, and operational procedures, engage in collaboration or interaction. These discrepancies may result in conflicts about decision-making procedures, communication methodologies, and operational methods, so generating divergent expectations amongst organizations. Conflicts may intensify when labor unions representing the workforce of either organization intervene, championing their members' interests, which include issues concerning labor rights, working conditions, pay, or employee benefits (Akpokiniovo-Uwawah, 2022). Addressing inter-organizational conflicts frequently necessitates a systematic methodology, particularly when the disagreements are significant. Organizations may evaluate diverse conflict resolution strategies, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or litigation, contingent upon the nature of the issue and the parties' commitment to achieve a resolution (Osisioma, 2016). Organizations often opt to manage problems pleasantly and collaboratively to preserve a positive working relationship. Collaboration often entails transparent and productive discussions among companies to ascertain the fundamental sources of dispute and investigate mutually advantageous resolutions. When internal settlement is difficult, companies may seek the expertise of external mediators or dispute resolution specialists to encourage conversations, provide objective insights, and assist in reaching mutually acceptable solutions (Akpakip, 2017).

### 2.3 | Concept of Diversity

Diversity is the state of having or consisting of multiple aspects, particularly when individuals of various ethnicities, cultures, etc. are included in a group or organization. Diversity includes variations in academic and professional backgrounds, social status, geography, race, ethnicity, diverse viewpoints, political and religion views, sexual orientations, heritage, and life experiences. Diversity within the Nigerian business landscape is a complex and dynamic concept that reflects the nation's rich social, cultural, and economic diversity. Nigeria's diverse population encompasses diverse ethnic groups, languages, religions, and regional variations, making it a microcosm of global diversity. Recent years have witnessed a growing recognition of diversity as a strategic asset in Nigerian businesses (Fatile&Adejuwon, 2011). This diversity encompasses ethnic, religion, linguistic, and gender diversity, with ethnic diversity being particularly prominent, given the presence of over 250 ethnic groups in the country (Akpakip, 2017). Each group contributes its unique cultural perspectives to the business environment, making diversity a central aspect of Nigerian business life. Embracing diversity offers numerous advantages for Nigerian businesses. It fosters creativity, innovation, and problem-solving by bringing together individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives (Zahid, 2017). Additionally, a balanced and inclusive personnel helps organizations comprehend and attend to Nigeria's diverse consumer base, leading to increased market reach and customer loyalty. Moreover, diversity promotes a more inclusive and equitable workplace, which positively impacts employee satisfaction, retention, and overall business performance (Osisioma, 2016).

However, coping with the inclusiveness in Nigerian businesses is not without its challenges. Ethnic as well as religion tensions, stereotypes, and biases can lead to internal conflicts and hinder collaboration. Gender inequality remains a significant issue, with women underrepresented in leadership roles. Language barriers can also impede effective communication. Overcoming these challenges requires proactive diverse initiatives, cultural sensitivity, and the implementation of equitable policies and ethics (Akinnusi, Sonubi & Oyewunmi, 2017; Akpakip, 2017). To effectively manage diversity, Nigerian businesses are adopting various strategies, such as diversity training programs, mentorship initiatives, and the building of diversity and inclusion committees. They are also focusing on creating inclusive policies, promoting cultural awareness, and implementing fair hiring and promotion practices (Al Raisi, Al Rawahi, Al Omrani, Al Hooti & Porkodi, 2019). Fostering free flow of information and an environment of respect is crucial for harnessing the full potential of diversity. In this diverse and dynamic marketplace, Nigerian businesses that address diversity-related issues proactively are better positioned to thrive while upholding the principles of social justice and inclusivity (Akinnusi et al., 2017).

### 2.4 | Demographic Diversity and Team Member Conflict

The diversity of the Nigerian business landscape is a multifaceted and evolving term that embodies the country's extensive social, cultural, and economic variety. Nigeria's heterogeneous population comprises several ethnic groups, languages, religions, and regional distinctions, rendering it a microcosm of world diversity. In recent years, there has been an increasing

acknowledgment of diversity as a strategic asset in Nigerian enterprises (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011). This diversity includes ethnic, religion, linguistic, and gender variations, with ethnic diversity being especially notable due to the existence of over 250 ethnic groups in the country (Akpakip, 2017). Every group imparts its distinct cultural viewpoints to the corporate milieu, rendering diversity a fundamental element of Nigerian commercial existence. Embracing diversity has multiple benefits for Nigerian enterprises. It cultivates creativity, innovation, and problem-solving by uniting individuals with varied experiences and viewpoints (Zahid, 2017). Moreover, a balanced and inclusive workforce enables firms to understand and cater to Nigeria's varied consumer demographic, resulting in expanded market reach and enhanced customer loyalty. Diversity fosters a more inclusive and equitable workplace, enhancing employee satisfaction, retention, and overall corporate performance (Osisioma, 2016).

Nevertheless, navigating inclusivity within Nigerian enterprises presents several problems. Ethnic and religion tensions, preconceptions, and biases can precipitate internal conflicts and obstruct collaboration. Gender inequality persists as a substantial concern, with women inadequately represented in leadership positions. Language limitations might hinder efficient communication. Addressing these difficulties necessitates proactive and diversified activities, cultural awareness, and the enforcement of egalitarian policies and ethics (Akinnusi, Sonubi & Oyewunmi, 2017; Akpakip, 2017). Nigerian firms are implementing diverse techniques to manage diversity efficiently, including diversity training programs, mentorship initiatives, and the establishment of diversity and inclusion committees. They are concentrating on developing inclusive policies, enhancing cultural understanding, and executing equitable recruiting and promotion processes (Al Raisi, Al Rawahi, Al Omrani, Al Hooti & Porkodi, 2019). Facilitating the unrestricted exchange of information and cultivating a culture of respect is essential for maximizing the benefits of diversity. Nigerian enterprises that proactively tackle diversity-related challenges are more likely to prosper while adhering to the tenets of social justice and inclusivity in this varied and dynamic economy (Akinnusi et al., 2017).

Workplace demographic diversity includes multiple characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, race, culture, and handicap. Gender diversity fosters equity and parity, uniting a variety of competencies and viewpoints. Age diversity, characterized by the coexistence of several generations in the workplace, cultivates a dynamic workforce that amalgamates expertise with innovative perspectives. Ethnic and racial diversity recognizes distinct cultural viewpoints, resulting in enhanced innovative problem-solving and improved market response. Cultural diversity improves flexibility in a worldwide environment, enabling effective interactions with varied stakeholders. Disability diversity underscores the need of accommodating individuals with impairments, fostering equitable opportunities, and exemplifying social responsibility (Alghazo & Al Shaiban, 2016; Barang'a & Maende, 2019; Ayega & Muathe, 2018; Cletus et al., 2018). The demographic variety of team members can substantially impact the dynamics of conflict within a group. Diversity fosters a multitude of viewpoints and opinions, although it may also heighten the likelihood of misunderstandings and tensions. Divergences in communication styles, ideals, and problem-solving methodologies may occasionally lead to misunderstandings and confrontations. When managed properly, demographic diversity can enhance team interactions by prompting members to explore other perspectives and learn from each other's distinct experiences, ultimately resulting in more innovative and comprehensive resolutions to conflicts (Cox, 1994). The influence of demographic diversity on conflict among team members might fluctuate based on the team's ability to accept and handle these differences effectively.

## 2.5 | Education and Work Experience Diversity and Team Member Conflict

Workplace educational diversity includes individuals' varied educational backgrounds, levels of schooling, degrees, and disciplines of study, which can enhance organizational knowledge and problem-solving capabilities. This diversity can foster more imaginative strategies for addressing difficulties and advancing the company (Creek, Kuhn & Sahaym, 2017). Diverse work experience, characterized by differing years of professional tenure, job functions, and industry backgrounds among employees, can augment an organization's efficiency and compliance, resulting in a more adaptable and resilient workforce (Barang'a & Maende, 2019). The interplay between education and diverse job experience on team member conflict is intricate. This diversity may lead to conflict when team members with varying educational backgrounds or professional experiences struggle to comprehend or appreciate each other's perspectives. Discrepancies in problem-solving methodologies may lead to miscommunications or conflicts. When skillfully handled, diversity in education and work experience can yield more comprehensive and imaginative conflict resolutions. Team members can leverage their different skills and experiences to cultivate a wider array of potential solutions,

fostering innovation and adaptability. Consequently, although diversity in education and work experience may initially present obstacles, it eventually has the capacity to improve conflict resolution processes within teams, promoting a more holistic approach to problem-solving (Cox, 1994).

## 2.6 | Cognitive and Personality Diversity and Team Member Conflict

Cognitive diversity in the workplace includes variations in cognitive styles and personality features among individuals, facilitating diverse problem-solving methods and thought processes (Hassanloo & Gelard, 2018). Cognitive types, including analytical, creative, and intuitive thinking, foster varied viewpoints and unique solutions. Diversity in personality qualities such as extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism can influence team dynamics and collaboration, resulting in a harmonious amalgamation of communication styles that fosters innovation and reliability (Igbadoo, Lawal, Shehu & Ikebuoso, 2021). Properly managing and valuing these cognitive and personality variations can enhance team performance and decision-making processes. The interplay of educational background and job experience diversity on team member conflict can be intricate. Diverse educational backgrounds and professional experiences among team members contribute unique perspectives and talents, facilitating innovative problem-solving. Nonetheless, these disparities may also incite conflict when team members fail to comprehend or appreciate one another's perspectives, resulting in miscommunications and disputes. Effective team leadership and communication are crucial for leveraging the benefits of educational and experiential diversity while alleviating potential conflicts. When effectively managed, such diversity can enhance comprehensive and innovative strategies for tackling challenges within the team (Cox, 1994).

## 2.7 | Language and Religion Diversity and Team Member Conflict

The language and religion diversity inside organizations underscores the importance of recognizing and accommodating employees' various main languages and religious beliefs, fostering an inclusive and tolerant environment (Al Raisi et al., 2019). Language diversity requires the provision of language assistance, translation services, and language training opportunities to facilitate effective communication and cultural comprehension among employees from diverse linguistic origins. Religion diversity entails establishing a workplace environment where employees can practice their faith free from discrimination. Provisions for religious practices, such as adaptable scheduling and allocated prayer spaces, reflect an organization's dedication to inclusivity and reverence for employees of various religious backgrounds (Goswami & Goswami, 2018; Mousa et al., 2020). Embracing linguistic and religion diversity enhances information exchange and cultural awareness, thereby contributing to an organization's success by expanding global market access and attracting premier talent. The influence of educational and experiential diversity on team member conflict is complex. Diverse educational backgrounds and work experiences can provide various perspectives and problem-solving methods to a team; however, conflicts may emerge if team members fail to comprehend or appreciate each other's viewpoints (Cox, 1994). Effective communication and collaboration are essential for harnessing the benefits of this diversity while minimizing potential conflicts. Moreover, organizations that actively confront these disparities by cultivating an inclusive philosophy, offering diversity training, and encouraging transparent communication can fully leverage the advantages of educational and experiential diversity, resulting in more holistic and innovative solutions to team challenges (Creek et al., 2017). When skillfully managed, diversity in education and job experience can boost team productivity and problem-solving ability.

## 2.8 | Theoretical Framework (Conflict Theory and The Unitary Theory)

Conflict theory, strongly associated with the pluralist paradigm proposed by Fox (1966), provides a viewpoint on organizational dynamics. This idea posits that organizations consist of multiple subsection groupings, each with own values, interests, and purposes. As a result, employees frequently possess ideals and ambitions that differ from those of management, resulting in persistent confrontations (Ngalo, Ogohi & Ibrahim, 2023). Conflict theorists contend that such conflicts are not only unavoidable but also rational, functional, and normative within organizations, typically resolved through compromise, consensus, or collective bargaining. From their perspective, trade unions serve a crucial function as legitimate adversaries to managerial authority and prerogatives. This viewpoint highlights the interplay between opposition and collaboration within the organizational framework. Trade unions are regarded as legitimate representative entities that enable employee groups to impact management decisions, championing their interests and concerns (Aderibigbe, 2010). Conflict theory acknowledges the significance of collective negotiation as a crucial mechanism for addressing the intrinsic conflicts between labor and

management. Aderibigbe (2010) posits that the pluralist perspective, grounded in conflict theory, is particularly pertinent for analyzing industrial relations in large unionized organizations. This viewpoint corresponds with the changing dynamics of modern society, where varied interests and values coexist, necessitating the open and constructive acknowledgment and resolution of disputes.

The unitary theory posits that organizations function as coherent and unified entities, both within the broader social system and as subsystems internally. This idea posits that the organization functions as a unified entity with a distinct and centralized authority framework. It underscores the presence of shared values, collective interests, and cohesive goals among its members. Proponents of this viewpoint regard individuals within the organization as constituents of a unified team or family, highlighting the significance of shared values, common objectives, and a collective future. Thus, the unitary theory signifies the absence of factionalism or internal divides inside the organization (Fajana & Shadare, 2012). Inside this framework, fighting is regarded as irrational or undesirable. Conflict resolution frequently necessitates a stringent response, such as the termination of striking employees, instead of pursuing dialogue or negotiation. Advocates of this viewpoint assert that managers and employees possess a mutual interest in securing the survival and prosperity of their enterprises. Conflicts are considered improbable to escalate to a level that would threaten the firm's solvency. Divisions that emerge are ascribed to factors such as personality disorders, improper recruitment and promotion practices, the deviance of dissenting individuals, or inadequacies in the organization's communication systems (Gbadamosi, 2011). Otite and Albert (2016) assert that the unitary perspective on industrial relations frequently results in the prohibition and suppression of trade unions, as they are perceived as illegitimate encroachments on management's authority. They are perceived as external forces vying with management for employee allegiance, while management aims to eradicate any other sources of authority within the workplace. This viewpoint leans towards authoritarianism and paternalism, prioritizing management's interests while advocating for consensus and industrial tranquility. It primarily presupposes that the organization functions in a state of complete harmony, rendering conflicts superfluous under this paradigm.

## 2.9 | Empirical Review

Osioma, Osioma, and Chukwumeka (2012) conducted a study including numerous formal organizations in Nigeria, covering both manufacturing and service sectors, with the objective of gathering comments from executives across a varied array of corporations and enterprises. The study utilized a Likert-type questionnaire distributed to 424 participants. Four research topics and their respective hypotheses were formulated for the study. The dataset underwent analysis through the mean and standard deviation of responses, while the hypotheses were evaluated using the t-test to determine the differences between means and the application of the students' t-distribution. The study ultimately advocated for the adoption of the Creative-Contingency strategy for dispute management as a sustainable resolution to conflicts inside organizations. Mba (2013) did a research study examining conflict management and its effects on employee performance at JB Nig. PLC, Bonny Island. The research approach utilized was descriptive, employing a sample of 50 respondents, consisting of 25 executive and non-executive personnel from JB Nig. PLC, Bonny Island. The essential data required for the investigation were mostly obtained through a cross-sectional design. The analyzed data indicated a substantial correlation between conflict management strategies and employee performance. Longe (2015) conducted empirical examinations that indicated a significant and positive correlation between conflict management strategies, including collective bargaining, compromise, and accommodation, and organizational success. In contrast, non-integrative conflict management tactics, such as competition, domination, and alternative dispute resolution, were statistically shown to adversely affect organizational performance. The regression analysis findings indicated that the collective bargaining technique demonstrated the most robust and substantial positive association with management performance. The study's findings also showed that workplace conflicts can originate from varied organizational settings founded in economic and goal-incompatible orientations.

Ogaga (2017) evaluated three forms of company conflict – specifically, relational, task, and process conflict – on employee performance within the Nigerian cement manufacturing sector, with a specific focus on Dangote Cement Company's Gboko Plant. The research applied two distinct estimate techniques: the Pearson correlation and the logit estimation approach. Examination of the logit estimation results revealed that among the three conflict types, only relationship conflict significantly affects employee performance. Additionally, the Pearson correlation study demonstrated that while relationship conflict has a deleterious influence on performance, both task and process conflicts favorably affect workers' production. However, the favorable association documented between process conflict and performance

was unanticipated. Finally, it was noticed through the Pearson correlation method that there exists a very weak association between all various sorts of organizational conflict and worker performance at Dangote Cement Plc.

Owan (2018) conducted a study which was focused on conflict management tactics and the job involvement of secondary school teachers. The study attempted to analyze this link by proposing six null hypotheses to guide its inquiry. It exploited both correlational and factorial research designs to achieve its objectives. The studies offered numerous key insights. Firstly, it was established that the amount of employment involvement among teachers in the ObubraLGA was especially high. This shows that teachers in this region displayed a significant commitment and engagement with their work. Moreover, the study uncovered that four distinct conflict resolving tactics, including arbitration, conversation, effective communication, and smoothing, jointly exerted a considerable impact on job participation of secondary school teachers. In summary, these conflict managing tactics played a crucial part in shaping teachers' passion and involvement with their professional jobs. Adeniran and Adeniyi (2018) examined issues that transcend leadership's authority in the context of conflict management within the Nigerian university system. This study utilized desk research to thoroughly investigate conflict management, mostly relying on existing data from textbooks, online resources, journals, and other pertinent materials. The study indicated that conflict is an intrinsic element of human existence and cannot be completely eliminated. Nevertheless, its influence can be alleviated to avert interference with organizational operations and the decline of employees' job performance. Agbo (2020) did a study at the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State to explore the impact of conflict management on organizational performance. The study utilized a descriptive approach and analyzed responses from 85 questionnaires with SPSS software, revealing a positive and substantial correlation between conflict management and organizational performance. The organization's deployment of motivating packages was recognized as a potentially beneficial factor for its personnel. The study determined that sustaining good dispute resolution processes in the workplace significantly enhanced business performance by promoting cooperation and oversight of activities. The recommendations encompassed the establishment of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, the evaluation of personnel competence in appointing conflict management representatives, and ongoing education and training for employees regarding proper grievance procedures to avert unlawful activities.

Chika-Anyanwu and Oparanma (2020) performed a theoretical analysis examining the influences of employee morale and conflict in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. It explores the complexities of conflict, including its causes and different types, while also offering comprehensive literature evaluations on both conflict and employee morale. The study examines the critical elements of conflict management, its consequences, and the intricate relationship between conflict and employee morale in industrial companies in Rivers State. The research highlights the ubiquitous and unavoidable character of disputes inside these organizations, encompassing interpersonal, intergroup, intrapersonal, and intra-organizational dimensions, informed by both conventional and contemporary conflict theories. It differentiates between productive and destructive conflicts and identifies core reasons, including divergent objectives, values, communication barriers, and power struggles. The study underscores the necessity of effective conflict resolution to avert detrimental effects on employee morale, which may result in diminished productivity, failure to achieve objectives, heightened absenteeism, inferior service quality, decreased profitability, and the cultivation of negative emotions such as frustration, anger, fear, distrust, and resentment among staff.

Madubuegwu, Ugwuozor, Onwe, and Nkiruka (2022) examined the distinctive characteristics of conflicts and the solutions for their management within the organizational framework of the Nigeria Customs Service (NSC). This study used a descriptive survey approach, administering questionnaires to a sample of 430 respondents. Responses were subjected to statistical analysis utilizing mean rating scores to examine four study topics including causes driving conflicts, their impacts, conflict management tactics, and their evaluation. The data indicated that the implemented conflict management strategies obtained a notably low grand mean score of 2.4, which is below the predetermined decision threshold of 2.5. This indicates that the existing conflict management protocols within the Nigeria Customs Service are inadequate, underscoring the pressing necessity for reform. This paper recommends the implementation of centralized and decentralized conflict management mechanisms and underscores the necessity of conducting in-service workshops on conflict resolution techniques to improve performance and productivity within the Nigeria Customs Service.

## 3 | METHODOLOGY

The research employed a cross-sectional research design, which is suitable for characterizing or examining a specific population at a particular point in time. This design allows for the use of a carefully selected sample to

represent a larger population, making it conducive for analyzing relationships between variables and conducting a detailed analysis of a specific research problem. In this case, the research focuses on investigating the relationship between diversity in various dimensions and team member conflict. The research population comprises all 800 employees of Premium Steel and Mines Limited (PSML), which is a significant steel manufacturing facility in Nigeria. To gather data, a convenient sampling technique was employed to select 120 employees (respondents) from the plant. The data collection instrument used for this study is a self-structured questionnaire consisting of two sections. These sections cover diversity dimensions (such as demographic, education and work experience, cognitive and personality, language and religion diversity), and questions related to team member conflict. Data analysis involved the use of simple percentages and frequencies to characterize responses, as well as descriptive and inferential statistics to examine research hypotheses.

**4 | DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

The researcher distributed a total of 120 questionnaires to the staff of Delta Steel Company's Warri plant, also known as PSML, which is a significant steel manufacturing facility in Nigeria. Out of these, 100 were filled out correctly and returned. Table 1 provides a breakdown of how the questionnaires were distributed among the sampled respondents. Subsequent sections will present and analyze the generated data.

**Table 1: Distributed and Collected Questionnaires**

Department	Number Issued	Number Returned	Percentage (%) Returned	Number Not Returned	Percentage (%) Not Returned
Administration	30	25	20.8	5	4.17
Finance	30	26	21.7	4	3.33
Personnel	30	24	20	6	5
Operational	30	25	20.8	5	4.17
Total	120	100	83.3	20	16.67

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2025.

The "Mean" column in Table 2 represents the average value for each variable. It provides a measure of the central tendency of the data. The mean score for "Team Member Conflict" is 4.298, suggesting that, on average, team member conflict scores in this category were around 4.3. The "Minimum" column shows the lowest value observed for each variable. The minimum score for "Team Member Conflict" is 1, indicating that the lowest recorded score for this variable was 1. The "Maximum" column displays the highest value observed for each variable. For instance, the maximum score for "Education & Work" is 5, indicating that the highest recorded score in this category was 5. Based on this information, it seems that the researcher have collected data on various measures of diversity and team member conflict in the context of mining sector firms in Nigeria. The mean scores for each variable provide insight into the average levels or perceptions of diversity and team member conflict within the study sample. The minimum and maximum values indicate the range of responses or scores observed for each variable.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Team Member Conflict	4.298	1	5
Demographic Diversity	4.434	1	5
Education & Work Diversity	4.72	1	5
Cognitive & Personality Diversity	4.474	1	5
Language & Religion Diversity	4.46	1	5

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2025.

To evaluate the reliability of the instruments used, Cronbach's alpha was utilized. This choice was made because Cronbach's alpha not only gauges the internal consistency of the items but also verifies whether these items can be considered as measuring a single dimension. For "Team Members' Conflict," the C- alpha coefficient is 0.9920, close to 1.

This suggests that the items related to team members' conflict in the study are highly internally consistent, indicating a strong relationship among these items. Similarly, for "Demographic," "Cognitive & Personality," and "Language & Religion," the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are all quite high (close to 0.99), indicating high internal consistency among the items within these variables. For "Education & Work Experience," the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.9943, which is even higher, suggesting exceptionally high internal consistency among the items measuring education and work experience.

Overall, the high Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all variables indicate that the items used to measure these constructs in the study are reliably consistent with each other and likely measure a single dimension or construct effectively. This is a positive sign of the reliability of the measurement instruments.

**Table 3: Cronbach Alpha**

Variable	Coefficient of Cronbach Alpha
Team Members' Conflict	0.9920
Demographic Diversity	0.9907
Education & Work Experience Diversity	0.9943
Cognitive & Personality Diversity	0.9902
Language & Religion Diversity	0.9903

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2025.

**4.1 | Test of Hypotheses**

Ho1: examine the influence of demographic diversity on team's member conflict in mining sector firms in Nigeria.

The coefficient for "Demographic Diversity" as presented in Table 4 is -0.25528. This negative coefficient suggests that as demographic diversity increases, team members' conflict tends to decrease. The standard error is 0.12006, and the t-statistic is -2.13 with a p-value of 0.036. The negative coefficient indicates that a higher degree of demographic variety is linked with lower conflict in firms. Possible reasons for this result could be that the team brings a variety of viewpoints and understandings, which often results to open and constructive communication, reducing conflicts. The p-value of 0.036 suggests that this relationship is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

Ho2: examine the influence of education and work experience diversity on team's member conflict in mining sector firms in Nigeria.

The coefficient for "Education and Work Experience Diversity" as presented in Table 4 is 0.27974. This positive coefficient indicates that an upsurge in education and work experience diversity is associated with an upsurge in team members' conflict. The standard error is 0.08394, and the t-statistic is 3.33 with a p-value of 0.001, indicating statistical significance. One potential reason for this result could be that differences in education and work experience usually result to varying opinions and approaches, which can sometimes result in conflicts in a team. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

Ho3: examine the effect of cognitive and personality diversity on team's member conflict in mining sector firms in Nigeria.

The coefficient for "Cognitive and Personality Diversity" as presented in Table 4 is 0.21308. This strongly positive coefficient suggests that as cognitive and personality diversity increases, team members' conflict significantly increases as well. The standard error is 0.25908, and the t-statistic is 4.68 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating high statistical significance. This result implies that teams with a greater diversity of cognitive styles and personality traits encounters more conflicts. The reason could be that such diversity usually results to differing problem-solving approaches, which can sometimes clash. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

Ho4: examine the influence of language and religion diversity on team's member conflict in mining sector firms in Nigeria.

The coefficient for "Language and Religion Diversity" as presented in Table 4 is -0.28507. This negative coefficient suggests that an increase in language and religion diversity is related with a decrease in team members' conflict, although the relationship is not statistically significant as indicated by the p-value of 0.239. The standard error is 0.24050, and the t-statistic is -1.19. The lack of statistical significance means that the relationship may not be robust. Possible reasons for this result could be that this variable may not always be sources of conflict or could be mitigated through active communication and accommodation. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

Overall, the R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) value which indicates the degree of variation in the dependent variable that can be accounted for by the predicting variable (demographic diversity, education & work experience, cognitive & personality diversity, language & religion diversity) is 0.965. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.965 indicates that about 96.5% variation in team members' conflict is accounted for by diversity (demographic diversity, education & work experience, cognitive & personality diversity, language & religion diversity). The adjusted R-square (Adj R<sup>2</sup>) of 0.963 represents the fit of the model (goodness of fit) which means that the regression model is good as diversity statistically and significantly predicts team members' conflict.

**Table 4: Multiple Regression**

Variable	Dependent Variable: Team Members' Conflict			
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-statistics	p-value
Demographic Diversity	-0.25528	0.12006	-2.13	0.036
Education & Work Experience	0.27974	0.08394	3.33	0.001
Cognitive & Personality Diversity	0.21308	0.25908	4.68	0.000
Language & Religion Diversity	-0.28507	0.24050	-1.19	0.239
Constant	-0.04638	0.11874	-0.39	0.697
Prob > F				0.0000
R-squared (R <sup>2</sup> )				0.9653
Adj R-squared (Adj R <sup>2</sup> )				0.9639

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2025.

## 5 | CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcome of this regression analysis shed light on the intricate connection between diversity and team members' conflict within the context of mining sector firms in Nigeria. Notably, our study indicated that demographic diversity and language and religion diversity have a tendency to mitigate conflict, as indicated by the negative coefficient. This suggests that teams with a bigger range of demographic backgrounds experience lower levels of conflict, potentially due to the enhanced variety of perspectives and experiences, which can foster more constructive communication and collaboration. Conversely, education and work experience diversity and cognitive and personality diversity were associated with heightened conflict. These positive coefficients imply that teams characterized by greater differences in education, work experiences, cognitive styles, and personality traits are more likely to encounter conflicts, possibly arising from contrasting approaches to problem-solving and communication. However, it is essential to recognize that these relationships are observational and do not necessarily imply causation, and other unexamined factors may contribute to the observed conflict dynamics.

These findings underscore the importance of recognizing and managing the multifaceted aspects of diversity within teams in the mining sector. While embracing demographic diversity can be advantageous in reducing conflicts, organizations should be mindful of the potential challenges posed by cognitive and personality differences and education and work experience disparities. Therefore, effective conflict resolution strategies and team-building initiatives that leverage the strengths of diverse teams while addressing potential sources of discord should be considered in order to harness the full potential of diversity and promote harmonious collaboration in mining sector firms in Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that mining sector firms in Nigeria adopt a proactive approach to diversity management. However, organizations should also invest in training and communication strategies that help bridge differences in education, work experiences, cognitive styles, and personality traits among team members. By promoting effective conflict resolution skills and creating an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated, these firms can harness the richness of diversity while minimizing potential sources of discord, ultimately enhancing teamwork and productivity in the mining sector.

This study focused on the effect of diversity on team member's conflict. However, it was revealed by the study that demographic diversity, Language and Religion Diversity has a negative influence on team member's conflict. This study examined the effect of diversity on team members' conflict, a case study of mining sector in Nigeria. It is therefore suggested that further research should be done on the two construct under study using another sector as a case study.

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