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## **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AS A STRATEGY FOR INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN TARABA STATE PUBLIC SERVICE (2007-2011)**

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### **Abstract**

*The main thrust of this paper is to examine the role of collective bargaining in the management of the industrial conflicts that took place between 2007 and 2011 in Taraba state public service. The study adopted the primary and secondary sources of data. Simple descriptive analysis and percentages were used for the purpose of data analysis and chi-square was used to test hypothesis. The study revealed that collective bargaining plays active role in the management the state-w industrial conflicts management in Taraba state and its role led to the resolution of the 2009 and 2011 state-wide strikes. Recommendations were made on how to improve the role of the state government should cooperate with the chapter in order to improve the contribution of the union in conflicts resolution and management in the state, Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress should always prepare and endeavour to mobilize, sensitize or enlighten its members on matters affecting the unions as well as to use such medium to counter most of government propaganda in oder to improve their role in collective bargaining and both the state government and Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) should embrace conflicts as their mutual problem and collective bargaining as the most acceptable way of settling any of such conflicts.*

**Keywords:** Conflict, Conflict Management, Public Sector, Collective Bargaining, Trade Union.

## **Introduction**

Unionization is one reaction of workers to employers' actions. Workers of different interests and needs come together in a trade union to negotiate the price of labour (Owoseni, 2014). Individual workers lack power, and may not be able to seek improvement in wages and other working conditions. This is the logic of trade unions. Trade unions are the main power resource of the workforce i.e. they serve as the platform for social interaction among workers. Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) is a labour union that serves as the main power resource of workers in Nigeria (Opara, Uruchi, & Igbaekemen, 2014). This power can promote the resolution of problems faced by the workers in an organization.

Conflict in the workplace cannot be ruled out, even with the existence of a trade union. Conflict between employers and employees is referred to as industrial conflict (Adebisi, 2004). Industrial conflicts can be expressed in different ways and terms such as strike, industrial unrest, industrial disharmony, trade dispute etc. Industrial conflict is the discord that occurs when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those individuals or groups block or frustrate each other's attempt to achieve their objectives. Conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staffs are often incompatible (Jones, George & Hill, 2000).

To Ajayi (2002) conflict is a fact of life in organizations as well as other areas of life, as people compete for jobs, resources, power, etc. dealing with it is difficult, because it arouses primitive emotions such as people feeling threatened. However, industrial conflicts give room for "bargaining". This is because, it results to a process of cross fertilization of ideas, negotiation and clarification of standpoints and demands, as well as institutionalization of the principle of "give and take" in order to attain peace and ensure continuity of production and services, as no sensible party to a conflict would wish it to degenerate into mutual suicide.

Industrial conflicts from 2007-2011 in Taraba state public service like some states of the federation have left much to be desired. It is on this note that the paper seeks to examine the role of collective bargaining in industrial conflict management in the state within the period. There is no doubt that collective bargaining pre-occupies itself with varying intellectuals of emotional capabilities and different identifiable social groups governed by dissimilar norms, values and aspirations. The paper attempts to identify these conflicting interests and as well suggests a more acceptable way of achieving common objectives in spite of the differences. The paper is significant because it provides the best framework of managing industrial conflicts via collective bargaining in both public and private sector organizations in Nigeria.

## **Putting the Problem in Perspective**

In Nigeria today, strike has become a household name, industrial conflicts that can be resolved via collective bargaining often degenerate to industrial action leading to loss of working hours which if quantified could amount to billions of naira. In the process of trying to resolve these issues of incessant strikes by labour unions through collective bargaining, some socio-political and other factors do come into play. These political factors include government refusal to negotiate or using threat on workers.

Taraba state public service between 2007 and 2011 was not left out of this problem. On 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, the failure of the Taraba State Government to implement the 27.5% Teacher's Salary Structure (TSS) as agreed by the Governors' Forum led to the strike action by the state

branch of Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT). Governor Danbaba Suntai was part of the Governors' Forum that went into negotiation with the union and signed the agreement in 2008 and promised to implement from January 2009, but to dismay of the teachers, he did not keep his promise. After several reminders by the union and state government's nonchalant attitude, the union decided to embark on the strike. There were several meetings between the State Executive Council (SEC) of Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress and the state government to resolve the strike, but in all the meetings, the State Government refused to reach agreement. Finally, the chapter threatened to mobilize workers and join the ongoing strike by the union of teachers, but the State Government threatened workers with dismissal (Ahmed-Gamgum, 2014).

Nevertheless, on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011, the workers in Taraba state civil servants went on an indefinite strike to press for the six point demand which included salary relativity, review of pension and payment of gratuity to retired civil servants. Others are the payment of paramilitary service allowance, the payment of health workers palliative salary scale and payment of new salary approved by the Federal Government. Before the strike, several attempts were made by the Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress to reach agreement with the state government but all proved abortive. During the strike, several meetings were held between the Congress and the state government officials, but all these efforts were in vain, the state government refused to meet any of the demands and rather directed workers to resume work or faced dismissal (Ahmed-Gamgum, 2014).

In all the above strike cases, there was commitment on the part of the Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), but there was nonchalant attitude on the part of state government to the plight of workers and it became a hindrance to reach agreement successfully. This serves as a clear testimony that, the collective bargaining role of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in Taraba state is engulfed by a host of enormous constraints and challenges, such as lack of seriousness to engage in collective bargaining on the part of the state government, takes longer time than necessary and it is usually concluded when the chapter threatens to embark on industrial actions and the use of coercion on the union by the state government. The situation if left unchecked may result to constant strike cases in the state. Hence the paper attempts to provide answer to the following questions: What was the role of collective bargaining in the 2009 and 2011 strike? Did collective bargaining help in resolving the 2007 and 2011 industrial conflicts in Taraba state public service?

This study will attempt to test the following hypothesis:

- H<sub>0</sub>:** That the collective bargaining effort of Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress did not lead to industrial conflicts resolution in Taraba state public service in the period under review.
- H<sub>1</sub>:** That the collective bargaining effort of Nigerian Labour Congress led to the resolution of industrial conflicts in Taraba state publicservice in the period under review.

### **Methodology**

The research is a survey research in which data was generated from the primary and secondary sources, population and sample size and the method of data analysis. A structured questionnaire was designed in a closed and opened ended form and was administered to the respondents. Questionnaire was used because it is faster and can generate comparable and quantifiable data. The responses thus constituted the data base of the study.

The study covered Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). The Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress is made up of 24 affiliated unions comprising workers in

both the public and private sector organizations. The congress has a membership of 5500 workers (Taraba state policy document 2012). A total of sixty workers were selected as sample size for the purpose of data analysis and generalization. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size from the population under study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The concept of conflict is multi-dimensional. However, according to Ajayi (2002) conflicts are the sequence of interaction between groups in the society, between groups and government, and between individuals. To him, conflict exists in the workplace as it does in many other parts of life. Conflict is inevitable in labour-management relations, but without cooperation based upon an ideology that makes it possible to develop constructive industrial relations, the marvels of modern technology and industrialization may lead to disaster.

The most promising aspect of Ajayi's (2002) view of conflict is his ability to view conflict as a "sequence of interaction" and relating it to organization. As workers continue to interact with one another and even with the management, conflict is inevitable. According to Fajana (2000), industrial conflict is the inability of the employers and employees to reach agreement on any issue connected with the subject of employers-employees' interactions. He however pointed out that many discussions on industrial relation and conflict management simply refer to strike because it is the most overt and significant aspect of industrial conflict.

In Fajana's (2000) view industrial conflict mainly take the form of strike. This view is true, however, industrial conflict does not normally take a form of strike, it takes other forms like sabotage, rudeness etc. His view was agreed by Muhammad (2014) and Jones, Gorge and Hill (2000) (2000). Muhammad (2014) agreed that industrial conflicts occur whenever clash of interests or objectives exist in worker-management relations. Industrial conflict is expressed in different terms such as strike, strike action, industrial unrest, industrial disharmony, trade dispute, industrial dispute, etc.

Organizational conflict is the discord that occurs when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those individuals or groups block or frustrate each other's attempt to achieve their objectives (Jones, et al (2000)). Conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staffs are often incompatible. To Jones, basically four types of industrial conflict can be identified. There is interpersonal conflict, which has to do with conflict between individual members of an organization and occur as a result of differences in their goals or values. The second type is intra-group conflict, which is conflict that occurs within a group team, or department, there is also inter-group conflict which arises between groups or team or departments. The fourth type of conflict is known as inter-organizational conflict and occurs across organizations (Akhaukwa, Maru, & Byaruhanga, 2013)..

According to Akume & Abdullahi (2013) the causes of industrial conflicts can be broadly classified into two categories: economic and non-economic causes. The economic causes will include issues relating to compensation like wages, bonus, allowances, and conditions of work, working hours, leave and holidays without pay, unjust layoffs and retrenchments. The non economic factors will include victimization of workers, ill treatment of staff members, indiscipline, etc.

### **Conditions Necessary for Effective Collective Bargaining**

The Nigerian Labour Congress Policy Document (2008) listed some conditions necessary for effective bargaining. These are: Favourable political climate, Freedom of association, Power relationship, Recognition of trade unions, Willingness to give and take, avoidance of unfair labour practice by both parties, Ability of the parties to negotiate skillfully and reach agreement, Willingness to negotiate in good faith and reach agreement and willingness to observe the collective agreement that emerge.

Factors like power relationship, willingness to negotiate in good faith and reach agreement and willingness to observe the collective agreement would have helped in resolving the 2009 and 2011 strike, but the state government failed to observed them in spite the efforts of Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress. Adherence to these conditions is best in industrial conflict resolution through collective bargaining mechanism.

### **Techniques or Methods of Collective Bargaining**

As mentioned earlier, one of the purposes of collective bargaining is settling conflicts between employer and employees in order to achieve industrial harmony. To achieve this, certain techniques are necessary. In Nigeria, the methods include the following according to Benjamin and Hideaki (2004):

a. **Preparation for Negotiation:** It is considered an essential factor in collective bargaining for the team that represents management or government to study the demands submitted by unions for negotiation before meeting with the union. This is because, any team which does not do its home work is sure to find things difficult at bargaining table. This includes surveys of wages and other related conditions of service for the various grades in comparable industries and an analysis of the cost of living indices since the last wages was granted. From such data, a case is made on each of the demands of the union, and presented to the general manager in the case of small companies and sometimes to some government officials in the case of public sector organizations for approval. Once this is done, the management team then goes into the negotiation room or table with full backing of the organization on each of the issues to be negotiated.

b. **Bargaining Demand:** A characteristic of union bargaining is the large initial demand, which they know will not be met by the management. This is very typical of the Nigerian way of bargaining. All that management needs in negotiation is patience. The unions normally make large demands in order to make it difficult for management to know their real position, since the demands usually cover up the real and important issues on which the union would not want to give away. Furthermore, the large numbers of demands are usually used as bargaining tactics. In a situation where unions submitted very many demands they will be prepared after hard bargaining to drop or reduce the relatively unimportant demands and contend that they have made concessions which should be followed by concession on the side of management. Thus large demand affords the union plenty of rooms in which to maneuver.

c. **Negotiation Tactics:** Experience in negotiation technique is also an important factor in collective bargaining, which is gained through practice. The more one deals with unions, the more one understands their behaviour. Some of the tactics used during negotiation are as follows: First, it is important for management to ascertain during their preparation period those items which the unions consider most important and on which they may go on strike if agreement is not reached. Another tactics is for management to present to the union facts and

figures of why they would not be able to increase wages such as economic reason, or lack of profit by the organization.

Patience is yet another tactics used by management during negotiation. Management must not give impression that they are in hurry to be over with negotiation. They must give the impression that they have months to spare on these negotiations and prepared to negotiate even late in the evening. This is very wise tactics because only very people would be interested in negotiation when they are tired and that is the time that agreements are most likely to be reached. Because when people become so fatigue and restless, they will be ready to go away with something whatever it is (Luqman, Shahzad, Shaheen, & Kiran, 2912).

d. **Breakdown of the Collective Bargaining:** Following a “deadlock,” at the negotiation table, the unions may give an ultimatum to the effect that unless its demand are met within certain period of time, They would call all their workers out on strike. It is then left for the management to compromise or face work stoppage. Such ultimatum forces decision on both parties and many agreements would be signed before the ultimatum expired (Obi, 2007).

e. **Changing Position and Reaching Agreement:** If agreements are not reached in negotiation, both union and the management must be prepared to change their position when necessary, as such parties do shift from their original stand in negotiations in order to facilitate agreements. The common stages and characteristics of the agreement making process are:

The union presents its final demands to the organization in some cases with explanatory notes as to why these demands are being made. In other cases a representative of the company usually a personnel manager holds a brief meeting with the union secretary over these demands and together separates the items into those for negotiation and those for discussion as laid down in the agreement. Once that is done, a date is fixed for formal negotiation. On the day of negotiation, the union spokesman opens the case giving reasons why it would be necessary for the management to meet the union’s demand (Zagelmeyer, 2005).

The third stage is that of making concession. One side starts by dropping some demands. This changes the atmosphere completely, and concession after concession begins to flow from both sides. Now and again, you have certain issues on which both parties do not want to budge and such issues may lead to a breakdown of the negotiation (Akume, & Abdullahi, 2013)

Relating the above techniques of collective bargaining as discussed above to the 2009 and 2011 strikes in Taraba state public service, and the role of Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in resolving them, most of the these techniques i.e. (Preparation for Negotiation, Negotiation Tactics) were used by the chapter at the expense of the workers, however the chapter uses “Breakdown of collective bargaining technique” to resolve the 2009 Teacher’s strike. As the state government refused to meet teachers’ demand after several negotiations with the state government, the chapter threatened to mobilize workers and join the ongoing strike by the state chapter of Nigerian Union of Teachers. It was on that note that the state government changes its position and the matter was resolved.

### **Constraints to Collective Bargaining**

In Nigeria, there are a number of constraints to collective bargaining process and structure (Anyim, *Elegbede* & Gbajumo-Sheriff, 2011).. Some factors which have hindered the applicability of collective bargaining in Nigeria are highlighted below:

One of the constraints of collective bargaining in Nigeria is government interventionist. Certain government interventionist measures include the proscription of trade unions, using force or threat on workers during collective bargaining process, lack of seriousness to engage in collective bargaining and the continuous issuance of government circulars on wages and conditions of service without seeking the opinions of the workers' representatives. All these have affected the operation of collective bargaining in Nigeria especially in the public sector organizations (Adewole, 2010).

Another constraint to collective bargaining is the issue of allowance to workers (Chukwuemeka, Ugwu, Enugu, & Igwegbe, 2012). Various allowances were given to different categories of workers and the process of interpreting these allowances and wages cause a great constraint to collective bargaining. An example is the agreement between ASUU and Federal Government in 2009.

More so, the weakness of trade unions, in the past, were characterized by problem of small size, low quality of leadership and meagre financial resources which all constrained the degree of their effectiveness in the collective bargaining process (Goldsmith, 1986). On the other hand, employers were better placed in terms of financial resources, quality of leadership and had access to better information. With these contrasting patterns, emerging from the two parties, employers were more or able to dictate the tune of collective bargaining. Until 1978 when the Trade Act made it compulsory for employers to bargain with unions, they (employers) could refuse to participate in collective bargaining because of the weakness of the unions (Adewole, 2010). Furthermore, formation of employer associations is another threat to collective bargaining because workers would not be able to make their demand successfully through their representatives; as such there may be conflict between worker's union and employer's association.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this paper, we shall be considering the Dunlop model of Industrial Relations System as framework. The model underscores that the actors involved in the collective bargaining process cannot operate in isolation. Otobo (2000) reinforced that the actors are: a hierarchy of managers and their representatives in supervision; a hierarchy of workers (non-managerial) and any spokesmen; specialized governmental agencies (and specialized private agencies created by the first two actors) concerned with workers, enterprises and their relationships. For the purpose of this study, the first set of actors translates to political executives/appointees of the state government and their management representatives. The second is the hierarchy of workers and their spokesmen in this case Nigerian Labour Congress and its officials. The third is the State Ministry of Employment. These actors interact with each other and are mutually dependent on one another for survival. They also interact with the environment (through the recruitment process and delivery of services) through which "energy" and "input" is derived. The transforming mechanism processes the inputs into output; the output is reprocessed through the feedback loop as inputs depending on the circumstances/situation from the environment (Obi, 2007).

According to this theory, negotiators approached the bargaining process as a mutual problem-solving exercise. Open and honest communication about each party's interests, intentions and merit of specific bargaining proposals is encouraged. This theory lends itself particularly to

bargaining issues in which both parties perceive a common threat or need and successfully resolving problems can benefit the interest of both parties. Discussions take place in good faith and agreements are arrived at jointly with negotiating officials of both the unions and employers in reaching decisions on matters in which both have vital and mutual interest.

Thus union representatives and the management meet each other to arrive at a mutual agreement which they cannot do alone. When the terms of agreement fail to provide the expected guidance to the parties, it is the joint objectives and not the terms, which must control. Hence, the industrial relation theory recognizes the principle of mutuality, joint concern and extension to workers of the corporate responsibilities.

### **Data Presentation And Analysis**

Out of a total of 60 questionnaires distributed to respondents on their perception of the role of collective bargaining in industrial conflicts management in Taraba state public service, only 55 were successfully completed and turned in by the respondents and this is considered statistically significant to proceed with the study. Techniques of data analysis were mainly by the use of non-parametric statistics which included simple frequency distributions and percentage values from opinion information.

### **Data Analysis**

Data obtained through the instrument of self-administered questionnaire were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency distribution and the results are discussed under the various sub-headings as they related to the subject matter. Below are the results of the questionnaire administered to respondents on the role Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress in collective bargaining and industrial conflicts management in Taraba State public service from 2007-2011.

Table 1: Respondents' Perception on whether collective bargaining was Helpful in Resolving the 2007 and 2009 Industrial Conflicts in Taraba State Public Service.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Yes	6	11%
No	49	89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Researcher's Survey 2015**

The above table shows respondents' perceptions on whether they considered collective bargaining helpful in resolving the 2007 and 2011 industrial conflicts in Taraba state public service. 6 respondents representing 11 percent held the view that collective bargaining as a strategy for the management industrial conflict was helpful in the amicable resolution of the statewide industrial conflict in Taraba. However, 49 respondents constituting 89 percent did not hold the view that it was helpful.

Table 2: Views of Respondents on the Attitude of the Taraba State Government during collective bargaining process in the 2011 State-wide Strike

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Excellent	2	4%



Good	4	7%
Fair	15	27%
Poor	34	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Researcher's Survey 2015**

The table above shows respondents' perception on the response of the Taraba state government in collective negotiation with NLC during the 2007 and 2011 state-wide strikes. The result shows that, a total of 6 respondents representing 11% says the response was excellent and good, whereas 15 respondents representing 27% says the response was fair while majority of the respondents representing 34 (62%) responded that the response was poor. This is a clear testimony that the state government did not have much concern for workers and did not embrace collective bargaining which is a corner stone of industrial relations.

Table 3: Respondents' perception on Whether Collective Bargaining is an effective tool in managing industrial conflicts in Taraba state public service.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Strongly Agreed	5	9%
Agreed	19	34%
Strongly Disagreed	6	11%
Disagreed	18	33%
Undecided	7	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Researcher's Survey 2015**

The above table shows respondents' perception on the efficacy of collective bargaining as a tool of managing industrial conflicts in Taraba state public service. A careful examination of the table shows that, 5 respondents representing 9% strongly agreed that collective bargaining is effective, 19 respondents representing 34% agreed, whereas 6 respondents representing 11% strongly disagreed while 18 respondents representing 33% disagreed and 7 respondents representing 13% were silent. Therefore, majority of the respondents agreed that collective bargaining is an effective tool and also majority disagreed, since the difference between 19 (34%) and 18 (33%) is not far. This is because of the nonchalant attitude of the state government during the 2007 and 2011 state-wide strike. But majority still believed that collective bargaining is an effective tool of resolving industrial conflict in Taraba state public service.

Table 4: Respondents' Perception on Whether the Collective Bargaining Effort of Taraba state Chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) led to Industrial Conflict Resolution in the Taraba state public service.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Strongly Agreed	29	53%
Agreed	17	31%
Strongly Disagreed	4	7%
Disagreed	4	7%
Undecided	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Researcher's Survey 2015**

The table above shows respondents' perception on whether the collective bargaining effort of Nigerian Labour Congress Taraba state led to industrial conflict resolution in the state. 29 respondents representing 53% strongly agreed, 17 respondents representing 31% also agreed that their effort will lead to industrial conflict resolution in the state while 4 respondents representing 7% disagreed and strongly disagreed while only 1 respondent representing 2% was silent. Therefore majority of the respondents strongly agreed that inspite the nonchalant attitude of the state government in collective bargaining, the role of NLC led to conflict resolution in the state, using their experience of the 2009 and 2011 state-wide strike.

### **Summary of the Major Findings**

The study revealed that, the use of collective bargaining as a tool for resolving industrial disharmony was helpful in the management of conflicts in Taraba state during the period under review.

Also the findings revealed that government or employers of labour are responsible for industrial disputes, because most of the collective bargaining agreements between labour unions and government failed as a result of insincerity to most of the agreements reached. Government sometimes reneged from its initial agreement with unions and when union tried to resolve this through collective negotiation, government did refuse to negotiate, thereby leading to strike. Example is how the Taraba state government reneged on its agreement with Nigerian union of teachers in 2009 and all workers in 2011 in the state and majority of the respondents agreed that its response with (NLC) during collective bargaining was relatively poor. The study also found that the respondents overwhelming agreed that collective bargaining is a viable tool in labour-management relations in Taraba state.

### **Testing of Hypothesis**

Question 4 (Do you think the collective bargaining effort of the Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), led to industrial conflicts resolution in the state?) in the research questionnaire was used to test hypothesis. Below was the result obtained through the administration of the question.

Table 4: Repondents perception whether the collective bargaing effort of Taraba state Chapter of Nigerian Labour congress (NLC) led to industrial conflict resolution in the Taraba state public service.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Strongly Agreed	29
Agreed	17
Strongly Disagreed	4
Disagreed	4
Undecided	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

The formula for the chi-square is as follows:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Where:

- X<sup>2</sup> = Chi- square
- F<sub>o</sub> = Observed Frequency
- F<sub>e</sub> = Expected Frequency
- ∑ = Summation

$$F_e = \frac{\text{Total responses}}{\text{Number of variables}}$$

$$= \frac{55}{5} = 11$$

**Determination Of Chi-Square Computed Or Calculated**

F <sub>o</sub>	F <sub>e</sub>	F <sub>o</sub> -f <sub>e</sub>	(F <sub>o</sub> -f <sub>e</sub> ) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(F_o - f_e)^2}{F_e}$
29	11	18	324	29.45
17	11	6	36	3.27
4	11	-7	49	4.45
4	11	-7	49	4.45
1	11	-10	100	9.09
				50.71

Therefore the chi-square compute or calculate = 50.71

**Chi-square tabulated**

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Chi-square tabulated} &= X^2_{n-1} (0.05) \\ &= X^2_{5-1} @ (0.05) \\ &= X^2_4 @ (0.05) \\ &= 9.488 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore the table chi-square = 9.488

**Decision rule:** Since the computed value (50.71) is greater than the table value (9.488), we reject the Null Hypothesis and accept the Alternative Hypothesis.

**Interpretation of the Result**

Since the chi-square calculated is greater than the chi-square tabulated value, we reject the Null Hypothesis which says “the collective bargaining effort of Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress did not lead to industrial conflicts resolution in Taraba state” and accept Alternative Hypothesis, ‘that the collective bargaining effort of Nigerian Labour Congress led to the resolution of industrial conflicts in Taraba state public service.

**Conclusion**

It was observed in the course of this study that the existence of conflict in the management of any organization is inevitable. The research work has tried to bring to light the role of labour unions in collective bargaining and management of these conflicts. Taking a look at paper, it has been established that there is correlation between the role of unions in collective bargaining and industrial conflict management in any working environment i.e Taraba state public service in this case.

Conclusively, collective bargaining remains the most effective instrument in the hands of Nigerian Labour Congress Taraba state chapter in their disputes with the state government during industrial strikes. As a bargaining agent, the paper finds its major justification in the eyes of its member unions and that the issue relating to financial reward are still, whether for material or symbolic reasons or both, among its major bargaining preoccupations.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations can be adopted to improve the role of Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress in collective bargaining and industrial conflict management in Taraba state public service.

Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) played an important role in the management of industrial conflicts in Taraba state especially the 2007 teachers' strike and 2011 state-wide strike, therefore the state government should cooperate with the chapter in order to improve the contribution of the union in conflicts resolution and management in the state public service.

Taraba state chapter of Nigerian Labour Congress should always prepare and endeavour to mobilize, sensitize or enlighten its members on matters affecting the unions as well as to use such medium to counter most of government propaganda in order to improve their role in collective bargaining.

Both the state government, business organizations, employers of labour, employees, non-profit organizations and all stakeholders in industrial relations in Taraba state public service should endeavour to embrace collective bargaining, consultation with the union representatives and negotiation between employers and employees as the machinery to resolve industrial conflicts in their efforts to promote industrial harmony, enhance employees' performance, increase productivity and improve the living standard of the generality of the people in the state.

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