

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND WORKPLACE CONFLICT REDUCTION IN SELECTED MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study examined the relationship between collective bargaining and workplace conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The increasing need to sustain harmonious labour-management relations and minimize workplace conflicts has heightened the importance of effective collective bargaining practices in manufacturing organizations. Collective bargaining was examined using negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution, while workplace conflict reduction was measured using interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction. The study was anchored on the Industrial Relations Systems Theory and adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 582 management and non-management employees drawn from 10 purposively selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, with a sample size of 234 determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. A total of 234 copies of the questionnaire were distributed; 223 (95.30%) were successfully retrieved, 11 (4.70%) were not returned, none (0.00%) was invalid, and 223 (95.30%) were used for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution had significant positive relationships with interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction. The study concludes that effective collective bargaining enhances workplace conflict reduction and recommends strengthening labour-management dialogue, grievance resolution mechanisms, and employee participation to sustain industrial peace and organizational effectiveness.*

**Keywords: Collective Bargaining, Negotiation Effectiveness, Grievance Resolution, Workplace Conflict Reduction, Industrial Dispute Reduction.**

**INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Statement of the Problem**

Manufacturing firms play a vital role in Nigeria's economic development by generating employment, promoting industrial growth, and contributing to national productivity. However, many manufacturing firms continue to experience workplace conflicts arising from disagreements over wages, working conditions, employee welfare, implementation of collective agreements, and ineffective communication between management and employees. These conflicts often manifest as interpersonal disagreements, grievances, strikes, work stoppages, and other forms of industrial disputes, which adversely affect employee morale, operational efficiency, and organizational performance (Müller et al., 2018).

Collective bargaining is widely recognized as an important mechanism for promoting harmonious labour-management relations through effective negotiation and structured grievance resolution. When negotiation processes are transparent and grievance procedures are timely and fair, organizations are better positioned to prevent workplace disagreements from escalating into interpersonal conflicts and industrial disputes (Hamberger, 2018). Conversely, weak negotiation practices and ineffective grievance resolution systems may erode employee trust, increase workplace tensions, and undermine organizational stability.

Despite the acknowledged importance of collective bargaining, workplace conflicts remain prevalent in many manufacturing firms in Nigeria, suggesting that existing bargaining processes may not be sufficiently effective in reducing interpersonal conflicts and industrial disputes. Although previous studies have examined collective bargaining and industrial relations, limited empirical evidence exists on the relationship between negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution as dimensions of collective bargaining and interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction as measures of workplace conflict reduction, particularly in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. This empirical gap necessitates the present study.

### Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between collective bargaining and workplace conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Examine the relationship between negotiation effectiveness and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the relationship between negotiation effectiveness and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the relationship between grievance resolution and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- iv. Determine the relationship between grievance resolution and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

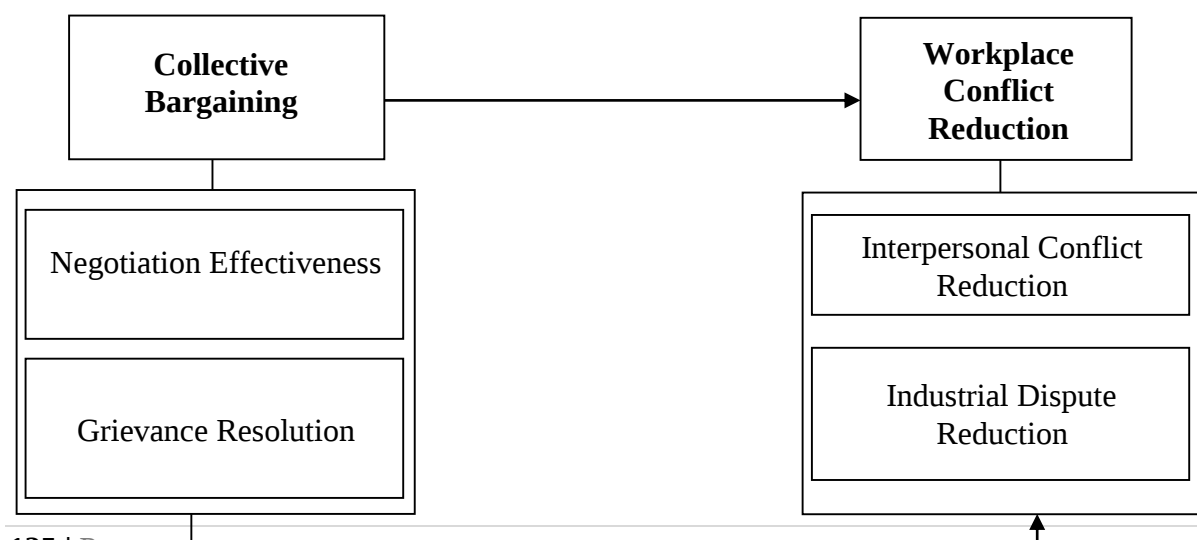
- i. What is the relationship between negotiation effectiveness and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between negotiation effectiveness and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between grievance resolution and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- iv. What is the relationship between grievance resolution and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria?

### Research Hypotheses

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

- H01: There is no significant relationship between negotiation effectiveness and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between negotiation effectiveness and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H03: There is no significant relationship between grievance resolution and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H04: There is no significant relationship between grievance resolution and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Collective Bargaining and Workplace Conflict Reduction in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Source:** The dimensions of Collective Bargaining (Negotiation Effectiveness and Grievance Resolution) were adapted from the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024) and supported by Hamberger (2018) and Müller et al. (2018). The measures of Workplace Conflict Reduction (Interpersonal Conflict Reduction and Industrial Dispute Reduction) were adapted from De Dreu and Gelfand (2008) and supported by Zhang et al. (2018) and Einarsen et al. (2020).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Collective Bargaining**

Collective bargaining is a formal process through which employers and employees, usually represented by trade unions, negotiate terms and conditions of employment, including wages, working conditions, employee welfare, and dispute resolution procedures. It is a fundamental component of industrial relations that promotes industrial democracy, organizational justice, and labour-management cooperation. Effective collective bargaining provides a platform for dialogue, mutual trust, and joint decision-making, thereby reducing workplace tensions and promoting organizational stability (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018; Müller et al., 2018). Collective bargaining also strengthens employee voice and enables organizations to address workplace concerns before they develop into serious conflicts, contributing to improved productivity and sustainable employment relationships.

#### **Negotiation Effectiveness**

Negotiation effectiveness refers to the extent to which collective bargaining negotiations are conducted in a transparent, collaborative, and result-oriented manner that satisfies both management and employees. Effective negotiations encourage open communication, mutual respect, compromise, and consensus building, resulting in agreements that are perceived as fair by both parties. Such negotiations strengthen trust, reduce misunderstandings, and minimize the likelihood of workplace disputes. Organizations characterized by effective bargaining processes are more likely to experience harmonious labour-management relations and higher organizational commitment because employees perceive management as responsive to their concerns (Hamberger, 2018). Furthermore, the ILO (2018) emphasizes that effective negotiations create opportunities for continuous dialogue, strengthen labour relations, and facilitate the peaceful settlement of workplace issues.

#### **Grievance Resolution**

Grievance resolution refers to the systematic process through which employee complaints, disagreements, and workplace concerns are investigated and resolved fairly, promptly, and consistently. A well-established grievance procedure provides employees with confidence that organizational decisions are subject to review and that legitimate complaints will receive impartial consideration. Effective grievance resolution prevents minor disagreements from escalating into interpersonal conflicts or industrial disputes while promoting organizational justice and employee satisfaction (Hamberger, 2018). The ILO (2024) further notes that efficient grievance handling mechanisms strengthen labour-management relationships by encouraging dialogue, improving trust, and reducing the incidence of workplace conflict through early intervention and fair dispute resolution.

### **Concept of Workplace Conflict Reduction**

Workplace conflict reduction refers to organizational efforts aimed at minimizing disagreements, hostility, and labour disputes through effective communication, collaboration, negotiation, and conflict management practices. Although conflict is inevitable because employees possess different interests and perspectives, organizations that manage conflict constructively experience stronger teamwork, improved employee well-being, and greater organizational effectiveness. Consequently, workplace conflict reduction has become an important objective of modern human resource and industrial relations practices because it promotes cooperation, labour peace, and organizational productivity (Zhang et al., 2018).

### **Interpersonal Conflict Reduction**

Interpersonal conflict reduction refers to the decrease in disagreements, hostility, and relationship tensions among employees and between employees and supervisors. Organizations that encourage constructive communication, mutual respect, and collaborative problem-solving create healthier working relationships and stronger team cohesion. Reduced interpersonal conflict enhances employee morale, trust, cooperation, and job satisfaction while improving overall organizational performance. Zhang et al. (2018) observed that workplace peacemaking behaviours significantly improve interpersonal relationships and foster positive organizational outcomes by encouraging employees to resolve disagreements constructively rather than through confrontation.

### **Industrial Dispute Reduction**

Industrial dispute reduction refers to minimizing strikes, lockouts, work stoppages, collective grievances, and other forms of organized labour conflict through effective collective bargaining and dispute resolution mechanisms. Stable industrial relations depend largely on the ability of employers and employees to resolve disagreements through structured negotiations rather than industrial action. According to Müller et al. (2018), well-coordinated bargaining systems strengthen labour peace by promoting consensus and ensuring that negotiated agreements are implemented effectively. Similarly, the ILO (2024) maintains that robust collective bargaining and effective grievance resolution are essential for preventing industrial disputes, maintaining operational continuity, and promoting sustainable organizational performance.

### **Collective Bargaining and Workplace Conflict Reduction**

Collective bargaining is an important mechanism for promoting workplace harmony through effective negotiations and structured grievance resolution. It strengthens communication, mutual trust, and cooperation between employers and employees, thereby reducing workplace conflicts and improving labour-management relations (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018).

Negotiation effectiveness promotes transparency, compromise, and consensus, reducing misunderstandings and employee dissatisfaction that often lead to workplace conflicts. Organizations with effective bargaining systems are more likely to experience lower interpersonal conflict and fewer industrial disputes (Hamberger, 2018; Müller et al., 2018). Similarly, grievance resolution provides formal procedures for addressing employee complaints promptly and fairly, preventing minor disagreements from escalating into serious workplace conflicts. The ILO (2024) notes that effective grievance handling strengthens organizational justice and peaceful dispute settlement, while Hamberger (2018) argues that it enhances employees' confidence in management.

Workplace conflict reduction is reflected in lower levels of interpersonal conflict and industrial disputes. Zhang et al. (2018) found that constructive communication and collaborative problem-solving improve workplace relationships and reduce interpersonal tensions. Likewise, Müller et al. (2018) observed that effective collective bargaining systems reduce strikes, lockouts, and other forms of industrial unrest by promoting consensus and dialogue. Consequently, organizations that

strengthen negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution are better positioned to achieve sustainable workplace conflict reduction.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Industrial Relations Systems Theory**

This study is anchored on the Industrial Relations Systems Theory propounded by John T. Dunlop (1958). The theory explains industrial relations as a system comprising three major actors: employers and their representatives, employees and their trade unions, and government agencies. These actors operate within a given technological, economic, and political environment to establish rules governing the employment relationship. Dunlop argued that cooperation and stability in organizations depend largely on effective interaction among these actors through mechanisms such as collective bargaining, consultation, and grievance handling.

The theory emphasizes that collective bargaining is a fundamental instrument for establishing workplace rules, resolving employment disputes, and promoting harmonious labour-management relations. Through effective negotiation and grievance resolution, organizations can address employee concerns, reduce misunderstandings, and prevent workplace disagreements from escalating into interpersonal conflicts or industrial disputes. Contemporary industrial relations scholars have reaffirmed the relevance of Dunlop's theory in explaining how collective bargaining contributes to workplace stability and organizational effectiveness (Budd, 2020; Müller et al., 2018).

The Industrial Relations Systems Theory is relevant to this study because it provides a theoretical explanation of how negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution, as dimensions of collective bargaining, contribute to interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction in manufacturing firms. The theory suggests that when employers and employees engage in constructive negotiations and utilize effective grievance procedures, workplace conflicts are minimized, labour-management relationships are strengthened, and organizational performance is enhanced. Therefore, the theory provides an appropriate framework for explaining the relationship between collective bargaining and workplace conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

#### **Empirical Review**

Several empirical studies have examined collective bargaining, workplace dispute resolution, and conflict management in different organizational contexts. Although the findings generally suggest that effective labour-management relations promote workplace harmony, evidence from manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria remains limited.

Müller et al. (2018) examined coordinated collective bargaining systems in the European manufacturing sector and found that effective bargaining promotes labour peace, strengthens employer–employee cooperation, and significantly reduces industrial disputes.

Hamberger (2018) reported that organizations with effective negotiation and grievance resolution procedures experience fewer workplace conflicts because employee complaints are handled promptly, fairly, and transparently.

Zhang et al. (2018), in a systematic review, found that constructive communication, peacemaking behaviours, and collaborative problem-solving significantly reduce interpersonal conflict while improving teamwork and organizational effectiveness.

Budd (2020) observed that effective collective bargaining strengthens labour-management relations through consultation and negotiation, thereby reducing workplace grievances, promoting industrial peace, and improving organizational performance.

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2018; 2024) reported that collective bargaining, social dialogue, and effective grievance handling strengthen trust between employers and employees, improve working conditions, and significantly reduce workplace and industrial disputes through structured dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms.

Although these studies established the importance of collective bargaining in reducing workplace conflict, most were conducted in developed economies or across diverse industries. Limited empirical evidence exists on how negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution influence interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. This gap justifies the present study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between collective bargaining and workplace conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the study variables without manipulating them.

The study population comprised 582 management and non-management employees drawn from 10 purposively selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The firms were selected because they have established organizational structures, active employer–employee relationships, formal collective bargaining practices, and functional grievance handling mechanisms. They were also drawn from major manufacturing subsectors, including cement, breweries, food and beverages, chemicals, plastics, and consumer goods, to ensure broad sectoral representation. This selection enhanced the external validity of the findings while remaining practical in terms of accessibility, time, and cost. The total accessible population was 582 employees.

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Based on the population of 582, a sample size of 234 respondents was obtained. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to distribute the sample across the selected firms, while simple random sampling was employed to select respondents within each firm.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Collective Bargaining and Workplace Conflict Reduction Questionnaire (CBWCRQ). The instrument measured collective bargaining (negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution) and workplace conflict reduction (interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction) on a five-point Likert scale. Face and content validity were established through expert review, while reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or above considered acceptable.

A total of 234 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to employees of the selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Out of this number, 223 copies, representing 95.30%, were successfully retrieved, while 11 copies, representing 4.70%, were not returned. No questionnaire was invalid or improperly completed; therefore, all 223 retrieved copies were considered suitable for analysis. The response rate of 95.30% is considered very high and adequate for statistical analysis, indicating a strong level of respondents' participation and enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study findings.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Ethical standards were observed throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the management of the selected firms, informed consent was secured from all respondents, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided were assured.

### Population of the Study

**Table 1: Population, Sample Size Allocation and Questionnaire Distribution among Selected Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria**

| S/N          | Manufacturing Firm                     | Manufacturing Subsector        | Population (N) | Sample Size (n) |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1            | Notore Chemical Industries Plc         | Chemicals/Fertilizer           | 74             | 30              |
| 2            | Indorama Eleme Petrochemicals Limited  | Petrochemicals                 | 70             | 28              |
| 3            | Ace Footwear                           | Plastics                       | 68             | 27              |
| 4            | International Breweries Limited        | Breweries                      | 64             | 26              |
| 5            | Siat Nigeria Limited                   | Oil Palm Products              | 61             | 25              |
| 6            | Air Liquide Nigeria Plc                | Industrial Gases               | 58             | 23              |
| 7            | Pure Flour Mills                       | Flour                          | 56             | 22              |
| 8            | Eastern Enamelware Factory Limited     | Consumer Goods                 | 49             | 20              |
| 9            | Green Hills Integrated Service Limited | Electrical, Plumbing/PVC Pipes | 43             | 17              |
| 10           | Danelec Limited                        | Transformers                   | 39             | 16              |
| <b>Total</b> |                                        |                                | <b>582</b>     | <b>234</b>      |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey (2026); Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Rivers/Bayelsa Branch, and official records of the selected manufacturing firms.

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

| S/N | Variables                              | Dimensions/Measures              | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1   | Collective Bargaining                  | Negotiation Effectiveness        | 5               | 0.884            |
|     |                                        | Grievance Resolution             | 5               | 0.871            |
| 2   | Workplace Conflict Reduction           | Interpersonal Conflict Reduction | 5               | 0.889            |
|     |                                        | Industrial Dispute Reduction     | 5               | 0.876            |
|     | <b>Overall Reliability Coefficient</b> |                                  | <b>20</b>       | <b>0.880</b>     |

**Source:** Adapted from International Labour Organization (2018, 2024); Hamberger (2018); Müller et al. (2018); De Dreu and Gelfand (2008); Zhang et al. (2018); and Budd (2020).

The reliability analysis indicates that all the study constructs are internally consistent and reliable. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.884 for negotiation effectiveness, 0.871 for grievance resolution, 0.889 for interpersonal conflict reduction, and 0.876 for industrial dispute reduction. These values exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), indicating that the questionnaire items consistently measure their respective constructs. Furthermore, the overall reliability coefficient of 0.880 demonstrates a high level of

internal consistency for the entire research instrument, confirming that it is reliable and suitable for data collection and subsequent statistical analysis.

**Table 3: Response Rate of Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval**

| Details                            | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Number of Copies Distributed       | 234       | 100.00%    |
| Number of Copies Retrieved         | 223       | 95.30%     |
| Number of Copies Not Returned      | 11        | 4.70%      |
| Number of Copies Invalid           | 0         | 0.00%      |
| Number of Copies Used for Analysis | 223       | 95.30%     |

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey (2026).

Table 3 shows that 234 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to employees of the selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Out of this number, 223 copies, representing 95.30%, were successfully retrieved, while 11 copies, representing 4.70%, were not returned. No questionnaire was invalid or improperly completed; therefore, all 223 retrieved copies were considered suitable for analysis. The response rate of 95.30% is considered very high and adequate for statistical analysis, indicating a strong level of respondents' participation and enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study findings.

## DATA RESULTS

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Negotiation Effectiveness**

| S/N | Negotiation Effectiveness Items                                        | N          | Min. | Max. | Sum   | Mean  | Std. Dev. |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------|------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 1   | Management and employees engage in open and constructive negotiations. | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 921.0 | 4.130 | 0.783     |
| 2   | Collective bargaining negotiations are conducted fairly.               | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 915.0 | 4.103 | 0.801     |
| 3   | Negotiated agreements reflect the interests of both parties.           | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 926.0 | 4.152 | 0.774     |
| 4   | Negotiation outcomes are implemented as agreed.                        | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 918.0 | 4.117 | 0.792     |
| 5   | Negotiations promote mutual trust between management and employees.    | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 931.0 | 4.175 | 0.758     |
|     | <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>                                              | <b>223</b> |      |      |       |       |           |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on Grievance Resolution**

| S/N | Grievance Resolution Items                                    | N   | Min. | Max. | Sum   | Mean  | Std. Dev. |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 1   | Employees have access to formal grievance procedures.         | 223 | 1.0  | 5.0  | 917.0 | 4.112 | 0.796     |
| 2   | Employee grievances are addressed promptly.                   | 223 | 1.0  | 5.0  | 923.0 | 4.139 | 0.778     |
| 3   | Grievance decisions are fair and unbiased.                    | 223 | 1.0  | 5.0  | 914.0 | 4.099 | 0.804     |
| 4   | Management encourages employees to report workplace concerns. | 223 | 1.0  | 5.0  | 927.0 | 4.157 | 0.769     |

|   |                                                          |            |     |     |       |       |       |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| 5 | Grievance procedures reduce workplace misunderstandings. | 223        | 1.0 | 5.0 | 933.0 | 4.184 | 0.751 |
|   | <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>                                | <b>223</b> |     |     |       |       |       |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

**Table 6: Descriptive Statistics on Interpersonal Conflict Reduction**

| S/N | Interpersonal Conflict Reduction Items                           | N          | Min. | Max. | Sum   | Mean  | Std. Dev. |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------|------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 1   | Workplace disagreements among employees have reduced.            | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 922.0 | 4.135 | 0.781     |
| 2   | Employees cooperate effectively with one another.                | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 930.0 | 4.170 | 0.760     |
| 3   | Conflicts between supervisors and employees are minimal.         | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 915.0 | 4.103 | 0.798     |
| 4   | Respectful communication exists among employees.                 | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 927.0 | 4.157 | 0.772     |
| 5   | Teamwork has improved because of better workplace relationships. | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 934.0 | 4.188 | 0.747     |
|     | <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>                                        | <b>223</b> |      |      |       |       |           |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

**Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Industrial Dispute Reduction**

| S/N | Industrial Dispute Reduction Items                      | N          | Min. | Max. | Sum   | Mean  | Std. Dev. |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------|------------|------|------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 1   | Industrial disputes have reduced in the organization.   | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 920.0 | 4.126 | 0.787     |
| 2   | Collective agreements are implemented without conflict. | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 926.0 | 4.152 | 0.773     |
| 3   | Strikes and work stoppages rarely occur.                | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 916.0 | 4.108 | 0.796     |
| 4   | Labour-management relationships are cordial.            | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 931.0 | 4.175 | 0.758     |
| 5   | Workplace disputes are resolved before escalating.      | 223        | 1.0  | 5.0  | 935.0 | 4.193 | 0.745     |
|     | <b>Valid N (listwise)</b>                               | <b>223</b> |      |      |       |       |           |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

### Interpretation of Descriptive Results

The results presented in Tables 4-7 indicate that respondents generally agreed that collective bargaining contributes positively to workplace conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Negotiation effectiveness recorded high mean scores ranging from 4.103 to 4.175, while grievance resolution ranged from 4.099 to 4.184, indicating positive perceptions of collective bargaining practices. Similarly, interpersonal conflict reduction recorded mean scores ranging from 4.103 to 4.188, and industrial dispute reduction ranged from 4.108 to 4.193, reflecting high levels of workplace conflict reduction. Finally, the findings suggest that effective negotiation and grievance resolution are important determinants of interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction among employees of the selected manufacturing firms.

### Inferential Statistical Analysis

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was employed to examine the relationship between collective bargaining (negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution) and workplace conflict reduction (interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction) among employees of selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The analysis was performed using SPSS Version 27 at a 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 8: Negotiation Effectiveness and Interpersonal Conflict Reduction**

| Pearson Correlation                                             |                         | Negotiation Effectiveness | Interpersonal Conflict Reduction |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Negotiation Effectiveness</b>                                | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                     | 0.781                            |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                         | 0.000                            |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                       | 223                              |
| <b>Interpersonal Conflict Reduction</b>                         | Correlation Coefficient | 0.781                     | 1.000                            |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.000                     | .                                |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                       | 223                              |
| <b>Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</b> |                         |                           |                                  |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

**Table 9: Negotiation Effectiveness and Industrial Dispute Reduction**

| Pearson Correlation                                             |                         | Negotiation Effectiveness | Industrial Dispute Reduction |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Negotiation Effectiveness</b>                                | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                     | 0.754                        |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                         | 0.000                        |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                       | 223                          |
| <b>Industrial Dispute Reduction</b>                             | Correlation Coefficient | 0.754                     | 1.000                        |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.000                     | .                            |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                       | 223                          |
| <b>Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</b> |                         |                           |                              |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

**Table 10: Grievance Resolution and Interpersonal Conflict Reduction**

| Pearson Correlation                                             |                         | Grievance Resolution | Interpersonal Conflict Reduction |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Grievance Resolution</b>                                     | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                | 0.769                            |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                    | 0.000                            |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                  | 223                              |
| <b>Interpersonal Conflict Reduction</b>                         | Correlation Coefficient | 0.769                | 1.000                            |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.000                | .                                |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                  | 223                              |
| <b>Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</b> |                         |                      |                                  |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

**Table 11: Grievance Resolution and Industrial Dispute Reduction**

| Pearson Correlation                                             |                         | Grievance Resolution | Industrial Dispute Reduction |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Grievance Resolution</b>                                     | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                | 0.792                        |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                    | 0.000                        |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                  | 223                          |
| <b>Industrial Dispute Reduction</b>                             | Correlation Coefficient | 0.792                | 1.000                        |
|                                                                 | Sig. (2-tailed)         | 0.000                | .                            |
|                                                                 | N                       | 223                  | 223                          |
| <b>Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</b> |                         |                      |                              |

**Source:** SPSS (Version 27) Result, 2026.

### Interpretation of the Results

The results presented in Tables 8–11 reveal strong positive and statistically significant relationships between collective bargaining and workplace conflict reduction among employees of selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Specifically, Table 8 shows that negotiation effectiveness has a strong positive relationship with interpersonal conflict reduction ( $r = 0.781$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that effective negotiations between management and employees contribute significantly to reducing interpersonal conflicts and improving workplace relationships.

Table 9 indicates a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between negotiation effectiveness and industrial dispute reduction ( $r = 0.754$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that organizations with effective negotiation processes are less likely to experience strikes, work stoppages, and other forms of industrial disputes.

Similarly, Table 10 reveals that grievance resolution has a strong positive relationship with interpersonal conflict reduction ( $r = 0.769$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This implies that prompt and fair handling of employee grievances minimizes workplace disagreements and strengthens harmonious interpersonal relationships.

Finally, Table 11 shows that grievance resolution has a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with industrial dispute reduction ( $r = 0.792$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This finding indicates that effective grievance handling mechanisms significantly reduce industrial conflicts by addressing employee concerns before they escalate into collective disputes.

Broadly, the findings demonstrate that collective bargaining, through negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution, significantly enhances workplace conflict reduction by reducing both interpersonal conflicts and industrial disputes in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### Summary of Hypothesis Testing

**Table 12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing**

| S/N | Hypothesis                                                                                                                                                            | Result                           | Decision                           |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| H01 | There is no significant relationship between negotiation effectiveness and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. | $r = 0.781$ ,<br>p-value = 0.000 | Reject H01<br>since p-value < 0.05 |
| H02 | There is no significant relationship between negotiation effectiveness and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.     | $r = 0.754$ ,<br>p-value = 0.000 | Reject H02<br>since p-value < 0.05 |
| H03 | There is no significant relationship between grievance resolution and interpersonal conflict reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.      | $r = 0.769$ , p-value = 0.000    | Reject H03<br>since p-value < 0.05 |
| H04 | There is no significant relationship between grievance resolution and industrial dispute reduction in selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.          | $r = 0.792$ , p-value = 0.000    | Reject H04<br>since p-value < 0.05 |

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

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that collective bargaining has a significant positive relationship with workplace conflict reduction among employees of selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution showed strong positive relationships with both interpersonal conflict reduction and industrial dispute reduction. These findings are consistent with studies showing that effective collective bargaining promotes labour peace, strengthens employer–employee relationships, and minimizes workplace conflicts through constructive dialogue and fair dispute resolution (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018, 2024; Budd, 2020).

The study found a strong positive relationship between negotiation effectiveness and interpersonal conflict reduction ( $r = 0.781$ ), indicating that effective negotiations reduce misunderstandings, enhance cooperation, and improve workplace relationships. This finding agrees with Hamberger (2018) and Zhang et al. (2018). Similarly, negotiation effectiveness had a strong positive relationship with industrial dispute reduction ( $r = 0.754$ ), supporting the findings of Müller et al. (2018) that coordinated collective bargaining systems promote industrial peace and reduce labour disputes.

The results also revealed strong positive relationships between grievance resolution and interpersonal conflict reduction ( $r = 0.769$ ), consistent with Hamberger (2018), and between grievance resolution and industrial dispute reduction ( $r = 0.792$ ), supporting the ILO (2024). Collectively, the findings demonstrate that effective collective bargaining significantly enhances workplace conflict reduction by minimizing interpersonal conflicts and industrial disputes. The findings also support the Industrial Relations Systems Theory developed by Dunlop (1958), which emphasizes that effective negotiation and grievance handling strengthen labour-management relations and promote organizational stability.

### CONCLUSION

The study concludes that collective bargaining has a significant positive relationship with workplace conflict reduction among employees of selected manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Specifically, negotiation effectiveness and grievance resolution significantly reduce interpersonal conflict and industrial disputes. The study therefore concludes that strengthening collective bargaining practices is a strategic industrial relations approach for promoting harmonious labour-management relations, sustaining industrial peace, and improving organizational effectiveness in manufacturing firms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Management of manufacturing firms should strengthen negotiation effectiveness by promoting regular dialogue, transparency, mutual trust, and collaborative decision-making between management and employee representatives during collective bargaining processes.
2. Manufacturing firms should establish and strengthen effective grievance resolution mechanisms that ensure employee complaints are addressed promptly, fairly, and transparently to prevent minor disagreements from escalating into interpersonal conflicts or industrial disputes.
3. Management should promote continuous labour-management engagement through joint consultative committees, periodic meetings, and employee participation in workplace decision-making to sustain harmonious industrial relations and reduce workplace conflict.
4. Manufacturing firms should periodically review and evaluate their collective bargaining and grievance handling procedures through employee feedback, industrial relations audits, and regular policy reviews to ensure continuous workplace harmony and long-term organizational effectiveness.

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