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Employees Relations and Organizational Performance of Olam Flour Mills, Ilorin, Kwara State

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Abstract

Globally, the success of any Organizations depends on a positive relationship between employees and employers. However, it is obvious that the struggle for harmonious relationship has become even more intense. Therefore, there is a need for managers to maintain strong relationships with their employees. This study investigates the link between employee relations and organizational performance at Olam flour mills, Ilorin. The research population consisted of 215 employees, and respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique. The sample size of 138 was determined based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula. Data were collected through administered questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between communication, conflict resolution, and employee participation, with results as follows: ($\beta = 0.864$, $t = 23.424$, $p < 0.05$); ($\beta = 0.805$, $t = 23.285$, $p < 0.05$); and ($\beta = 0.885$, $t = 18.37$, $p = 0.05$), respectively. The study concluded that organisations that effectively utilise employee relations strategies will experience higher organisational performance. The study recommended that management of Olam flour mills should ensure proper manage and maintenance of employee relations strategies such as communication, conflict resolution and employee participation to improve their relationship with employees and drive overall performance of the organisation.

Keywords: Employee relations, communication, conflict resolution, employee participation, organisational performance.

1.0 Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, the link between employee relations and organizational success has become a key area of research, highlighting its importance in driving overall performance. Effective employee relations are keys for shaping workplace culture, resolving conflicts, and fostering positive interactions between employees and management (Kaufman *et al*, 2021). Organizations that prioritize strong employee relations tend to experience better performance outcomes, such as higher productivity, job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and greater achievement of organizational goals (Akinwale and Ogunyomi, 2021).

Employees are often seen as an organization's most valuable asset, and their contributions directly impact performance (Xi, 2019). As such, maintaining healthy employee relations is essential for any organization striving for growth. According to CIPD (2018), employee relations encompass a range of activities, including collective bargaining, negotiations, and labour law compliance, all to reduce turnover and improving retention. Effective systems for employee relations include practices such as employee recognition, policy development, and problem-solving. HR managers are necessary role in promoting positive employee relations, which is vital for organizational success, particularly in a competitive and rapidly evolving business landscape. Strong employee relations lead to organizational improvements, such as enhanced competitiveness, effective change management, and increased employee morale (Armstrong, 2016).

The quality of employee relations reflects an organization's core values and culture. Schein (2010) noted that with the rise of digital transformation, the need for effective employee relations has increased, as organizations must retain top talent and keep employees engaged in a technology driven world. The concept of employee relations dates back to the Industrial Revolution, highlighting the need for fair wages, better working conditions, and worker involvement in decision-making (Adebayo *et al*, 2020; Rusyandi, 2020). Over time, employee relations have evolved into element of organizational performance, helping companies navigate change, retain talent, and maintain a productive work environment.

Organizational performance concern with how well a company achieves its objectives, such as profitability, growth, and employee satisfaction. Studies show that effective employee relations are linked to better performance outcomes (Kaufman *et al*, 2021; Malik *et al*, 2024). Employees who feel valued and respected experience increased motivation and productivity, which contribute to organizational success. Olam flour mills, a prominent agribusiness company, acknowledges the vital role of effective employee relations in achieving success.

The challenges faced by manufacturing companies include Olam flour mills, Ilorin, in leveraging employee relations to enhance organizational performance cannot be overemphasised. Despite the recognized importance of effective communication, conflict resolution and employee participation in driving organizational success, there exists a notable gap in their implementation within the company. Employees are not sufficiently engaged in decision-making processes, and the lack of open communication channels

often leads to misunderstandings and disengagement. Furthermore, when conflicts among employees are not always addressed promptly it can negatively impact morale and productivity. As a result, employee dissatisfaction increases, and organizational performance suffers. Therefore, the study examine the effect of employee relations on the overall performance of Olam flour mills, Ilorin

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Employee Relations

Xi, (2019) opined that employee relations represent an organization's deliberate efforts to implement various mechanisms aimed at regulating relationships among employees in pursuit of organizational goals. Kaufman *et al* (2021) define employee relations as the management of interactions between an organization and its employees to create a positive work environment, improve job satisfaction, and enhance overall productivity. Similarly, Pareek and Rai (2012) suggest that effectively managing employee relations fosters increased confidence, trust, and loyalty among employees. This suggestion fits into the style for managing employee relations in Olam Flour Mills, Ilorin. Supporting this idea, it has been observed that trust and loyalty are cultivated by employers through transparent remuneration practices, regular feedback systems, and delegating responsibilities to staff (Janssens *et al*, 2013). A failure to build trust and respect with employees can lead to deteriorating relationships over time. Nikoloskietet *al* (2014) emphasize that employer-employee relations entail providing employees with clear and consistent information about the organization's objectives, ensuring they comprehend management's direction and their role in achieving organizational goals.

2.1.2 Communication

Communication is a cornerstone of positive employee relations within industrial relations frameworks (Obinnaet *al*, 2024). It is the primary tool through which employers can convey organizational policies, expectations, and changes to employees. A transparent and open communication system fosters trust, ensuring employees are aware of organizational objectives, shifts in workplace policies, and the overall business

environment (Mwale and Shaju, 2022). An organization's capacity to convey information effectively enables both clients and employees to engage in open communication and develop trust in the company. It is essential that communication be two-way, allowing employees to express their concerns, suggestions, or grievances. When employees feel they have a voice, it can mitigate misunderstandings that could lead to workplace disputes or unrest. The lack of clear communication, on the other hand, can result in employees feeling marginalized or misinformed, potentially escalating into resentment and conflicts (Maynard *et al*, 2015).

Moreover, communication contributes significantly to proactive conflict management. By maintaining clear and consistent dialogue, misunderstandings or disagreements can

be resolved before they spiral into larger issues. Effective communication practices include regular meetings (one-on-one, group, or departmental), newsletters, and digital platforms (emails and intranet) to disseminate information and gather feedback (Mwale and Shaju, 2022). In industrial relations, communication extends beyond just formal channels; informal interactions between managers and staff also contribute to workplace morale. In fact, research consistently highlights that open communication is a key predictor of organizational success, as it leads to higher employee engagement, reduced turnover, and a more harmonious work environment (Prasetyo and Aliyyah, 2021).

2.1.3 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution plays an important role in industrial relations by addressing disputes in a way that prevents escalation and maintains workplace harmony (Aremu *et al*, 2021). Conflict is fundamentally a disagreement that may stem from various factors, including anger, mistrust, personality clashes, and biased institutional policies (Mahajan, 2022). Conflicts are inevitable due to the diverse backgrounds, interests, and expectations of employees and employers. How conflicts are managed greatly impacts the work environment in Olam Flour Mills, Ilorin. Poorly handled conflicts can lead to distrust, dissatisfaction, and even strikes, whereas effective conflict resolution ensures that grievances are resolved promptly and fairly (Adeyemi and Ademilua, 2012). According to Fisher *et al* (2011), conflict resolution based on mutual interest and respect leads to more sustainable solutions for all parties involved.

A key component of effective conflict resolution is providing employees with clear, structured grievance procedures. These systems address issues such as unfair treatment, disputes over wages, or working conditions transparently. Mediation, arbitration, and negotiation are tools used in many industrial relations settings. Mediation involves a neutral third-party facilitating discussions to help both parties reach a mutually agreeable solution, whereas arbitration requires a third party to render a binding decision. These mechanisms prevent conflicts from escalating and demonstrate the employer's commitment to fair treatment, reducing labor unrest (Avgar *et al*, 2023).

2.1.4 Employee Participation

Kuye and Sulaiman (2011) define participation as individuals engaging in decision-making, program implementation, benefiting from growth, and contributing to evaluations. Employee participation also involves employees actively applying their ideas, skills, and efforts to address organizational challenges and achieve its objectives. Engaging employees in decision-making boosts workplace morale and enables them to share valuable insights, ultimately leading to improved decision-making and problem-solving (Tidjoro and Barinua, 2022). Research shows that organizations with high levels of employee participation experience higher productivity, as employees are more invested in the organization's success (Benson & Lawler III, 2016).

In industrial relations, employee participation also serves as a mechanism to reduce labour disputes and promote industrial peace. Employees who are involved in shaping policies, particularly those related to compensation, work conditions, and job security, are less likely to engage in protests or strikes. Participation can take the form of works

councils, joint committees, or collective bargaining, where management and employees collaborate to make decisions (Barinua and Christopher, 2022). This inclusive approach fosters a culture of collaboration over confrontation, preventing adversarial relationships and promoting a more harmonious and productive industrial relations environment (Bennett *et al*, 2016).

2.2 Theoretical Underpinning

2.2.1 The Resource-Based View (RBV)

The RBV, which gained prominence through the work Barney (1991) emphasized that the key to a firm's sustained competitive advantage lies in its unique resources and capabilities in the context of human resource. In the context of employee relations and organizational performance, the Resource-Based View (RBV) posits that employees are essential assets that drive an organization's competitive advantage. The theory asserts that organizations with well-managed, motivated, and skilled employees can leverage these human resources to drive performance, innovation, and overall success. Employee relations practices, such as effective communication, conflict resolution, and fostering a supportive work culture, are vital to maximizing the potential of these human resources. When employees feel valued, engaged, and well-supported, they are more likely to contribute positively to the organization, thereby enhancing its performance.

Moreover, according to the RBV, a company's ability to build and maintain positive employee relations can become a unique, inimitable resource that competitors find difficult to replicate, contributing to long-term organizational success. By aligning employee interests with organizational goals, the RBV underscores the importance of strategic employee management practices in achieving superior performance. Therefore, promoting strong employee relations goes beyond addressing individual concerns; it involves building a sustainable, high-performing workforce that aligns with and supports the organization's strategic goals.

2.3 Empirical Review

A successful organization must communicate effectively with employees to ensure alignment with its goals. Effective communication is a cornerstone of organizational success, directly influencing performance, employee satisfaction, and overall productivity. Communication within an organization refers to the flow of information among employees, managers, and stakeholders, shaping the work environment and decision-making processes (Mwale and Shaju, 2022). Research consistently highlights that open, transparent communication enhances trust, collaboration, and engagement, leading to improved performance outcomes (Dartey-Baah, 2022).

Clear communication ensures that employees understand their roles, the organization's objectives, and their part in achieving those goals. It also provides a platform for employees to voice concerns, give feedback, and propose ideas, enhancing decision-making and problem-solving (Owen, 2014). Effective communication minimizes misunderstandings, reduces conflict, and promotes a positive work culture. Conversely,

poor communication can result in confusion, dissatisfaction, and lower employee morale, which negatively impacts organizational performance (Nieken, 2023).

Moreover, communication plays a significant role in managing change within an organization. As businesses adapt to market shifts, the ability to effectively communicate these changes helps employees align with new strategies, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation. Organizations that emphasize effective communication are more likely to drive innovation, enhance employee engagement, and improve retention, all of which support long-term success (Huang and Guo, 2019).

Conflict resolution plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational performance, as it directly influences workplace harmony, employee engagement, and productivity. Conflicts are inevitable in any workplace, arising from differences in opinions, interests, and expectations. However, the manner in which conflicts are managed significantly affects organizational outcomes. Effective conflict resolution techniques, such as mediation, negotiation, and open dialogue, can prevent disputes from escalating and contribute to a more positive work environment (Aremu *et al.*, 2021).

However, Igbokwe (2024) stressed conflicts, if not properly managed, can harm any organization. Often, managers are unaware of the negative impact employee conflicts have on productivity and performance. Unresolved conflicts within the organization lead to serious consequences, including high financial and human costs. Therefore, effective conflict resolution strategies are highly needed to experience employee satisfaction, collaboration, and overall performance (Avgaret *et al.*, 2023). By addressing disagreements constructively, organizations can harness the potential of different perspectives to generate creative solutions and improve decision-making (Dartey-Baah, 2022). Additionally, the ability to manage and resolve conflicts effectively contributes to employee well-being, ensuring that individuals can focus on their work rather than unresolved tensions.

Employee participation plays an important role in improving organizational performance. It entails actively engaging employees in decision-making processes, which can enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. Employee participation in decision-making positively influences them, motivating them to contribute their best to the organization's growth and development. However, when employees are excluded from decision-making, it can lead to conflicts between management and staff (Ezeanolue and Ezeanyim, 2020). Employee participation in decision-making serves as an effective strategy for improving organizational productivity. (Majekodunmi and Olajide-Arise 2024).

Moreover, Organizations that promote employee participation typically experience lower turnover rates, as employees are more committed to the company's goals. Participatory approaches, such as works councils, joint committees, and collective bargaining, help bridge the gap between management and employees, promoting a collaborative work environment (Tidjoro and Barinua, 2022) Furthermore, involving employees in decision-making can lead to more innovative solutions, as diverse perspectives are considered, ultimately enhancing organizational competitiveness (Bryson *et al.*, 2020). Studies also

suggest that employee participation plays a role in reducing industrial disputes. Employees who have a voice in shaping policies related to compensation, work conditions, and job security are less likely to engage in protests or strikes, promoting industrial peace and stability. (Kuye and Sulaimon, 2011; Torkaet al , 2010; Kaufmanet al, 2021).

3.0 Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to gather employees' perspectives at Olam flour mills, Ilorin. The total population for the study was 215 staff members. A simple random sampling technique was used to ensure equal representation of participants.

The sample size was determined using the **Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula**:

$$s = \frac{X^2NP(1 - P)}{e^2(N - 1) + X^2P(1 - P)}$$

Where:

$X^2=3.841$ $X^2 = 3.841$ (Chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom at a 0.05 significance level)

$N=215$ $N = 215$ (Population size)

$P=0.5$ $P = 0.5$ (Estimated population proportion to maximize variance)

$e=0.05$ $e = 0.05$ (Margin of error, also referred to as the significance level)

Following **Krejcie and Morgan (1970)**, a population proportion estimate of **0.50** was used to maximize variance, ensuring the largest possible sample size. With a **95% confidence level**, the assumption $(1-P) \approx 1(1 - P) \approx 1$ was applied to determine a statistically reliable sample size for the study.

$$s = \frac{3.841 \times 215 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2(215 - 1) + 3.841 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}$$

$$s = \frac{825.815 \times 0.25}{0.535 + 0.96025}$$

$$s = \frac{206.45375}{1.49525}$$

$$s = \frac{206.45375}{1.49525} = 138$$

Therefore, a sample size of one hundred and thirty eight (138) employees was used for the study.

Therefore, a sample size of one hundred and thirty eight (138) employees was used for the study.

4.0 Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Table 1: Regression of Communication on Organizational Performance

Model: OrgPer =β0+ β1Com + ε	Effect of communication on organizational performance								
	B	t	Sig.	R	R ²	AdjR ²	Df	F	Sig
(Constant)	.343	3.426	<.001	.856	.732	.730	1	548.689	<.001 ^b
Communication	.864	23.424	.000				129		
a. Dependent Variable: Org.Performance									

Researchers' Findings (2025)

The finding from the above hypothesis posited that effective communication significantly and positively contributes to organizational performance in Olam flour mills, Ilorin. The table shows that beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.864$), t-test value (23.424), and p-value (<0.05).

Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant impact of effective communication on organizational performance, is rejected at the 5% significance level. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that effective communication has a significant impact on organizational performance, is accepted. This finding indicated that organizations that fostering effective communication in employee- employer relationship drives towards organizational success and high performance.

Table 2: Regression of Conflict Resolution on Organizational Performance

Model: Org. Per = $\beta_0 +$ $\beta_1 \text{ConRes} +$ ϵ	Effect of conflict resolution on organizational performance								
	B	t	Sig.	R	R ²	AdjR ²	Df	F	Sig
(Constant)	-.001	-.008	<.001	.899 ^a	.808	.807	1	542.196	<.001 ^b
Conflict resolution	.805	23.285	.000				129		
a. Dependent Variable: Org. Performance									

Researchers' Findings (2025)

The result of above hypothesis posited that conflict resolution has significant and positive impact on organizational performance in Olam flour mills, Ilorin. The beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.805$), t-test value (23.285), and p-value (<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant impact of effective conflict resolution on organizational performance, is rejected at the 5% significance level. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that effective conflict resolution has a significant impact on organizational performance, is accepted. This finding pointed out that conflict resolution in employee relations contributes greatly to organizational performance.

Table 3: Regression of Employee Participation on Organizational Performance

Model: Org.Per = $\beta_0 +$ $\beta_1 \text{EmpPar}$ + ϵ	Effect of employee participation on organizational performance								
	B	t	Sig.	R	R ²	AdjR ²	Df	F	Sig
(Constant)	.425	3.452	<.001	.852 ^a	.725	.723	1	337.799	<.001 ^b
Employee participation	.885	18.379	.000				129		
a. Dependent Variable: Org. Performance									

Researchers' Findings (2025)

The findings above confirm that employee participation significantly and positively predict overall organizational performance in Olam flour mills, Ilorin. The beta coefficient ($\beta =$

0.885), t-test value (18.379), and p-value (<0.05) at a 5% significance level provide strong statistical support for the hypothesis. This implies that effective employee participation in employee relations enhances the attainment of overall performance in an organization at 5% level of significant.

The findings from the first hypothesis confirm that effective communication significantly enhances organizational performance, as indicated by the beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.864$) and p-value (<0.05). This suggests that strong communication practices within employee relations at Olam Company should be prioritized, as they are statistically significant at the 5% level. Investing in effective communication is essential for the organization, as it supports employees in improving overall work efficiency and achieving performance targets. This result aligns with the study by Bell, Rajendran, and Theiler (2012), which found that face-to-face communication in resolving employee disputes strengthens relationships between management and workers, ultimately leading to increased organizational productivity.

The results from the second hypothesis indicate that conflict resolution has a significant and positive impact on organizational performance at Olam flour mills, Ilorin ($\beta = 0.805$; $p=0.00<0.05$). This aligns with Kovach's (2015) study, which highlights conflict resolution as a crucial factor in enhancing relationships between employees and managers. Similarly, Aremuet *al* (2021) emphasized that effective conflict resolution fosters strong workplace relationships and industrial harmony, ultimately contributing to organizational sustainability and improved performance.

Furthermore, the findings from the third hypothesis indicate that employee participation in decision-making serves as a crucial criterion for achieving optimal performance in the sampled company. The t-value of 18.379 and a p-value of .000 confirm the model's significance at $p<0.05$, with a beta coefficient of 0.852. This suggests that employee participation plays a vital role in enhancing organizational performance at a 5% level of significance. These results align with the studies of Onkila and Sarna(2022) and Qureshi *et al* (2020), who highlighted that employee participation and teamwork management in employee relations contribute directly to improved organizational performance.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study investigated the effect of employees relations on organisational performance in Olam flour mills Ilorin branch. From the findings, the research concludes that organizations with strong communication strategies, well-implemented conflict resolution mechanisms, and a culture of employee participation will experience higher organizational performance. These factors not only improve employee relations but also contribute to a motivated workforce, leading to better overall organisation's outcomes.

Based on the findings, the study recommended as follows:

- i. The management of Olam flour mills should continuously build clear, transparent, and accessible communication systems. Open dialogue between

- ii. employees and management can promote inclusion and keep employees informed about organizational goals and changes.
- iii. The Management of Olam should provide regular conflict resolution training for both employees and managers. This training should focus on understanding the root causes of conflict and effective negotiation strategies.
- iv. The Organization should continuously allow employees to be actively involved in decision-making, particularly in areas that directly affect their work and the overall functioning of the organization. Recognizing and implementing employee participation can lead to improved morale, job satisfaction, employee engagement and improve overall organisational performance.

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