

**EFFECT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISM ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN TARABA STATE UNIVERSITY JALINGO**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Conflict is a natural and inevitable aspect of organizational dynamics, particularly in complex institutions such as universities where individuals from diverse cultural, professional, and academic backgrounds interact daily. In such settings, divergent goals, values, and perspectives often lead to disagreements and misunderstandings that, if left unmanaged, can escalate into disruptive disputes. Scholars have long recognized that conflict, when properly addressed, can be a catalyst for innovation, improved decision-making, and organizational growth. However, unmanaged or poorly handled conflict frequently results in diminished employee morale, strained workplace relationships, and declining institutional performance.

**Conflict resolution**, according to Rahim (2011), refers to the process through which two or more parties find a peaceful solution to a disagreement, aiming to minimize the negative outcomes of conflict while enhancing learning and group effectiveness. Over the past decade, conflict resolution mechanisms have emerged as a critical element of strategic organizational leadership. Modern management theory emphasizes that effective conflict resolution is fundamental to maintaining a healthy organizational climate, fostering employee collaboration, and sustaining high productivity levels. Within educational institutions, where teamwork, research collaboration, and administrative coordination are essential, the importance of structured conflict resolution mechanisms cannot be overstated. Universities, as centers of learning and knowledge creation, depend heavily on harmonious relationships among faculty, staff, and administrators to achieve their academic and organizational goals. Persistent and unresolved conflicts undermine these relationships, disrupt academic programs, and erode institutional credibility.

Globally, conflict resolution mechanisms have evolved beyond punitive or authoritarian approaches to embrace participatory and dialogue-driven mechanisms. Among these, constructive negotiation, tactical avoidance, reasonable compromise, and restorative dialogue have been identified as central techniques that shape organizational outcomes (Thompson & Nadler, 2019; Katz & Flynn, 2022; Zehr & Jones, 2021). Constructive negotiation is widely acknowledged as an essential conflict resolution tool that fosters open communication, mutual understanding, and joint problem-solving. When effectively implemented, constructive negotiation can transform adversarial interactions into collaborative efforts, thereby enhancing employee productivity and organizational performance (Safiyanu & Elijah, 2025).

Tactical avoidance, on the other hand, is a conflict-handling style where parties intentionally refrain from direct engagement in disputes. While tactical avoidance can provide temporary relief from tension, research indicates that unresolved conflicts often resurface, sometimes with greater intensity, thereby impairing employee morale and disrupting institutional harmony (Katz & Flynn, 2022). Reasonable compromise occupies a middle ground, encouraging conflicting parties to make concessions for mutual benefit. This approach has been linked to improved cooperation, reduced workplace hostility, and enhanced team performance in organizational settings.

Restorative dialogue relatively recent addition to conflict resolution mechanism goes beyond immediate dispute resolution to address the deeper relational and emotional dimensions of workplace conflicts. These practices emphasize dialogue, empathy, and reconciliation, aiming to

repair damaged relationships and foster long-term institutional stability (Zehr & Jones, 2021; Ogbu & Ogbechie, 2024). In educational institutions, restorative approaches are particularly valuable as they build collegial trust, support academic freedom, and cultivate a collaborative environment conducive to learning and knowledge sharing.

Employee performance refers to the extent to which employees successfully execute their assigned tasks, contribute to institutional goals, and demonstrate efficiency, quality output, and innovation in their roles (Dessler, 2021; Martin & Kolb, 2020). In higher education institutions, employee performance encompasses a broad spectrum of responsibilities, including teaching, research, administrative duties, and service delivery to students and the community. Empirical research suggests that performance levels are significantly shaped by the work environment, leadership practices, and the presence or absence of workplace conflicts. Thus, understanding the direct and indirect effects of these conflict management techniques on employee performance is critical for fostering a sustainable and high-functioning academic workforce, particularly within Nigerian universities struggling with recurrent industrial and interpersonal disputes.

### **Statement of Problem**

Ideally, conflict resolution within higher education institutions is expected to serve as a mechanism that enhances fairness, fosters employee loyalty, and improves overall performance. When properly managed, conflict mechanism grounded in bargaining, dialogue, and restoration should act as catalysts for innovation, improved decision-making and organizational growth, ensuring that the diverse perspectives within a university lead to constructive outcomes rather than disruption.

However, the reality at Taraba State University, Jalingo, stands in contrast to this ideal. Reports indicate that inadequate conflict resolution mechanisms have fueled persistent disputes and strained staff-management relations (Abubakar & Fatima, 2025). rather than being resolved constructively, these conflicts often result in disrupted academic calendars, prolonged industrial disputes, and a general decline in institutional efficiency.

This situation negatively affects multiple stakeholders. Primarily, it impacts the employees (academic and non-academic staff) by lowering morale, increasing absenteeism, and diminishing teaching and research output. Consequently, this affects the students through disrupted learning schedules and poor outcomes, ultimately undermining the organizational effectiveness of the university as a whole. Existing research has established that conflict resolution mechanism generally influence organizational outcomes (Gibbons & Lawrence, 2022; Okonkwo, 2025). However, these studies have largely focused on corporate settings or general industrial actions. While scholars have recognized the importance of conflict resolution in broader management theory, the literature is heavily skewed toward business enterprises rather than academic environments.

There is a critical scarcity of empirical research-to the best of the researcher's knowledge-that specifically evaluates how distinct techniques such as negotiation, avoidance, compromise, and restorative practices affect employee performance within the specific context of Nigerian universities. The current body of knowledge leaves a gap in understanding how these targeted strategies can be effectively deployed to improve productivity in higher education institutions like Taraba State University.

Therefore, the broad objective of this research is to examine the effect of conflict resolution mechanisms on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo, to provide evidence-based recommendations for promoting institutional harmony and academic excellence.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of conflict resolution mechanism on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. The specific objectives were to:

- i. determine the effect of constructive negotiation on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

- ii. ascertain the effect of tactical avoidance on the performance of employees in Taraba State University, Jalingo.
- iii. determine the effect of reasonable compromise on employee performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.
- iv. determine the effect of restorative dialogue practices on employee performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo.

## **Literature review**

### **Concept of Employee Performance**

Armstrong and Taylor (2022) define employee performance as “the degree to which an individual executes their assigned roles and responsibilities, meeting or surpassing established standards of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality” (p. 310). This definition emphasizes alignment with organizational benchmarks and expectations. Similarly, Meyer and Allen (2023) describe employee performance as “observable and measurable behaviors that directly or indirectly contribute to the organizational goals” (p. 415), suggesting that performance encompasses not only task completion but also discretionary behaviors such as teamwork and initiative. O’Neill and McLarnon (2024) provide a psychological perspective, defining it as “a multidimensional construct involving both task performance, which relates to core job duties, and contextual performance, which includes supportive behaviors that enhance the social and psychological climate of the workplace” (p. 68). Finally, Dunford and Jones (2022) conceptualize it as “a combination of employee efficiency, quality of output, adaptability, and contribution to collective organizational success” (p. 877). Collectively, these scholarly definitions reveal that employee performance is not limited to measurable output but also involves qualitative factors that sustain organizational growth and cohesion.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution is a multifaceted concept that refers to the processes, strategies, and mechanisms employed to address and manage disputes between individuals or groups with the aim acceptable solution. According to Deutsch (2022), conflict resolution involves structured interactions that enable conflicting parties to recognize their differences, understand the underlying causes of disputes, and collaboratively develop solutions that satisfy the needs of all stakeholders involved. It is not merely the suppression of disagreements but rather a constructive engagement designed to transform potentially destructive confrontations into opportunities for learning, growth, and enhanced cooperation within organizations.

Rahim and Katz (2020) define conflict management as “the process of designing effective strategies to minimize the negative consequences of conflict while enhancing the positive outcomes that can benefit the organization and its members” (p. 388). This definition highlights that conflict resolution is not solely about eliminating disputes but also about leveraging differences to achieve organizational and individual benefits. Aritz and Walker (2023) similarly emphasize that well-managed conflicts can foster creativity, innovation, and stronger workplace relationships by encouraging open communication and collaborative problem-solving. When conflicts are ignored or mishandled, however, they often escalate, leading to reduced employee morale, impaired teamwork, and diminished organizational productivity (Crampton & Wagner, 2021).

### **Constructive negotiation**

Rahim and Katz (2020) define constructive negotiation as “a deliberate, structured process where conflicting parties communicate directly, make reciprocal concessions, and collaborate to achieve a solution that minimizes negative consequences while maximizing organizational and individual benefits” (p. 391). This definition emphasizes the deliberate nature of negotiation and its focus on balancing outcomes for both employees and management. Similarly, Gelfand, Aycan, and Erez (2021) describe negotiation as “an interpersonal decision-making process required whenever individuals cannot achieve their objectives independently and must work together to develop

integrative solutions” (p. 287). This perspective situates negotiation as a collaborative tool that compels stakeholders to move beyond isolated pursuits and instead cooperate for joint problem-solving.

Deutsch (2022) further conceptualizes constructive negotiation as “a conflict resolution mechanism that balances power dynamics and competing interests through open dialogue and the exploration of joint gains, aimed at fostering long-term relational harmony” (p. 114). By highlighting power balancing and relational sustainability, Deutsch’s definition extends negotiation’s utility beyond immediate conflict resolution to the preservation of constructive workplace relationships. Additionally, Friedman and Currall (2022) define it as “the process of constructive communication between disputing parties aimed at reconciling opposing goals and interests through bargaining and strategic compromise” (p. 152). This definition draws attention to negotiation’s strategic component, where structured bargaining leads to solutions that are equitable and sustainable. Collectively, these scholarly definitions illustrate that negotiation is not a mere transactional exchange but rather a dynamic, relational, and integrative process that transforms conflict into collaborative opportunity.

### **Tactical Avoidance**

Tactical avoidance is one of the commonly recognized mechanism for managing organizational conflict, though it is often regarded as a passive or less constructive approach compared to negotiation or collaboration. It refers to the deliberate decision of individuals or groups to withdraw from or postpone addressing a conflict, thereby avoiding direct confrontation or engagement with the underlying issues. According to Katz and Flynn (2022), avoidance is a conflict-handling style where individuals sidestep disputes either by changing the subject, evading contentious discussions, or retreating physically or emotionally from the conflict situation. While this approach may temporarily defuse tension, it does not necessarily resolve the root causes of conflict, making its long-term effectiveness questionable in many organizational contexts.

Scholars have provided different definitions of tactical avoidance, illustrating its complexity and varying implications for workplace dynamics. Rahim and Katz (2020) define avoidance as the behavioral tendency to withdraw from or delay conflict interaction with the intent of reducing immediate confrontation, even at the expense of problem resolution. This definition emphasizes tactical avoidance as a mechanism primarily concerned with minimizing short-term discomfort rather than fostering lasting solutions. Similarly, Deutsch (2022) conceptualizes tactical avoidance as “a conflict management style characterized by disengagement from contentious situations, marked by low assertiveness and low cooperation” (p. 118), highlighting its passive nature in balancing personal and organizational interests.

Gelfand, Aycan, and Erez (2021) provide another perspective, defining tactical avoidance as a strategic retreat from direct conflict engagement, adopted when the perceived costs of confrontation outweigh the anticipated benefits of resolution. This definition introduces a calculated dimension to tactical avoidance, suggesting that it may sometimes be a rational and protective choice in hierarchical or politically sensitive organizations. Furthermore, Friedman and Currall (2022) describe avoidance as the conscious decision to disengage from overt conflict expression to maintain temporary peace or defer engagement until conditions become more favorable. These scholarly interpretations collectively reveal that avoidance is not merely inaction but rather a nuanced response shaped by interpersonal, cultural, and organizational considerations.

The role of tactical avoidance in conflict resolution has been debated extensively in academic literature. On one hand, avoidance can serve as a tactical pause that allows emotionally charged situations to cool down before constructive dialogue resumes. This cooling-off effect can prevent immediate escalation and provide time for reflection, particularly in highly tense or polarized environments (Deutsch, 2022). For instance, in universities where hierarchical relationships between faculty, staff, and administration can complicate open dialogue, temporary avoidance may prevent conflicts from spiraling into public disputes that damage institutional reputation (Owoicho, 2024).

**Reasonable Compromise**

Reasonable compromise is one of the most widely employed mechanisms for conflict resolution in organizational settings and is often viewed as a middle-ground approach that seeks to balance the competing interests of disputing parties. Thompson and Nadler (2019) defined reasonable compromise as a resolution mechanism where each party involved in a conflict relinquishes certain demands to reach an agreement that partially satisfies their objectives. This definition underscores the reciprocal nature of reasonable compromise and its focus on balancing interests rather than maximizing joint gains. Similarly, Deutsch (2022) conceptualizes compromise as “a problem-solving method characterized by intermediate concern for one’s own outcomes and those of others, leading to solutions that are satisfactory but not optimal” (p. 120). This interpretation highlights the functional but limited nature of compromise compared to integrative conflict resolution approaches. Friedman and Currall (2022) offer another perspective, describing compromise as a practical conflict management approach that prioritizes expediency and fairness through the exchange of concessions, enabling quick settlement of disputes while preserving working relationships. This view emphasizes compromise’s efficiency in preventing prolonged disputes and maintaining organizational harmony. Finally, O’Neill and McLarnon (2024) define reasonable compromise as a decision-making process where opposing parties partially accommodate each other’s needs, resulting in balanced outcomes that reduce hostility and facilitate continued collaboration. Collectively, these definitions illustrate that reasonable compromise is neither as collaborative as negotiation nor as passive as avoidance but occupies a central role in resolving conflicts with minimal disruption to organizational functioning.

It is fundamentally characterized by mutual concession, where each party involved in a disagreement relinquishes part of its demands or expectations to achieve an agreement that is acceptable to all. Unlike negotiation, which aims for integrative, win-win solutions, compromise generally results in partial satisfaction for both parties, trading off the possibility of complete fulfillment of interests in favor of swift and practical resolutions. According to Rahim and Katz (2020), compromise represents a conflict-handling style that operates on moderate levels of assertiveness and cooperation, making it a pragmatic choice in scenarios where maintaining workplace relationships is essential.

**Restorative dialogue**

Scholars have offered various definitions of restorative dialogue, each highlighting unique aspects of this approach. Zehr (2021), considered a pioneer in restorative justice theory, defines restorative dialogue as a set of principles and processes that seek to involve all stakeholders in addressing harm, repairing relationships, and restoring balance in the community affected by conflict. This definition underscores inclusivity and relational repair as central elements of the practice. Ogbu and Ogbechie (2024) conceptualize restorative dialogue as ethically grounded conflict management techniques that emphasize dialogue, accountability, and empathy, with the objective of fostering collective understanding and long-term reconciliation. This interpretation highlights the ethical and emotional dimensions that distinguish restorative approaches from conventional resolution mechanisms. Meanwhile, Safiyanu and Elijah (2025) describe them as “institutional frameworks that shift the focus from blame and punishment to healing, relationship-building, and the proactive prevention of workplace disputes. Collectively, these definitions illustrate that restorative practices extend beyond resolving immediate disputes to cultivating a supportive and empathetic organizational culture that nurtures harmony and resilience.

Restorative dialogue represents a contemporary and transformative approach to conflict resolution that has gained prominence in organizational and educational settings over the past two decades. Unlike traditional methods that focus solely on punitive measures or quick settlements, restorative practices aim to repair relationships, rebuild trust, and address the underlying causes of disputes. This approach views conflict not merely as a problem to be managed but as an opportunity for learning, dialogue, and strengthening community bonds within organizations. Zehr and Jones (2021) describe restorative practices as structured processes that prioritize open communication, mutual

understanding, and collective problem-solving, enabling disputing parties to reconcile differences in a manner that promotes healing and sustainable peace.

### **Empirical Review**

Friedman and Currall (2022), conducted a study with the aim of identifying the effect that avoidance has on conflict management on the productivity of the employees in the public sector. The rationale for the study was to establish the consequences of applying avoidance as a way of dealing with conflicts in the long run on productivity, teamwork, and morale. The study employed cross-sectional survey and the subjects of the study were 150 public sector employees whose performance was observed for two years. To search for patterns and relationship, data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The study also showed that avoidance was associated with negative outcomes for the employees' performance including low productivity, dissatisfaction, and stress. Moreover, if the conflicts are not resolved, they were understood to escalate and involve more of the organization. They also discovered that while avoidance might be useful in the short term it is generally detrimental to performance in the long term. The researchers recommended that organizations should not maintain the culture of avoidance and should encourage positive approach to conflict management.

deleke and John (2023) explored how conflict management styles, including avoidance, influenced staff performance at three public universities. Data collected from 250 respondents and analyzed using regression analysis showed that avoidance significantly reduced organizational efficiency by fostering unresolved disputes and low staff morale. The study concluded that persistent avoidance strategies lead to communication breakdowns, which ultimately harm teaching effectiveness and administrative delivery.

Friedman, Tidd, Currall, and Tsai (2022) investigated avoidance behaviors in multinational companies across Africa and Europe. Surveying 420 employees, they discovered that avoidance contributed to increased absenteeism, repeated conflicts, and lower job satisfaction. However, the research also indicated that short-term avoidance can be beneficial in highly tense situations as a cooling-off mechanism, allowing parties to revisit disputes under less emotional strain.

Jones (2022) conducted a mixed-method study in U.S. higher education institutions to explore how restorative practices influence employee performance and workplace relationships. Using surveys and semi-structured interviews with 180 academic and administrative staff, the study found that supervisors who utilized restorative dialogue circles and mediation techniques reported improved emotional intelligence, accountability, and communication within their teams. This approach led to higher staff engagement and collaboration, contributing positively to overall job performance and conflict resolution effectiveness.

In the Ugandan educational sector, Ajaiyeoba (2024) examined the impact of restorative practices on staff productivity and institutional harmony across 12 secondary schools. Data from 210 respondents analyzed using regression models showed that implementing restorative harm-repair meetings and peer mediation accounted for a 28% improvement in teamwork and conflict management efficiency. The study concluded that restorative frameworks reduced interpersonal hostility and improved collective problem-solving, thereby enhancing employee performance.

Tumwebaze, Augustine & Osunsan (2020) examined the impact of compromise on employee performance at Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). A sample of 222 respondents was analyzed through regression models ( $R^2 = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), showing that compromise significantly accounted for 25% of variance in performance. The study concluded that compromise is an effective and low-cost conflict resolution strategy, albeit its value diminishes when overused.

Okereke, Eze & Asogwa (2022) investigated conflict management strategies including compromise on employee performance at the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Enugu State. Using survey data from 112 respondents and z-score analysis, they found that compromise (alongside collaboration and avoidance) had a significant positive effect on staff promptness, enforcement capacity, and overall productivity

**Theoretical Framework****The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) Theory**

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) Theory, developed in 1974 by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, is a prominent framework for understanding how individuals manage conflict in organizational settings. The theory identifies five primary conflict-handling modes: competing, collaborating, accommodating, avoiding, and compromising (Thomas, 2021). These modes are derived from the dual concern model, which emphasizes two behavioral dimensions: assertiveness, or the degree to which individuals strive to satisfy their own interests, and cooperativeness, or the extent to which they aim to satisfy the concerns of others (Kilmann & Thomas, 2022). Each mode represents a distinct approach to conflict, with competing characterized by high assertiveness and low cooperativeness, collaborating involving high levels of both, accommodating reflecting low assertiveness and high cooperativeness, avoiding marked by low levels of both, and compromising reflecting moderate assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Within university environments such as Taraba State University, Jalingo, the TKI framework is valuable for diagnosing conflict-handling behaviors and guiding effective dispute resolution. For instance, negotiation aligns closely with the collaborating mode, as it seeks to foster open dialogue and mutually beneficial solutions. Avoidance mirrors the withdrawing style, where conflicts are deferred rather than addressed, while compromise corresponds to a middle-ground approach in which both parties make concessions to reach quick agreements (Currall, 2022). Applying the TKI theory enables researchers to assess which conflict modes are most prevalent in the institution and evaluate their influence on employee performance, job satisfaction, and workplace relationships.

Despite its practical application, the TKI Theory has faced scholarly criticism. One limitation is its oversimplification of conflict behavior into only five modes, potentially neglecting the fluid and context-dependent nature of real-world disputes (Rahim & Katz, 2020). Moreover, the framework has been critiqued for its Western-centric assumptions, as it presumes assertiveness and cooperativeness are universally valid dimensions of conflict management (Gelfand, Aycan, & Erez, 2021). In collectivist societies, such as Nigeria, conflict resolution often prioritizes communal harmony and relationship preservation, which may not align neatly with TKI's typology. Additionally, the model focuses on individual conflict styles without adequately accounting for organizational structures, historical grievances, and systemic power dynamics that also shape conflict outcomes (Deutsch, 2022).

Nevertheless, the TKI remains a widely used and influential model due to its diagnostic simplicity and adaptability. It provides a structured means of analyzing behavioral tendencies during conflict, allowing organizations to identify dominant handling styles and areas for improvement. For Taraba State University, employing the TKI framework while recognizing its limitations can help administrators and staff understand existing conflict resolution patterns and strategically select approaches that foster cooperation and enhance employee productivity. When complemented by culturally sensitive interpretations and integrated with other theoretical perspectives, such as Conflict Transformation Theory, the TKI can significantly contribute to the development of sustainable conflict management policies in higher education institutions.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a survey research design. With total population of 1524 consisting of staff stratify based on faculties faculty Agriculture 122, Art 152, communication and media studies 76, education 229, engineering 122, health science 91, law 61, management sciences 229, science 274 and social science 168. The sample size for the study is determined using Taro Yamane formula  $n =$

$\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} n = \frac{1524}{1+1524(0.05)^2} n = \frac{1524}{4.81} n = 317$ . The sampling techniques utilized for the study is simple random sampling. Data for the study were collected through primary source, utilizing the questionnaires to get appropriate information. Regression analysis was utilized to determine the

relationship that exist between conflict resolution mechanism and employees' performance in Taraba State University Jalingo

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Summary of Coefficient Results

Hypotheses	Variables	B	SE B	B	T	P	Decision
H <sub>01</sub>	Constructive Negotiation (NM)	0.470	0.039	0.471	12.102	.000	Rejected
H <sub>02</sub>	Tactical Avoidance (AM)	0.501	0.041	0.479	12.240	.035	Accepted
H <sub>03</sub>	Reasonable Compromise (CM)	0.288	0.039	0.289	7.439	.005	Rejected
H <sub>04</sub>	Restorative Dialogue (RP)	0.349	0.040	0.338	8.658	.000	Rejected
F Value	94.299						
F Sig	.000						
R <sup>2</sup>	.567						
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.561						
Durbin-Watson	1.894						

### Source; Field Survey (2025)

The model summary shows an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.567, meaning that 56.7% of the variation in employee performance is explained by the four predictors-Negotiation, Avoidance, Compromise, and Restorative Practices. The Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (0.561) is very close to the R<sup>2</sup>, indicating that the model is stable and reliable with minimal overestimation. The F-statistic (94.299,  $p < .05$ ) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant and that at least one of the conflict resolution mechanisms contributes meaningfully to employee performance. Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson value (1.894) falls within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), suggesting no serious autocorrelation problem. This validates the independence of residuals assumption and strengthens the robustness of the model. The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , confirming that the collective influence of conflict resolution mechanism, Constructive Negotiation, Tactical avoidance, Reasonable Compromise, and Restorative Dialogue has a strong and positive impact on Employee Performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo.. This implies that differences in employee performance are systematically associated with variations in how conflicts are managed within the institution. The high F-value (94.299) further underscores that the predictors collectively exert substantial influence on performance outcomes.

Indicating that all four predictors have positive and statistically significant effects on employee performance at  $p < .05$ , implying that improvements in conflict management practices translate into higher employee effectiveness and productivity. Among the predictors, Avoidance ( $\beta = 0.479$ ) and constructive Negotiation ( $\beta = 0.471$ ) emerged as the most influential variables, suggesting that when staff employ constructive negotiation or apply avoidance tactically to prevent escalation, performance outcomes improve significantly. Restorative Practices ( $\beta = 0.338$ ) and reasonable Compromise ( $\beta = 0.289$ ) also contributed positively, indicating that fostering reconciliation and encouraging mutual concessions further enhance institutional harmony and efficiency.

The regression results validate the study's hypotheses, showing that conflict resolution strategies collectively and individually exert significant influence on employee performance. The model's explanatory power ( $R^2 = 0.567$ ) and the significant F-statistic confirm that the predictive framework is both statistically strong and practically meaningful. This implies that effective adoption of constructive negotiation, reasonable compromise, tactical avoidance, and restorative dialogue can substantially enhance staff efficiency, reduce workplace tension, and foster a culture of mutual respect and collaboration within Taraba State University, Jalingo.

**Summary of Findings from Hypotheses Testing and Regression Analysis**

The regression results further revealed that Tactical Avoidance ( $\beta = 0.479$ ) and Negotiation ( $\beta = 0.471$ ) were the strongest predictors of employee performance, followed by Restorative dialogue ( $\beta = 0.338$ ) and reasonable Compromise ( $\beta = 0.289$ ). This suggests that staff who engage in constructive communication, apply avoidance judiciously, and adopt restorative dialogue practices are more likely to perform better. In general, the findings confirm that conflict resolution strategies collectively explain 56.7% of the variation in employee performance within the university. The study concludes that the consistent and strategic use of conflict resolution techniques strengthens institutional cohesion, enhances employee morale, and supports sustainable organizational effectiveness.

**Discussion of Findings**

Negotiation emerged as a significant and positive predictor of employee performance. The results imply that when conflicts are resolved through open communication, consultation, and mutual understanding, they promote trust and strengthen interpersonal relationships. In the context of Taraba State University, effective negotiation allows staff and management to reach fair resolutions, minimize tension, and sustain productive collaboration. This finding is consistent with Rahim (2011), who argued that negotiation fosters constructive dialogue that reduces interpersonal friction and enhances task accomplishment. Similarly, Thompson and Nadler (2019) observed that negotiation improves employee satisfaction and decision quality by creating a win-win environment. Katz and Flynn (2022) also emphasized that participatory negotiation prevents escalation and encourages shared responsibility in addressing grievances. Thus, the university's emphasis on dialogue-based negotiation practices positively translates into improved morale, cooperation, and institutional efficiency.

The study found that avoidance had a significant positive effect on employee performance. This suggests that, when applied tactically, avoidance can prevent unnecessary escalation of disputes, giving individuals time to reflect and approach issues more calmly. In organizational contexts like universities, where interpersonal differences are inevitable, temporary avoidance may help maintain decorum and reduce emotional strain while creating opportunities for resolution at a later stage. This result aligns with Katz and Flynn (2022), who stated that strategic avoidance, when not rooted in neglect, serves as a useful short-term mechanism for restoring stability in high-tension environments. Martin and Kolb (2020) further noted that avoidance enables employees to focus on performance-related activities by temporarily diverting attention from disruptive disagreements. However, the findings of this study also imply that avoidance must be carefully balanced; prolonged withdrawal without resolution could suppress issues and hinder trust-building.

Compromise was also found to have a statistically significant and positive effect on employee performance. This indicates that when disputing parties make mutual concessions, they foster a spirit of fairness, equality, and collective problem-solving that enhances cooperation and productivity. In the context of Taraba State University, compromise among academic and administrative staff helps maintain harmony in departmental operations and reduces resistance to managerial decisions. This finding supports Usman (2025), who established that compromise enhances job satisfaction by balancing organizational and individual interests. Dessler (2021) likewise emphasized that compromise strengthens team cohesion and decision acceptance, especially in collaborative work settings. The results are also consistent with Oladipo (2023), who reported that compromise-based conflict management reduces hostility and increases employee commitment in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Therefore, compromise plays a pivotal role in maintaining balance between competing interests while safeguarding performance efficiency.

Restorative practices were also shown to have a significant positive impact on employee performance. This means that when conflict resolution goes beyond surface-level settlement to address emotional and relational wounds, it rebuilds trust and enhances long-term organizational stability. Restorative dialogue, empathy, and reconciliation are crucial in educational institutions

where collaboration and mutual respect underpin success. The result corresponds with Zehr and Jones (2021), who asserted that restorative approaches in workplace conflicts foster emotional healing and promote accountability. Similarly, Ogbu and Ogbechie (2024) found that restorative dialogue improves collegial trust and organizational cohesion in Nigerian universities. This study therefore supports the notion that restorative dialogue not only mend relationships but also strengthen employees' sense of belonging, leading to higher motivation, reduced absenteeism, and sustained performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that conflict resolution mechanism plays a vital role in enhancing employee performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo. Specifically, when conflicts are addressed through constructive negotiation, reasonable compromise, tactical avoidance, and restorative dialogue, they lead to improved cooperation, reduced stress, and stronger team cohesion. Constructive negotiation encourages mutual understanding and collaboration among employees, while tactical avoidance, when used strategically, helps de-escalate tensions and preserve relationships. Reasonable compromise promotes fairness and shared ownership of decisions and restorative dialogue rebuild trust and reinforce emotional stability after disputes. Collectively, these approaches transform conflicts from potential disruptions into opportunities for growth and innovation. The study affirms that effective conflict resolution is not merely a management function but a strategic organizational competence that enhances morale, productivity, and institutional sustainability in higher education. Therefore, university management should view conflict management as a proactive leadership practice rather than a reactive response to disputes.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- i. The management should adopt formal negotiation mechanisms within departments to encourage open dialogue and participatory decision-making among staff. This can help reduce misunderstandings and strengthen interpersonal relationships.
- ii. Management should train staff to apply avoidance tactically when necessary to prevent escalation, while ensuring that unresolved issues are later addressed through dialogue or mediation.
- iii. Policies should be developed to promote compromise as a balanced approach to conflict management. Managers should ensure that concessions are fair and that all parties feel respected and heard.
- iv. The university should integrate restorative dialogue circles and peer mediation systems into its conflict management framework. These models can rebuild trust and promote reconciliation following interpersonal or departmental disputes.

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