



## Labour Management Relations and Service Delivery in Anambra State Ministries: 2014-2024

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the relationship between labour-management relations and service delivery in Anambra State Ministries from 2014 to 2024. Anchored on Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory, the research focused on how industrial actions and mediation mechanisms affect the timeliness and quality of public service delivery. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with data collected from a sample of 372 civil servants drawn from a population of 5,327 using stratified random sampling. A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument, supplemented by secondary sources. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression with SPSS version 25. Findings revealed that industrial actions had a statistically significant effect on the timeliness of service delivery ( $R^2 = 0.9597$ ,  $F(1,3) = 71.47$ ,  $p = 0.0035$ ), with respondents indicating that strikes and work stoppages frequently cause delays, backlogs, and disruptions in government services. Similarly, mediation mechanisms between labour and management significantly influenced service delivery ( $R^2 = 0.9798$ ,  $F(1,3) = 145.49$ ,  $p = 0.0012$ ). Effective mediation was found to promote prompt grievance resolution, enhance employee morale and cooperation, and reduce workplace tension, thereby supporting uninterrupted and efficient service delivery. The study concludes that strained labour-management relations, particularly through frequent industrial actions, undermine timely service delivery in Anambra State Ministries, while well-structured mediation processes serve as a vital tool for improving harmony and performance. It recommends proactive grievance management, institutionalization of formal mediation frameworks, regular dialogue between labour and management, and timely implementation of agreements to minimise disruptions and strengthen public service delivery in the state.*

**Keywords:** Labour-management relations, industrial actions, mediation mechanisms, service delivery, Anambra State Civil Service, public sector performance

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

Effective public service delivery depends not only on policies, infrastructure, and funding but also on the quality of relationships between labour (employees and unions) and management (civil service leadership and political executives). In Nigeria, particularly Anambra State, labour-management relations have shaped how reliably and efficiently governmental services reach citizens (Adamu, Bappi, & Ibrahim, 2024; Onwuchekwa & Onwuchekwa, 2017). Episodes of industrial action, disputes over wages, structural reforms, and digitization efforts show that human and institutional aspects of labour relations are central to service delivery outcomes. The civil service is regarded as the engine room of government, serving as the administrative and bureaucratic structure through which policies are translated into actionable services (Agbodike, Osawe, & Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2015). In Nigeria, civil services at both federal and state levels are mandated to maintain order, provide public goods, and sustain development initiatives (Otah et al., 2024). The Anambra State Ministries, in particular, executes government decisions, delivers social services, and drives socio-economic programmes. However, its effectiveness often hinges on the relationship between the workforce (labour unions and employees) and government (political executives and management).

Labour-management relations in Nigeria have long been marked by friction, disputes, and industrial unrest, especially in the public sector. Causes include poor service conditions, irregular salaries and pensions, limited training, weak welfare packages, and political interference (Henry, Akahomhen,

Wednesday, Lawrence & Festus, 2025). Poorly managed grievances escalate into strikes, protests, or work-to-rule actions that disrupt operations and undermine service delivery. In Anambra, disputes involving major unions such as the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), and Joint Public Service Negotiating Council (JPSNC) have been recurrent. Between 2014 and 2024, common grievances included delayed salaries, stalled promotions, pension mismanagement, and poor working conditions. For example, judiciary staff strikes in 2015–2016 shut courts for months (Ujumadu, 2016); in 2018, the NLC threatened strikes over unpaid entitlements (Okafor, 2018); in 2019, disputes arose over minimum wage implementation (Addeh, 2019); and in 2020, the NUT protested poor welfare and promotions (Rasak, 2020). By 2021–2022, Anambra faced the same widespread unrest seen in other states (Njoku et al., 2022). These cycles not only disrupted essential services but also eroded trust, weakened efficiency, and reduced public confidence in governance.

The roots of these tensions lie in Nigeria's labour history. During the colonial period, workers in railways, public works, and the civil service endured exploitative conditions characterized by forced labour and rigid controls (Cornelius, Amujo, & Pezet, 2019). Though the 1938 Trade Union Ordinance legalized unionism, authorities resisted worker demands through union-busting and fragmentation (Solomon, 2020). Leaders such as Michael Imoudu mobilized workers for fair wages and better conditions, laying the foundation for organized struggles (Oyesola, 2020). At independence in 1960, unions gained space but still faced colonial legacies, inflation, and instability. Labour federations such as the United Labour Congress (ULC) and Nigeria Trade Union Congress (NTUC) emerged but were weakened by rivalries and political ties (George, Owoyemi, & Onokala, 2012). Military regimes further constrained activism, detaining leaders and suppressing strikes (Adebile & Ogunbona, 2025). In 1978, government restructured unions, creating the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), a move that consolidated union activity but also increased state control (Okolie & Akbefe, 2021).

This historical evolution has shaped labour–management relations in Nigeria and, by extension, in Anambra State. The recurring disputes, mistrust, and weak mechanisms for dialogue have significantly influenced the performance of the civil service. Between 2014 and 2024, persistent unrest repeatedly disrupted service delivery and weakened public trust in government institutions. These patterns highlighted the need for systematic research into how labour–management relations affect service delivery in the Anambra State Civil Service.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Anambra State Civil Service is the administrative backbone of governance, responsible for translating policies into services for citizens. However, between 2014 and 2024, its effectiveness has been undermined by strained labour–management relations. Disputes over salaries, pensions, promotions, welfare, and working conditions have repeatedly escalated into strikes, protests, and work stoppages, disrupting essential services and eroding public trust in government. Several incidents within the decade illustrate the seriousness of the problem. In 2015–2016, prolonged industrial action by judiciary staff shut down courts for months, delaying justice and denying citizens access to legal redress. In 2018, workers threatened to paralyze the state over unpaid entitlements and unremitted pension deductions. By 2019, unrest grew as the state delayed implementing the new national minimum wage, while in 2020, teachers staged protests over poor welfare and stagnated promotions, disrupting teaching and learning in public schools. In subsequent years, similar disputes surfaced across various sectors, showing the persistence and systemic nature of the problem.

These recurring conflicts highlighted weaknesses in grievance handling, collective bargaining, and communication between government and workers. Instead of relying on dialogue and collaboration, industrial action often became the default approach to resolving disputes. As a result, critical services in education, health, justice, and administration were disrupted, reducing efficiency and weakening public confidence in governance. The persistence of labour unrest also reflects deeper structural issues, such as mistrust, adversarial negotiation styles, and political interference. Although government has made attempts through reforms and modernization, these measures have not adequately addressed the root causes of conflict.

The issue addressed in this study concerns the role of labour–management relations in shaping the effectiveness of the Anambra State Civil Service, particularly with regard to service delivery outcomes. Over the years, interactions between government authorities and civil servants have often been

characterized by disputes, negotiations, and occasional industrial actions relating to wages, working conditions, and staff welfare. While these developments suggest that labour–management relations may influence the quality and efficiency of public service delivery, there appears to be limited systematic and empirical evidence that clearly explains the nature and extent of this influence over time. This situation tends to constrain policymakers in formulating well-informed and sustainable strategies aimed at promoting cooperation, reducing tensions, and improving service delivery. In view of this, it becomes necessary to examine the relationship between labour–management relations and service delivery in the Anambra State Civil Service from 2014 to 2024.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between Labour management relations and service delivery in Anambra State Ministries: 2014-2024. However, the specific objectives are:

1. To examine the effect of industrial actions on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries.
2. To assess how mediation mechanisms between labour and management influence service delivery.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following two research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the effect of industrial actions on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries?
2. How do mediation mechanisms between labour and management influence service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries?

### **1.5 Hypotheses**

Two null research hypotheses were formulated and tested for the purpose of this study:

1.  $H_0$ : Industrial actions have no significant effect on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries.
2.  $H_0$ : Mediation mechanisms between labour and management do not significantly influence service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Labour Management Relationship**

Mbah and Ifeanyi (2012) defined labour–management relations as the interactions between labour (represented by workers and their trade unions) and management within industrial and organizational settings. According to them, this relationship embodies the processes of negotiation, consultation, cooperation, and sometimes confrontation that occur between employees, who seek to secure better working conditions, wages, and welfare, and employers, who aim to maximize productivity, profitability, and organizational efficiency. They emphasized that in Nigeria, such relations are frequently characterized as adversarial, with labour and management often holding diametrically opposed views. While workers and unions press for equity, fairness, and protection from exploitation, management tends to prioritize cost minimization, discipline, and control of organizational resources. This tension, if not properly managed, can manifest in industrial disputes, strikes, lockouts, or reduced productivity. However, they also noted that when effectively coordinated through dialogue, collective bargaining, and adherence to labour laws, labour–management relations can foster industrial harmony, mutual respect, and improved service delivery.

Labour–management relations have been widely discussed by Nigerian scholars as a critical determinant of industrial harmony and organizational performance. According to Mbah and Ifeanyi (2012), labour–management relations represent the interactions between workers and management, often expressed through processes of negotiation, consultation, cooperation, and, at times, confrontation. They note that in Nigeria, these relations are frequently adversarial, as labour and management tend to hold diametrically opposed interests—workers pressing for improved welfare and equity, while management

emphasizes productivity, cost minimization, and control. They described labour–management relations as a set of relationships shaped by leadership behaviour, communication patterns, collective bargaining, and the implementation of agreements. They argue that these elements ultimately determine whether industrial relations produce conflict or harmony. Where communication is transparent, leadership demonstrates fairness, and agreements are implemented in good faith, industrial harmony is enhanced. However, when agreements are violated or communication is poor, the relationship often degenerates into strikes, lockouts, or other forms of industrial conflict, which are recurrent features of Nigeria’s industrial climate.

Industrial or labour–management relations are defined as the relationship between employees and management, often mediated by trade unions, and encompassing the systems, rules, and procedures that regulate work conditions, employee rewards, and mechanisms for dispute resolution (Ebeh, 2021). This conceptualization highlights that labour–management relations are not merely spontaneous interactions but are governed by institutional frameworks, negotiated agreements, and established workplace norms. According to Ebeh (2021), these relations form the foundation for determining how employees are compensated, how grievances are addressed, and how conflicts between management and workers are resolved in ways that promote organizational stability.

#### Service Delivery

Service delivery is an essential function of government, referring to the provision of fundamental services and amenities to citizens. These services include electricity, clean water, housing, healthcare, education, and other basic necessities that enable people to live decent and productive lives. Ekejiuba and Ibrahim (2024) defined service delivery as the act of supplying citizens with essential public goods, emphasizing that the government has a primary duty to ensure that the basic needs of its people are met. This understanding highlights the tangible aspect of governance, where the state converts resources and policies into real benefits for the population. Unlike broader definitions that focus on processes, strategies, or outcomes, this view centers on the actual provision of services as the core of service delivery. In the Nigerian context, where infrastructural gaps and inequalities in access to basic amenities persist, this perspective becomes particularly significant. Reliable provision of electricity, potable water, housing, and related services not only improves the quality of life for citizens but also promotes economic productivity, social stability, and national development. Conversely, failure to deliver these services leads to public dissatisfaction, loss of trust in government, and deepening socio-economic inequalities. This illustrates how closely public welfare and governance effectiveness are intertwined, showing that good administration is measured not only by policies but by the concrete benefits people receive.

Beyond the physical provision of services, public service delivery also encompasses the systems and processes governments put in place to ensure that citizens’ needs are met effectively. Eneanya (2018) described public service delivery as the institutional arrangements through which governments provide goods and services to the public, emphasizing the relationship between the state and its citizens. This perspective considers both the structural and relational dimensions of service delivery. Structurally, it highlights the formal mechanisms such as ministries, agencies, and public enterprises responsible for organizing and distributing services. Relationally, it acknowledges that citizens are not passive recipients but active participants whose expectations and needs shape the delivery process. This customer-oriented approach reflects the principles of New Public Management, which emphasizes efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability in government operations. Under this model, the quality of service delivery is measured not just by the quantity of services provided but by their accessibility, reliability, and the satisfaction they generate among citizens. For instance, the effectiveness of healthcare, education, and utilities is judged by how well these services meet user expectations and enhance their well-being. By linking governance with citizen satisfaction, Eneanya’s definition highlights that effective public service delivery is central to building trust and legitimacy in government institutions.

Service delivery can also be viewed from the operational standpoint of customer-provider interaction. Samitier (2017) emphasized that service delivery is the counterpart to service provisioning. While service provisioning involves making a service available, service delivery refers to the execution and fulfillment of that service. The relationship between the customer and the provider is shaped by both the availability and quality of services provided. Successful service delivery requires that service providers meet the needs and expectations of users in a timely, efficient, and reliable manner. This dynamic demonstrates that both the provision and delivery of services are critical in ensuring satisfaction and fostering long-term

loyalty. Citizens evaluate government performance based not only on whether services exist but on whether they are efficiently delivered and effectively meet public needs.

Shittu (2020) further emphasized that service delivery is measured by how well services meet or exceed public expectations. According to this view, the effectiveness of service delivery depends on its alignment with the anticipated needs and standards of beneficiaries. When services fulfill or surpass expectations, they enhance citizen satisfaction and improve public perception of government performance. Poor delivery, on the other hand, can result in frustration, reduced trust, and negative opinions about service providers. This highlights that the quality of service delivery plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception, fostering accountability, and maintaining credibility in public administration.

Operationally, service delivery also involves the practical steps through which services are rendered to the end-users. Lovelock and Wright (2002, as cited in Martins & Ledimo, 2015) described service delivery as the process by which a service or product reaches the customer. This approach focuses on the activities, procedures, and interactions involved in ensuring that promised services are effectively provided. Timeliness, efficiency, reliability, and quality are critical factors in operational service delivery. When these factors are well-managed, service delivery enhances customer satisfaction, builds trust, and strengthens the reputation of the provider. In government settings, efficient operational delivery of public services such as electricity supply, sanitation, and public transportation directly influences citizen well-being and confidence in institutions.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study is Victor Vroom's Valence-Expectancy Theory, propounded in 1964. Also known as the Valence-Instrumentality-Expectancy (VIE) theory, it was deemed most suitable because it provides a clear framework for understanding employee performance and motivation, which are central to labour-management relationships and their effect on service delivery in the public sector. Vroom's theory assumes that one event will lead to another and that the probability of an outcome occurring depends on an individual's expectation that a particular action will result in the desired outcome (Sutton & Neuhaus, 2024). According to Vroom, when individuals choose between alternatives involving uncertain outcomes, their motivation is influenced both by what they expect and by the degree to which they believe these outcomes are possible. Expectancy is defined as the belief that a particular action will be followed by a specific outcome (Williams, 2024).

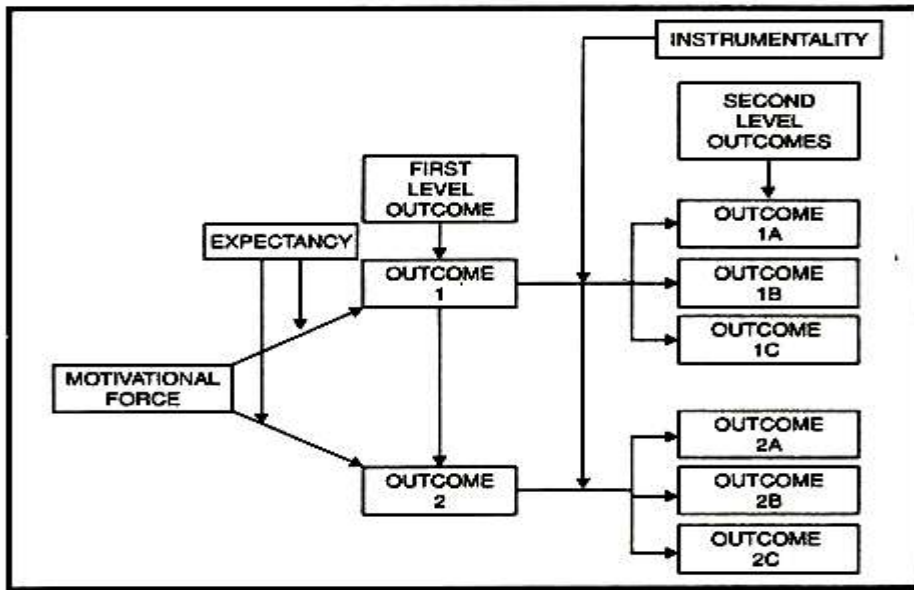
The theory rests on the assumption that individuals are rational and will always try to maximize their pay-offs. Employees are therefore likely to choose actions that provide the greatest personal benefit. Motivation to work is strongly determined by an individual's perception that specific behavior will lead to a certain outcome and the value placed on that outcome (Bandhu, Mohan, Nittala, Jadhav, Bhadauria & Saxen, 2024). Vroom critiqued Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory for its heavy reliance on the context of the original study and instead emphasized that a person's motivation is determined by the anticipated value of positive and negative outcomes of an action, multiplied by the expectancy that the action will achieve the intended goals (Vroom, 1964). The theory is expressed mathematically as:

$$\text{Motivational Force} = \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality} \times \text{Valence}$$

Where:

- i. **Expectancy (E)** refers to the belief that putting in a certain level of effort will lead to the successful performance of a task. It answers the question: *"If I try, can I succeed?"*
- ii. **Instrumentality (I)** refers to the belief that successful performance will lead to a particular outcome or reward. It answers the question: *"If I succeed, will I get the reward?"*
- iii. **Valence (V)** refers to the value or importance an individual places on the expected reward or outcome. It answers the question: *"Do I care about the reward?"*

**Fig.1: Vroom's Expectancy Theory Diagram**



**Source:** Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation (with diagram). <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/organization/motivation-organization/vrooms-expectancy-theory-of-motivation-with-diagram/63892>

**Each variable is explained as follows:**

This diagram visually represents the relationship between Valence, Expectancy, and Instrumentality in determining motivation ( $Motivation = Valence \times Expectancy \times Instrumentality$ )

1. Valence (V): Valence refers to the attractiveness or repulsiveness of an outcome to an individual. It represents the strength of an individual's preference for a particular reward. Valence is subjective and varies from person to person. It is considered positive when an individual prefers achieving an outcome to not achieving it, zero when the individual is indifferent, and negative when the individual prefers not attaining the outcome. Importantly, valence is not the objective value of the reward but the perceived value in the mind of the employee. For instance, an employee motivated by recognition will place little valence on monetary rewards. In a civil service context, employees are likely to be more motivated when the rewards offered—such as promotion, recognition, or enhanced benefits—are aligned with what they personally value.

2. Expectancy (E): Expectancy, also called Effort-Performance Probability, refers to the belief that one's efforts will lead to successful performance of a task. It is the perception in the mind of the individual regarding the likelihood that a particular action or behavior will produce a specific outcome. Expectancy ranges between 0 and 1. A value of 0 indicates that the individual perceives no chance of success, leading to little or no effort. A higher value indicates greater perceived likelihood of success, resulting in increased effort. For example, if an employee believes that completing a task efficiently will lead to recognition or promotion, their effort is more likely to be maximized.

3. Instrumentality (I): Instrumentality, or Performance-Reward Probability, refers to the belief that successful performance will lead to a desired outcome or reward. It links performance to outcomes, just as expectancy links effort to performance. For instance, if an employee seeks promotion, superior performance is the first-level outcome, and the promotion is the second-level outcome. Instrumentality represents the belief that excelling at performance will indeed lead to the promotion. Instrumentality also ranges from 0 to 1, reflecting the perceived probability that achieving the first-level outcome will result in the desired reward.

**Application of the Theory**

Vroom's Valence-Expectancy Theory is directly applicable to understanding labour-management relationships and service delivery in the Anambra State Civil Service because it links employee motivation to organizational performance. Between 2014 and 2024, the civil service in Anambra State experienced

various labour-management challenges, including industrial actions, disputes over salary adjustments, and issues related to employee welfare and recognition. The theory helps explain how these factors influenced the quality and timeliness of service delivery. According to the theory, employees are motivated to perform when they perceive a clear connection between their effort and the outcomes of their work (expectancy) and when they place value on those outcomes (valence). In the Anambra State Civil Service, employees are motivated when:

1. Their efforts are recognized and rewarded: For example, timely payment of salaries, promotions, or allowances enhances employee commitment and reduces the likelihood of strikes.
2. Management demonstrates fairness and transparency: Impartial treatment in handling grievances or promotions increases employee trust and willingness to cooperate.
3. Their work contributes to achieving organizational objectives: When civil servants see that their contributions directly improve service delivery to the public, motivation and job satisfaction are enhanced.

Conversely, when employees perceive that their efforts do not lead to positive outcomes, or when management is perceived as unfair or unresponsive, motivation declines. This can manifest in industrial disputes, absenteeism, low productivity, and delays in service delivery, issues that were observed in several departments of the Anambra State Civil Service during the 2014–2024 period. The theory also applies to management's perspective. Management is motivated to engage employees constructively and implement policies effectively when it perceives that doing so will lead to improved service delivery and the attainment of organizational goals. In practical terms, this implies that strategies such as collective bargaining, performance-based incentives, capacity-building programs, and transparent grievance handling are crucial for aligning employee motivation with service delivery objectives.

### **Empirical Review**

Uchendu et al., (2024) explored how successful mediation of labor disputes strengthens workforce stability. Through qualitative examination and case studies across industries, the study highlighted mediation's role as a non-adversarial, problem-solving process that fosters dialogue, addresses grievances early, and prevents escalation into strikes or litigation. Findings showed that impartial mediators, clear communication channels, management commitment, and structured mediation processes produce positive outcomes such as reduced absenteeism, improved job satisfaction, and higher retention. The authors recommended institutionalizing mediation within human resource policies, training mediators, preserving confidentiality, and creating formal mediation programs to build trust and preempt protracted disputes.

Kayode (2024) studied strike actions and the university education system in Nigeria, focusing on their causes and remedies. The research relied on secondary data obtained from published print and online sources. The main independent variables were causes of strike actions, while the dependent variables were the impacts on university operations and student academic performance. The study reviewed the role of academic staff unions, public universities, and student bodies in shaping strike actions. Findings revealed that strike actions are typically driven by demands of academic staff for improved conditions, but they also arise when students' grievances are neglected by university management. The study highlighted both negative and positive outcomes of strikes. Negative impacts included disruption of academic calendars, delays in graduation, and diminished educational quality. On the positive side, strikes were found to be instruments for demanding reforms and ensuring institutional accountability. The paper concluded that government should recognize students' unions as stakeholders in policy decisions. It recommended inclusive dialogue, improved university funding, and sustainable policy reforms as key measures to reduce the frequency of strike actions and their disruptive consequences.

Shimawua (2020) explored the impact of industrial union strikes on the performance of public universities in Nigeria and examined how recurring labor disputes affect academic outcomes and institutional efficiency. The study highlighted that strikes have become a recurring phenomenon due to inconsistent policy implementation and strained relationships between university management, government, and staff unions. Using a comprehensive review of secondary literature, the study identified the key causes of industrial unrest, including inadequate education and training of labor leaders, rigid organizational structures, poor communication channels, government interference, underfunding, and insufficient teaching facilities. The study also noted that political factors exacerbate disputes, further

disrupting academic calendars and diminishing student performance. Findings revealed that prolonged strikes negatively affect the standard and quality of education in public universities, reduce productivity, and impede contributions to national economic growth. Despite these challenges, the study emphasized that strikes, when managed constructively, can serve as avenues for expressing grievances and advocating positive reforms. Shimawua recommended that union leaders and university management undergo regular training to understand industrial relations better, establish clear communication strategies, and create collaborative mechanisms to resolve disputes promptly. The study contributes to knowledge on the intersection of industrial relations, higher education, and national development by illustrating the profound effects of labor unrest on academic performance and institutional stability in Nigeria.

Ukaidi (2023) investigated the impact of management strategies on employee grievances at the Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar. The study examined how selected strategies such as mediation, grievance handling style, communication, and inclusive management influence grievance resolution. The independent variables were management strategies, while the dependent variable was employee grievance resolution and commitment. The research adopted a survey research design, collecting data from employees through a structured questionnaire. Findings revealed that the mediation strategy had a significant positive effect on resolving grievances. This approach was found to enhance open communication between conflicting parties and facilitate fair resolution by involving a neutral third party. Furthermore, grievance handling style was shown to positively influence employee commitment, while communication and staff inclusiveness significantly reduced grievances in the organization. Based on the results, the study recommended that the management of the Nigerian Ports Authority adopt mediation as a primary grievance resolution strategy and ensure transparent communication of conflict procedures. It concluded that effective management of grievances enhances employee trust, reduces workplace tension, and improves organizational harmony within the Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar.

Nwokike, Ndu-Anunobi, and Nwosu (2025) examined conflict management and performance of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Through an extensive literature review anchored in conflict theory and empirical studies, the authors found that government failures to address grievances promptly, irregular payment of salaries, and unfavorable working conditions have driven repeated ASUU strikes. These conflicts have caused academic calendar disruptions, delayed graduations, and declines in educational quality. The study recommended improved communication, sustained engagement with academic staff, prompt remuneration, and institutional reforms that prioritize staff welfare to improve performance and reduce strike incidence.

Nnagbo et al., (2025) assessed *the effect of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes on students' academic training at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, between 2019 and 2023*. The study, anchored on Conflict Theory and utilizing a descriptive survey design, collected data through questionnaires and analyzed them with SPSS. The findings revealed that frequent ASUU strikes significantly disrupted teaching and learning, resulting in poor student performance and reduced access to academic resources. The study concluded that incessant industrial actions pose serious threats to the stability and quality of higher education in Nigeria. It recommended continuous dialogue, proactive engagement, and timely resolution of disputes between the government and academic unions to ensure uninterrupted academic activities and safeguard educational standards.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive survey research design was adopted because it allows for the systematic collection of data on naturally occurring phenomena without manipulating variables. Although the design cannot establish causality and may involve respondent bias, it is suitable for studying perceptions across a large population. The study was carried out in the Anambra State Ministries, which serves as the administrative hub of the state government, with Awka as the central location of major ministries and operations. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to civil servants, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, official records, and reports to provide background and support analysis. A structured questionnaire served as the main data collection instrument. It included Likert-scale questions and was administered with the help of research assistants over a two-week period, ensuring ethical standards like confidentiality and consent.

The population consisted of 5,327 civil servants across ministries, departments, and parastatals. Using the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 372 respondents was determined. A stratified random

sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation across all ministries. Within each stratum, simple random sampling (lottery method) was used to select respondents. To ensure validity, the instrument underwent expert review (face validity), leading to necessary corrections. For reliability, a pilot test and test–retest method were conducted, yielding a high reliability coefficient of 0.93, indicating strong consistency. Data analysis involved both descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics, specifically simple linear regression, using SPSS (version 25). Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level, with decisions based on p-values.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### Data Analysis

Research Question One: What is the effect of industrial actions on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State ministries?

Table 1: Effect of industrial actions

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
1	Industrial actions in the civil service often lead to delays in the completion of government services.	156 (41.9%)	139 (37.4%)	3 (0.8%)	33 (8.9%)	41 (11.0%)	372 (100%)
2	Strikes and work stoppages slow down the pace at which public services are delivered.	162 (43.5%)	128 (34.4%)	5 (1.3%)	42 (11.3%)	35 (9.4%)	372 (100%)
3	Frequent industrial actions cause backlogs that delay the execution of government projects.	149 (40.1%)	137 (36.8%)	8 (2.2%)	41 (11.0%)	37 (9.9%)	372 (100%)
4	Service delivery becomes less timely during periods of industrial disputes.	141 (37.9%)	146 (39.2%)	11 (3.0%)	39 (10.5%)	35 (9.4%)	372 (100%)
5	When there are no industrial actions, government services are delivered more promptly.	118 (31.7%)	132 (35.5%)	15 (4.0%)	56 (15.1%)	51 (13.7%)	372 (100%)
	Total	726 (39.0%)	682 (36.7%)	42 (2.3%)	211 (11.3%)	199 (10.7%)	1,860 (100%)

Source: Field survey, 2026

Data in table 6 shows that industrial actions in the civil service often lead to delays in the completion of government services. Out of 372 respondents, 156 (41.9%) strongly agreed and 139 (37.4%) agreed, indicating that a substantial majority perceive industrial actions as a source of delay. Only 33 (8.9%) disagreed and 41 (11.0%) strongly disagreed, while 3 (0.8%) were undecided, suggesting that very few respondents believe that industrial actions do not affect service timelines.

Regarding the statement that strikes and work stoppages slow down the pace at which public services are delivered, 162 respondents (43.5%) strongly agreed and 128 (34.4%) agreed. A smaller proportion, 42 (11.3%) disagreed and 35 (9.4%) strongly disagreed, while 5 (1.3%) were undecided. This indicates that most respondents clearly recognize that strikes reduce the speed at which services are rendered to the public.

For the item on frequent industrial actions causing backlogs that delay the execution of government projects, 149 respondents (40.1%) strongly agreed and 137 (36.8%) agreed. Only 41 (11.0%)

disagreed and 37 (9.9%) strongly disagreed, with 8 (2.2%) undecided. This shows that a large majority perceive repeated industrial actions as a significant factor leading to project delays.

When asked whether service delivery becomes less timely during periods of industrial disputes, 141 respondents (37.9%) strongly agreed and 146 (39.2%) agreed. Those who disagreed totaled 39 (10.5%) and 35 (9.4%) strongly disagreed, while 11 (3.0%) were undecided. The data clearly reflects that industrial disputes are widely seen as a barrier to the timely delivery of services.

Finally, for the statement when there are no industrial actions, government services are delivered more promptly, 118 respondents (31.7%) strongly agreed and 132 (35.5%) agreed, showing that a majority still see the absence of strikes as improving timeliness. However, 56 (15.1%) disagreed and 51 (13.7%) strongly disagreed, with 15 (4.0%) undecided, indicating that other factors might also influence service promptness even when industrial actions are absent.

Research Question Two: How do mediation mechanisms between labour and management influence service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries?

Table 2: Mediation mechanisms

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
1	Mediation mechanisms in the Anambra State Civil Service help resolve employee grievances promptly.	128 (34.4%)	160 (43.0%)	26 (7.0%)	36 (9.7%)	22 (5.9%)	372 (100%)
2	The process of resolving disputes between labour and management is fair and transparent.	104 (28.0%)	150 (40.3%)	32 (8.6%)	54 (14.5%)	32 (8.6%)	372 (100%)
3	Effective mediation between labour and management leads to improved service delivery.	142 (38.2%)	160 (43.0%)	22 (5.9%)	28 (7.5%)	20 (5.4%)	372 (100%)
4	Poorly managed mediation processes lower employee morale and negatively affect service delivery.	120 (32.3%)	144 (38.7%)	26 (7.0%)	54 (14.5%)	28 (7.5%)	372 (100%)
5	Management's responsiveness to mediation efforts strengthens cooperation and enhances service delivery.	150 (40.3%)	160 (43.0%)	20 (5.4%)	26 (7.0%)	16 (4.3%)	372 (100%)
	Total	644 (34.6%)	774 (41.6%)	126 (6.8%)	198 (10.6%)	118 (6.3%)	1,860 (100%)

Source: Field survey, 2026

The responses in Table 7 reveal that mediation mechanisms between labour and management play a significant role in influencing service delivery in the Anambra State Civil Service. For the item stating that mediation mechanisms help resolve employee grievances promptly, 128 respondents (34.4%) strongly agreed and 160 (43.0%) agreed, totaling 288 respondents (77.4%) in agreement. Only 36 (9.7%) disagreed, 22 (5.9%) strongly disagreed, and 26 (7.0%) were undecided. This shows that a large majority of respondents perceive timely grievance resolution through mediation as a critical factor in maintaining smooth service delivery.

Regarding the statement that the process of resolving disputes between labour and management is fair and transparent, 104 respondents (28.0%) strongly agreed and 150 (40.3%) agreed, making 254 respondents (68.3%) in agreement. However, 54 (14.5%) disagreed, 32 (8.6%) strongly disagreed, and 32

(8.6%) were undecided. While a majority believe the dispute resolution process is fair and transparent, a notable minority suggests that there is room for improvement in the mediation process.

When asked whether effective mediation leads to improved service delivery, 142 respondents (38.2%) strongly agreed and 160 (43.0%) agreed, totaling 302 respondents (81.2%). Only 28 (7.5%) disagreed, 20 (5.4%) strongly disagreed, and 22 (5.9%) were undecided. This indicates that staff widely recognize a direct link between effective mediation and the quality and efficiency of service delivery.

For the statement that poorly managed mediation processes lower employee morale and negatively affect service delivery, 120 respondents (32.3%) strongly agreed and 144 (38.7%) agreed, giving 264 respondents (71%) in agreement. A smaller number, 54 (14.5%) disagreed and 28 (7.5%) strongly disagreed, while 26 (7.0%) were undecided. This highlights that ineffective mediation can have a detrimental effect on both morale and service outcomes.

Finally, regarding management’s responsiveness to mediation efforts strengthening cooperation and enhancing service delivery, 150 respondents (40.3%) strongly agreed and 160 (43.0%) agreed, totaling 310 respondents (83.3%) in agreement. Only 26 (7.0%) disagreed, 16 (4.3%) strongly disagreed, and 20 (5.4%) were undecided. This clearly shows that responsive management in mediation processes is perceived as a key factor in fostering cooperation and improving service delivery.

### Test of Hypotheses

#### Regression Analysis for Research Hypothesis One

H<sub>0</sub>: Industrial actions have no significant effect on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries.

H<sub>1</sub>: Industrial actions have a significant effect on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries.

**Table 3: Model Summary for Research Hypothesis One**

Regression Statistic	Value
Regression Equation	$Y = 0.3793 + 0.8951X$
Correlation (R)	0.9797
R Square	0.9597
Standard Error of Estimate	0.0322
F-Value	71.4728
Probability (F-Value)	0.0035

**Table 4: ANOVA for Research Hypothesis One**

Source	df	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Value	Sig. F (p-value)
Regression	1	0.0740	0.0740	71.4728	0.0035
Residual	3	0.0031	0.0010		
Total	4	0.0771			

**Table 5: Coefficients**

Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	0.3793	0.4075	0.9308	0.4206	-0.9175
Industrial Actions	0.8951	0.1059	8.4542	0.0035	0.5582

A simple linear regression was conducted to examine the effect of industrial actions on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries. The regression model was statistically significant,  $F(1,3)=71.47, p=.0035$ ,  $F(1, 3) = 71.47, p = .0035$ , and explained approximately 95.97% of the variance in timeliness of service delivery ( $R^2=.9597$ ,  $R^2 = .9597$ ). There was a strong positive correlation between industrial actions and timeliness of service delivery,  $r=.9797$ ,  $r = .9797$ . The slope for industrial actions was significant ( $b=0.8951, t=8.45, p=.0035$ ,  $b = 0.8951, t = 8.45, p = .0035$ ), indicating that for every one-unit increase in industrial actions, timeliness of service delivery is expected to increase by 0.8951 units. The intercept was not statistically significant ( $b=0.3793, t=0.93, p=.421$ ,  $b = 0.3793, t = 0.93, p = .421$ ).

The results suggest that industrial actions have a significant effect on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries. Therefore, the null hypothesis that industrial actions have no significant effect was rejected.

#### Regression Analysis for Research Hypothesis Two

$H_0$ : Mediation mechanisms between labour and management do not significantly influence service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries.

$H_1$ : Mediation mechanisms between labour and management significantly influence service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries.

**Table 6: Model Summary for Research Hypothesis Two**

Statistic	Value
Regression Equation	$Y = 0.1963 + 0.9467X$
Correlation (R)	0.9898
R Square	0.9798
Standard Error	0.0240
F-Value	145.4878
P-Value	0.0012

**Table 7: ANOVA for Research Hypothesis Two**

Source	DF	SS	MS	F-Value	P-Value
Regression	1	0.0841	0.0841	145.4878	0.0012
Residual	3	0.0017	0.0006		
Total	4	0.0858			

**Table 8: Coefficients for Research Hypothesis Two**

Coefficient	SE	t-Stat	P-Value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	0.1963	0.3039	0.6458	0.5644	-0.7710
Mediation Mechanisms	0.9467	0.0785	12.0618	0.0012	0.6969

A simple linear regression was conducted to examine whether mediation mechanisms between labour and management significantly influence service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) stated that mediation mechanisms do not significantly influence service delivery, while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) stated that they do. The regression model was statistically significant,  $F(1,3)=145.49, p=.0012$  ( $F(1, 3) = 145.49, p = .0012$ ), and explained approximately 97.98% of the variance in service delivery ( $R^2=.9798$  ( $R^2 = .9798$ )). The correlation coefficient ( $r=.9898$  ( $r = .9898$ )) indicated a very strong positive relationship between mediation mechanisms and service delivery. The regression coefficient for mediation mechanisms was significant ( $b=0.9467, t=12.06, p=.0012$  ( $b = 0.9467, t = 12.06, p = .0012$ )), suggesting that for every one-unit increase in mediation mechanisms, service delivery is expected to increase by 0.9467 units. The intercept was not statistically significant ( $b=0.1963, t=0.65, p=.564$  ( $b = 0.1963, t = 0.65, p = .564$ )), which is typical when the predictor variable is the main focus.

The results suggest that mediation mechanisms between labour and management have a significant effect on service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries. Therefore, the null hypothesis that mediation mechanisms do not significantly influence service delivery was rejected.

### Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between labour–management relations and service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries between 2014 and 2024 with between key organizational factors—industrial actions, mediation mechanisms, and collective bargaining outcomes—and employee outcomes, specifically timeliness and quality of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries. The findings from the three hypotheses provide empirical insight into how these labor-related factors influence employee performance, motivation, and service delivery outcomes.

Findings from Hypothesis One revealed that industrial actions have a significant effect on the timeliness of service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries. The regression analysis indicated a strong positive relationship, suggesting that as industrial actions occur, management and employees respond in ways that influence the pace of service delivery. These results indicate that industrial actions, while generally disruptive, exert a measurable effect on service delivery timelines. Therefore, the null hypothesis that industrial actions have no significant effect was rejected. This aligns with prior studies showing that labour disputes can directly affect public service delivery. For instance, Kayode (2024) examined strike actions in the Nigerian university education system and found that strikes disrupt academic calendars, delay graduations, and diminish educational quality. Similarly, Shimawua (2020) highlighted that recurring industrial union strikes in public universities negatively impact institutional efficiency, academic outcomes, and overall productivity.

Findings from Hypothesis Two indicated that mediation mechanisms between labour and management significantly influence service delivery. The analysis showed a very strong positive relationship, demonstrating that effective mediation improves employee cooperation, dispute resolution, and overall service quality. These findings highlight the importance of structured mediation processes in promoting organizational efficiency and maintaining uninterrupted service delivery. The null hypothesis that mediation mechanisms do not significantly influence service delivery was therefore rejected. This outcome corroborates prior research emphasizing the role of mediation in organizational efficiency and dispute resolution. Uchendu, Akintayo, and Dagunduro (2024) highlighted that successful mediation strengthens workforce stability by addressing grievances early, fostering dialogue, and preventing escalation into strikes or litigation. The study also noted that impartial mediators, clear communication channels, and structured processes contribute to improved job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, and higher retention. Similarly, Ukaidi (2023) found that mediation strategies in the Nigerian Ports Authority

significantly improved grievance resolution, enhanced open communication, and increased employee commitment.

### CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of industrial actions, mediation mechanisms, and collective bargaining outcomes on service delivery in the Anambra State Ministries. The findings indicate that labour-related factors play a critical role in shaping employee performance, organizational efficiency, and the timeliness and quality of public service delivery. Specifically, industrial actions were found to significantly delay service delivery, highlighting the disruptive potential of strikes and work stoppages on government operations. Mediation mechanisms were shown to positively influence service delivery by facilitating timely grievance resolution, fostering dialogue, and enhancing cooperation between employees and management. Likewise, collective bargaining outcomes were found to improve employee motivation, commitment, and overall service performance, underscoring the importance of fair negotiations and the faithful implementation of labor agreements.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended as follows:

1. Since industrial actions were found to significantly delay service delivery, it is important for the Anambra State Ministries to adopt proactive strategies that prevent strikes before they occur. This could involve regular dialogue between management and staff, identifying and addressing grievances early, and creating a system to anticipate potential labor disputes. By taking these steps, the Civil Service can reduce disruptions and ensure that essential public services are delivered on time.
2. It is recommended that mediation processes be formally integrated into the Civil Service. Training impartial mediators, establishing clear communication channels, and setting up formal procedures for handling grievances can help resolve disputes quickly, build trust, and maintain a harmonious work environment.

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