Managing Role Conflict among University Administrators in Nigeria

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to find out the types, causes, and management of role conflict between university professional and academic administrators that may become destructive. The administrators were the Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Librarians, Bursars, Heads of Departments, Deans of Faculties and Postgraduate Schools, Directors of Programmes and Services, and Provosts of Colleges. A sample of eight universities selected through stratified random sampling was used for the study. This comprised three State, two Federal, and three Private universities. The ex post facto research design of an analytical survey was employed. Three research questions were raised and answered. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data which were analyzed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The study identified the most common types and causes of role conflict between academic and professional administrators and determined appropriate management strategies to minimize, resolve and avoid them in Nigeria Universities. Recommendations were made to maintain peace and harmony among all Nigeria University administrators for effective University administration.
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Keywords: administrators, role conflict, management strategies, universities, Nigeria
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INTRODUCTION
Organizations like the universities need to operate in peaceful environments where there is a high level of understanding, tolerance, and compromise among administrators, other staff and students, and unions. Where this exists, conflicts are minimized, and there is always greater commitment and high productivity which in turn leads to better provision of services and overall organizational development. It is alleged that bad-belly exits among professional and academic administrators in universities. It is believed that a major cause of this antagonism could be traced to the conflicts that manifest as a result of their roles as administrators of universities. The modern university system comprises a variety of communities based on the wide range of academic disciplines and functions involved therein. Its internal behavior constitutes a very complex organism shaped by these many hands. This implies that its entire life is extensively shaped by its internal logic, habits, and dynamics. It is also influenced by the challenges, constraints, and pressures bearing upon it from the outer environment. The university is therefore made up of people with different backgrounds almost certainly having different needs, skills, talents, aspirations, visions, missions, and status. They also probably possess and pursue different interests, values, competencies, knowledge, and behavioural styles. This also means that members of this complex social organization could exhibit different preemptions and aggressions.

In this study, the professional administrators include the vice-chancellors, the deputy vice-chancellors, the registrars, the bursars, the librarians, the directors of health services, and the directors of physical planning, while the academic administrators were the provosts of colleges, the deans of postgraduate schools, the deans of faculties, the directors of academic planning, the heads of departments, and the heads of academic units of public universities. Administration in universities provides the matrix which binds together various integral and important parts of the university. It also lubricates the machinery of governance to sustain a smooth and effective operation. The degree of complexity attendant in university administration is hardly to be encountered in any other situation with peculiarities which distinguish it from others. Among these are examinations and high degree of concentration of brains. Many universities are residential institutions with municipal characteristics namely halls of residence, staff quarters, primary and secondary schools, medical centres/health clinics, student bursary, sports, security, and agricultural centres, water scheme, power plant, drainage and sewage, etc. All these are managed by university administrators, professional and academic alike. In carrying out their roles, there are bound to be conflicts. Alade (1998) and Akarode (2005) noted that when disagreements among people in a social milieu remain unresolved, they graduate into conflicts. They defined conflict as a by-product of the interactions of people or groups with different expectations, interests, backgrounds, and roles in the society. Role conflict can thus be said to be inevitable, unavoidable, natural and a normal part of any complex organization like the university. The objective of the study was to find out the types, causes, and management of role conflicts

between professional and academic administrators that may become destructive.

Theoretical Framework
Two conflict theories form the basis of this study. One is the Conflict Process Theory proposed by Goldman (1966) in Alade (1998). The principal assumption of this theory is that the substantive issues of conflicts arise from and have consequences for basic structural components of organizations. The theory provides a way to classify the substantive issues of social and political conflicts and observes the organizational consequences of the resolution and non-resolution of these conflicts. It takes records of developmental trends associated with sequences of conflict cycles and ultimately provides an empirical basis for designing strategies of conflict resolution and avoidance. It assumes that social and political conflict between two or more adversary parties are initiated and concluded by events of a decisional character; the sequence of events from the initiating one to the concluding one may be referred to as a conflict cycle; at least one of the three types of substantive topics may be found as issues in all social and political conflicts and such substantive topics include, disagreement about the 'task-expectation' associated with a position or office; disagreement about the 'role-performance' of particular incumbents in the position; disagreements about the conditions of 'incumbency' of the person in the position.

The theory holds that conflict cycles are resolved by decisions about one or more of these substantive topics. Sequences of resolving decisions about task-expectations produce a 'formalization' process. When the decisions are on role-performances, they produce a 'socialization' process while the decisions on incumbency conditions produce an 'investiture' process. Formalization means that task-expectations should not be verbal or assumed but should be formally and clearly stated and presented to the officer in-charge of each position; socialization requires that role-performances should declare the way and manner by which the officer should perform the duties assigned to the position including induction; while investiture should involve formal installation into and celebration of the officer's position. These will ensure that the officer knows very well what to do, how to do it, where the limits come, all in a conducive atmosphere.

The Conflict Process Theory also states that the observation of conflicts pertaining to major organizational offices is a reliable procedure for sampling the developmental tendencies of the organization as a whole. Therefore, when universities experience positive/non-destructive role conflicts, innovations and creativity should emerge, which will further lead to better conflict resolutions and conflict avoidance thus improving the administrators'

effectiveness and efficiency in accomplishing set goals and objectives of the universities.

Another theory that lends credence to this study is the Structural-Functional Theory propounded by Persons (1960) in Alade (1998) after the World War II. The theory postulates that individuals will normally adjust to a given structure in an organization but any change in the structure of the organization causes conflicts and destabilizes the organization. Conflict should be minimized by minimizing structural changes in order to maintain stability with both the individuals as well as the institutions. The implication is that universities should be mindful of their organizational charts and careful at making changes that may not be easily accepted by the university community. The theory reflects a systems approach where each part has one or more functions to perform. This is usually the case with academic administrators in the universities who double-function as academics and administrators. Institutions are sub-systems of society. Each institution is made up of roles and each role is associated with a particular set of expectations. Roles in institutions are occupied by individuals who have their own personalities and need dispositions but who must act according to the set of expectations associated with their roles to be able to achieve the institution's goals and objectives. It is therefore obvious that under such state of diversity as found in universities, individuals or groups could disagree on issues that directly or indirectly pertain to them sometimes with emotional intensity as they perform their various roles. When these disagreements are left unresolved, they most likely become destructive. However, this theory sees conflict as dysfunctional, abnormal, and a disease which can be endemic to a society if not properly managed. This implies that role conflict could be constructive if well managed in organizations. It therefore advocates issues that will maintain the state of equilibrium and collaboration in an organization. There is therefore need to explore the types and causes of role conflict in a particular organization to be able to proffer strategies for its successful management. It was in this light that this study investigated the types and causes of role conflict that exists among university academic and professional administrators as well as the strategies to effectively curb them.

Types of Role Conflict
Generally, conflicts take the form of intrapersonal, interpersonal or inter-group. Conflicts become interpersonal or inter-group when they take the form of open actions such as hostile reactions, strike actions, etc against another persons or groups but until the hostile feelings are acted upon, it remains at the level of intrapersonal problem only. In an organization a person's role can be in conflict with another person's or group's expectations therefore 'role conflict' refers to the disagreements between individuals or groups emanating from the responsibilities entrusted to them in

an organization. Role conflicts arise as a result of role ambiguity where people are not clear about what they expect of each other or of one another. Where roles are not properly spelt out and individuals' or groups' responsibilities are not clearly stated, workers may not be able to build up expectations of one another because of role ambiguity (Olutade, 2005). This study examined interpersonal and inter-group role conflicts found among university administrators.

Causes of Role Conflict
The causes of role conflict in universities in this study were discussed under two broad categories – structural and non-structural causes. The structure of a university, like any other organization, is influenced by a number of factors including the size, the nature of the environment, and the characteristics of its technology. Thus the structural role conflicts are linked with issues that relate to these factors. This means that the structural causes of conflicts will include work interdependence, mutual dependence on limited resources, differences in performance criteria and reward systems, differences in units and subunits orientations and goals, and differences in status and jurisdictional ambiguities. The non-structural causes, referred to as personal or behavioural include differences in background, personal traits, values, communications, perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and viewpoints.

Strategies for Managing Role Conflict
Glueck (2000) defined conflict management as all actions and mechanisms used by executives (or parties in conflict or independent third parties) to keep conflict from interfering with achievement of the enterprise's objective. Dalrendorf (2000) maintained that conflicts in organizations arise as a result of goal incompatibility. The first step, therefore, in developing an effective strategy for conflict resolution in any context lies in recognizing the underlying goals that the parties are seeking in the process and accepting the legitimacy of their efforts to pursue their goals. To effectively curb role conflict there is need to understand how it works in organizations. Since role conflict is dynamic it passes through some stages which Otobo (2007) classified as Frustration, Conceptualization, Role Conflict Behaviour, and Outcome. According to him, frustration arises from the attempts or actual actions at opposing, hindering or blocking the achievement of one's or a group's objectives/goals by another. Such frustrating activities could be denial of requests, promotion, incremental allowance etc as well as undermining of interests and sabotage; Conceptualization is the subjective stage of role conflict which is usually flittered through one's belief systems and values. At this stage the proposed actions and their consequences are considered; Role conflict behavior refers to the action or reaction taken to address the role conflict. This can take the form of confrontation, attack and defeat or undermining or cooperation or

appeasement as the case may be which may involve yielding to demands, making concessions, or accepting conditions, etc; Outcome is the actual consequence of the role conflict. It could be in the form of resolution through agreement and settlement (Otobo, 2007). According to him, three assumptions that underline role conflict – that conflict is endemic in organizations because of lack of consensus as to the expectations and prescriptions for rancour, organizational positions; and, lack of uniform commitment to organizational goals/objectives; that while some conflicts are detrimental others are beneficial from the stand points of both individual and organizational goals/objectives; and that the principle of minimizing conflict as subscribed to by some managers and social scientists makes valid the existence of crisis in organizations. These mean that the proper management of conflict will, require as the situation demands, bargaining, third party intervention, super-ordinate goals, removal of the key persons in the conflict via transfer or termination of appointment (used as a last resort), appeal to hierocracy, appeal to higher authority, and the use of Ombudsman and the alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism. He further explained that bargaining is a process whereby two or more parties appear to settle what each will give and take or perform and receive. It involves the presentation of demands or proposals by one of the parties and the evaluation of these by the other party or parties followed by counter proposals and concessions. The ultimate objective of bargaining is an agreement acceptable to both parties, that specifies how a specific role/resources is to be divided and or how a particular issue (role conflict) is to be resolved.

Third Party Intervention is a strategy adopted where the parties involved could not resolve the role conflict themselves. This is occasioned by either party believing that their respective positions were correct and therefore unwilling to make any concessions. There results a stalemate which calls for the intervention of a third neutral party. The neutral third party can help resolve the conflict by introducing an objective and positive attitude to the conflict situation. Super-ordinate Goals arise in addition to existing ones and establishing them in role conflicts could help in resolution. It is a goal more important to each other party in a role conflict situation than its independent goals and requires mutual dependence to achieve. Cooperation resulting from the achievement of super ordinate goal can improve communication, trust and friendship. Removal of the key persons in the role conflict via transfer or termination of appointment could be useful in conflict resolution. This strategy is used as a last resort. This is known as restructuring. Restructuring a group or organization can also effectively resolve a role conflict when the source of the role conflict is restructured. In doing this, conflict administrators or groups can be re-located, task responsibilities re-defined and resources re-allocated.

Appeal to Hierarchy involves the conflicting parties referring the matter to a recognized superior position in the organization structure. This superior listens to the parties in role conflict and decides who is correct. It is not the same as a third party case. But where parties are not satisfied with the ruling or decision of the immediate superior in the hierarchy, they can appeal to a higher authority. The decision here could be made binding on the parties to the dispute and the immediate superior. It is like going from the lower courts to the Supreme Court where the final decision is binding on all parties. Ombudsman and the ADR mechanism help staff to overcome alienation as room is given to individuals to express their interests. It facilitates communication and ensures that lower levels in the hierarchy can bring their problems up to the top. This is a unique strategy because it is backed by law and parliament. It also stands outside the hierarchical structure.

The key points in all these strategies are effective communication methods, preventive methods, and leadership techniques methods. Open communication allows the honest confrontation of differences between persons which can take the forms of: I win – you lose; I want out, I will withdraw; I will give in for good relations; I will meet you half-way; I can care and confront. Preventive methods involve establishing from the outset, organizational conditions which stimulate collaboration rather than competition while leadership techniques strategies adopt techniques of supportive leadership and the development of high mutual influence among people which provide a counter balance to the probability of conflict. Scholars (Fashoyin, 2002; Burach, 2001; Dalrendorf, 2000; Glueck, 2000) revealed some basic administrative skills necessary in minimizing probabilities of conflict. These include the need to have sufficient technical skill to accomplish the mechanism of the particular job for which the administrator is responsible; sufficient human skill in working with others to be an effective group member and to be able to build cooperative effort within the team he leads; sufficient conceptual skill to recognize the inter-relationships of the various factors involved in his situation, which will lead him to take the action that is most likely to achieve the maximum good for the organization; sufficient advanced planning and co-ordination in especially over-bureaucratic forms of organization.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
It is pertinent to emphasize that though conflict is often seen in negative perspectives in Nigeria, it does possess some beneficial aspects. For instance, conflict could involve a more comprehensive analysis of issues which could lead to re-visitations, re-clarifications, and re-definitions of the issues that would give a much better outcome than the status quo. Thus, when role conflicts are resolved, it leads to correction of weaknesses and uplifting of strengths, building of agreements and consensus, and the progress of individuals, groups, organizations, and States. The outcome of this study would help university administrators everywhere to recognize the causes and types of role conflicts that are likely to manifest and know how to regulate them to ensure better personal interactions, good team spirit, and effective leadership to enhance the accomplishment of university goals and objectives. It would be a guiding tool to the university academic and non-academic staff and their Unions as regards demarcation and jurisdictional determination of which Union and which job-role should have the right to certain jobs and wage claims. It would also provide useful information for future policy decisions to the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Governing Councils and Senates of the various universities in Nigeria and elsewhere.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
It has been alleged that role conflict in Nigeria Universities has for decades given rise to distrust and hostility among professional and academic administrators thus contributing in hampering effective and efficient attainment of the goals and objectives of university education in Nigeria. It also appeared that despite this situation, stakeholders and those directly involved seemed to have been condoning this silent war and pretending that all was well. This probably explains the gross dearth of research on this matter. In the industrial sector, role conflict is perceived to hardly play anything but disruptive and negative roles. Literature on industrial relations in the world of work over the years has reflected the antagonistic political divide of the world along ideological lines thereby promoting distrust and sometimes open hostility among practitioners. These practitioners see one another as one of oppressors, exploiters, communist stooges, or extremists, etc rather than as partners in social engineering (Etzioni, 2004; Burach, 2001; Dalrendorf, 2000; Fashoyin, 2000). The education sector today is not different from the industrial sector for it also stands to market its goods in the global market and the inputs expended must also account for the outputs obtained to be able to defend its viability for continued absorption of scarce resources. Obviously, role conflicts in education are bound to also be disruptive and negative as people involved often see one another as enemies. This is unwholesome for the university community and definitely unwanted. It therefore becomes expedient that role conflict among university administrators in Nigeria be investigated to proffer feasible strategies for minimizing or avoiding it. This study therefore explored the causes and types of role conflict between university professional and academic administrators in Nigeria as well as strategies to reduce and avoid them, from the view-point of the administrators themselves. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses.

Research Questions
1. What are the most common types of role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities?
2. What are the major causes of role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities?
3. What are the most effective management strategies for minimizing, resolving and avoiding role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities?

METHOD
This study is an ex-post facto design of an analytical survey. The independent variables were therefore studied in retrospect and not manipulated. The target population was made up of all current heads of academic and non-academic departments, directors of academic programmes and physical services, deans of faculties and postgraduate schools, registrars, bursars, deputy vice-chancellors, and vice-chancellors of the thirty State, twenty-four Federal, and thirty-four Private universities in Nigeria. For the study sample, the universities were stratified along ownership and twenty percent was selected through stratified random sampling from each category totaling eighteen. This comprised six State universities, five Federal Universities and seven Private universities. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the administrators in the sampled universities. On the whole, 342 copies were retrieved made up of 169 professional and 173 academic administrators. The t-test for independent means (Z-score) was used for data analysis. Significance was established at the 0.05 level.

The instrument for data collection was a fifty-five-item Likert-type questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled 'Role Conflict Among University Administrators' (RCAUD). Part I of the instrument collected demographic information on sex, age, qualification, experience, and office/position held. Part II collected information on the types, causes and management strategies of role conflicts in Nigeria universities. In designing the questionnaire, the researcher ensured that the items were related to the objectives of the study. It ascertained that the statements and items included were those supported by available and relevant literature. It therefore included items that would measure what the study intended to measure. The first draft was given to experts in public administration and educational administration for scrutiny. Based on the suggestions received and considered, the instrument was revised and found valid. The highest option scored four points while the lowest scored one point. Mean scores of two points and above were taken to be positive opinions.

The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method. The instrument was administered twice on twenty academic and twenty professional administrators outside the selected Nigeria universities within a time lapse of three weeks. The computed reliability coefficient of 0.84 was accepted as satisfactory.

RESULTS
The results of the data analyses that answered research questions one, two, and three were presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

Research Question One: What are the most common types of role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities?

Table 1: Z-Score Ranking on Most Common Types of Role Conflict between Professional and Academic Administrators in Nigeria Universities

S/N	Types of Role Conflict	Professional Administrators n = 169		Academic Administrators n = 173		Z_{-score}	Decision at $Z_{critical}= 1.960$ $p \leq 0.05$
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Competition for positions and offices	3.42	0.73	3.44	0.63	1.42	Not Significant
2	Unpalatable interactions	3.29	0.75	3.30	0.66	-0.35	Not significant
3	Divergence in sub-unit goals	3.61	0.64	3.59	0.71	0.33	Not Significant
4	Intemperate and abusive language	2.62	1.17	2.52	1.15	0.55	Not Significant
5	Locus of power distribution	3.06	0.99	3.11	1.00	-0.43	Not Significant
6	Anxiety	1.74	1.14	1.73	1.12	0.16	Not Significant
7	Anger and bitterness	3.33	0.74	3.30	0.76	0.57	Not Significant
8	Power and resources distribution by gender	1.86	0.95	1.70	0.81	1.81	Not Significant
9	Power and resources distribution by experience	3.63	0.56	3.57	0.60	1.18	Not Significant
10	Competition for scarce resources	3.26	0.91	3.08	0.97	1.86	Not Significant
11	Drives for autonomy	3.56	0.56	3.60	0.62	-0.85	Not Significant
12	Hostile behaviours	2.94	0.96	2.98	0.97	-0.58	Not Significant

Result in Table 1 showed the mean scores and Z-score values for the most common types of role conflict between professional and academic administrators of Nigeria universities. It revealed that

there were no significant differences in the opinions of both groups as indicated in all the twelve items explored implying that professional as well as academic administrators have a common agreement

on the most common types of role conflict that existed between them. These were vividly shown in Table 1. Some of them were competition for positions and offices; unpalatable interactions; divergence in sub-unit goals; and hostile behaviours.

Research Question Two: What are the major causes of role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities?

Table 2: Z-Score Ranking on Major Causes of Role Conflict between Professional and Academic Administrators in Nigeria Universities

S/N	Causes of Role Conflict	Professional Administrators n = 169		Academic Administrators n = 173		Z_{score}	Decision at $Z_{critical}$= 1.960 $p \leq 0.05$
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Absence of power	3.29	0.75	3.25	0.82	0.57	Not Significant
2	Abuse of power	3.84	0.43	3.73	0.48	2.32	Significant
3	Miscomprehension of roles	3.60	0.59	3.51	0.56	1.83	Not Significant
4	Overlapping functions	3.65	0.57	3.62	0.60	-0.84	Not Significant
5	Certain individuals assume much power	3.40	0.71	3.44	0.65	-0.60	Not Significant
6	Inadequate communication	3.21	0.84	3.22	0.83	-1.17	Not Significant
7	Poorly arranged duties	3.26	0.58	3.24	0.61	0.33	Not Significant
8	Miscomprehension of duties	3.56	0.57	3.54	0.66	1.42	Not Significant
9	Improper power assignment	3.49	0.69	3.40	0.60	0.76	Not Significant
10	Differing emotions and attitudes	3.46	0.75	3.42	0.78	0.85	Not Significant
11	Differing perceptions	3.22	0.76	3.20	0.80	0.43	Not Significant
12	Differing ideas and interests	3.24	0.83	3.12	0.92	1.61	Not Significant
13	Differences from power structure	3.35	0.74	3.33	0.77	0.07	Not Significant
14	Few influential persons controlling the University	3.82	0.44	3.72	0.52	2.33	Significant
15	Differing view points	3.23	0.82	3.26	0.89	-0.66	Not Significant
16	Differences in value	3.52	0.66	3.41	0.77	1.44	Not Significant
17	Certain professional offices/positions given to academic administrators	3.03	0.92	3.11	0.92	-0.71	Not Significant
18	Certain academic offices/positions given to professional administrators	2.96	0.12	2.87	1.09	0.38	Not Significant
19	Academic administrators out-number professional administrators in the decision making body	3.06	0.99	3.12	0.98	-0.42	Not Significant
20	Professional administrators out-number academic administrators in the decision making body	3.34	0.71	3.50	0.64	-2.03	Significant

The result in Table 2 showed the mean scores and Z-score values for the major causes of role conflict that existed between professional and academic administrators of Nigeria universities. Apart from items 2, 14, and 20 which revealed significant differences others showed no significant differences in the opinions of both groups. This meant that professional and academic administrators were not in common agreement that abuse of power, few influential persons controlling the university, and academic administrators out-number professional administrators in the decision making body were major causes of role conflict between the two groups. However they agreed that the others were major causes of role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities. These are, absence of power; miscomprehension of roles; overlapping functions; certain individuals

assume much power; inadequate communication; poorly arranged duties; miscomprehension of duties; improper power assignment; differing emotions and attitudes; differing perceptions; differing ideas and

interests; differences from power structure; differing view-points; differences in value; certain professional offices/positions given to academic administrators; certain academic offices/positions given to professional administrators; and academic administrators out-number professional administrators in the decision making body of the university.

Research Question Three: What are the most effective management strategies for the resolution and avoidance of role conflict among Nigeria universities administrators?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Z-Score Values on Most Effective Management Strategies for the Resolution and Avoidance of Role Conflict between Professional and Academic Administrators in Nigeria Universities

S/N	Management strategies for resolving and avoiding role conflict	Professional Administrators n = 169		Academic Administrators n = 173		Z_{-score}	Decision at $Z_{critical}$= 1.960 p ≤ 0.05
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Using dialogue and allowing parties to express their feelings freely	3.62	0.63	3.63	0.70	0.33	Not Significant
2	Problem-solving approach	3.52	0.64	3.50	0.63	0.34	Not Significant
3	Thorough diagnosis of role conflict to ascertain the root cause and remove it	3.60	0.63	3.61	0.56	-0.22	Not Significant
4	Bargaining and persuading	3.33	0.70	3.37	0.78	-0.55	Not Significant
5	Withdrawal from role conflict arena	2.78	0.99	3.01	0.88	-3.07	Significant
6	Ensuring team work/spirit to avoid role conflict	3.85	0.43	3.74	0.49	2.34	Not Significant
7	Voting for majority decision						Not Significant
8	Intervention of higher authorities at various stages until resolution is achieved	3.53	0.72	3.60	0.68	0.79	Not Significant
9	Intervention of some selected experienced administrators	3.01	0.99	3.16	0.79	-1.31	Not Significant
10	Use of ad-hock peace committee	3.35	0.74	3.33	0.77	0.07	Not Significant
11	Both parties lose after resolution	3.28	0.60	3.27	0.61	0.34	Not Significant
12	One party wins the other party loses after resolution	3.57	0.61	3.44	0.68	2.00	Significant
13	Both parties win after resolution	2.61	1.16	2.55	1.16	0.57	Not Significant
14	Lead parties to reach compromise	3.25	0.86	3.11	0.94	1.61	Not Significant
15	Both parties removed from role conflict arena and replaced	2.60	1.14	2.57	1.15	0.56	Not Significant
16	Parties forced to reconcile	3.34	0.71	3.51	0.64	-2.03	Significant
17	Parties judged as in court	2.93	0.12	2.90	1.09	0.39	Not Significant
18	Parties urged to forgive and forget through prayers	2.51	1.01	2.52	0.99	0.04	Not Significant

Result in Table 3 showed the mean scores and Z-score values of the most effective management strategies for the resolution and avoidance of role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities. It revealed significant differences in the opinions of professional and academic administrators in items 5, 12, and 16, implying that both groups were not in common agreement with withdrawal from role conflict arena; one party wins the other party loses after resolution; and parties forced to reconcile. The strategies in the rest of the items showed no significant differences in opinions implying that they were perceived by both groups alike to be most effective management strategies for resolving and avoiding role conflicts existing between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities. These are – Using dialogue and allowing parties to express their feelings freely; Problem-solving approach; Thorough diagnosis of role conflict to ascertain the root cause and remove it; Bargaining and persuading; Ensuring team work/spirit to avoid role conflict; Voting for majority decision; Intervention of higher authorities at various stages until resolution is achieved; Intervention of some selected experienced administrators; Use of ad-hock peace committee; Both parties lose after resolution; Both parties win after resolution; Lead parties to reach compromise; Both parties removed from role conflict arena and replaced; Parties judged as in court; Parties urged to forgive and forget through prayers.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Some of the most common types of role conflict found in this study among Nigeria universities administrators include unpalatable interactions, anger and bitterness, and hostile behaviours. As they administrator the university together, professional and academic administrators should not be judgmental and antagonistic or be condemning each other. Rather, inevitable role conflict should lead them to become mature in tolerance, perseverance, love and acceptance of individual differences and attributes. Absence of power and poor power distribution in the universities major causes of role conflicts found in this study. The solution to these types of role conflict could be consideration of the status and role performance of an individual in the university before electing him or her into an office and then supporting the office with corresponding power vested in the authority of the office held or position. Round pegs should be put in round holes to fit well. Inadequate communication, overlapping of function and poor arrangement of duties were some of the major causes of role conflict identified in this study. Duties and roles of university officers should be well defined. Each officer should know his expected roles and his boundaries and limitations. This would reduce the frictions that often arise from misconception of leadership roles, task performance and task expectations. Therefore, the demarcation of roles and functions of the administrators must be well spelt out rather than loosely left in the hand of

the incumbent. Inadequate communication found as one of the major causes of role conflict between professional and academic administrators agreed with the work of Alade (1998), who pointed out that effective communication channel was vital to an organization, and that the continuous healthy existence of any organization depends on how well its communication channels operate.

One of the most effective strategies for the avoidance and resolution of role conflict as indicated by the administrators is ascertaining the root cause of role conflict and removing it. This finding agreed with those of Alade (1998) and Olutade (2005). Olutade (2005) declared that a thorough diagnosis of role conflict usually leads to the best possible solution for all the parties engaged in the role conflict. Alade (1998) advised that in resolving or avoiding role conflict, stakeholders should recognize that feelings are facts and are relevant to the management of role conflict since allowing people to express their feelings freely could expose the root causes of role conflict. Obviously, problem-solving, collaborating, participatory or confrontational strategies represent a high desire to satisfy the concerns and interests of others as well as oneself in the role conflict situation. This way, the interests and concerns of parties involved in a role conflict will be well integrated. The problem-solver is people-oriented and a good listener who loves others intensely and constantly working to help others make considerable progress with little concern for self. These reflect strategies found important and effective in resolving, minimizing or avoiding role conflicts in this study and they are in consonance with the ideas and findings of Otobo (2007), Fashoyin (2002), Burach (2001), Dalrendorf (2000), Glueck (2000), and Olutade (1998). All the strategies found in this study as effective in managing role conflict tallied with those enumerated by Otobo (2007) discussed elaborately in the introduction of this study. Dalrendorf (2000) noted that conflicts arise as a result of goal incompatibility collaborating our finding of divergence in sub-unit goals as a common type of role conflict in Nigeria universities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that role conflict between professional and academic administrators in Nigeria universities were rooted in competition for scarce resources, inadequate communication, poorly arranged duties, power tussle, personality clashes, improper power distribution and poor management strategies. It was also found that one of the most effective strategies for the avoidance and resolution of role conflict was ascertaining the root cause of role conflict and removing it. This way, situations and conditions that would lead to the various types of role conflict would have been removed before the administrators assume

offices and positions. It was therefore recommended that university authorities should adopt this strategy and all the others found in this study to be effective in managing role conflict in Nigeria universities. Moreover, the Constitution and Bye-Laws of the university should be explanatory enough and be made available to both the academic and professional administrators and all university staff for awareness and use. Administrators, both academic and professional, should see each other as partners in progress to ensure smooth running of the university. They should be satisfied with whatever position or role offered without any resentment or rivalry.

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