# Impact of Expert Determination and Mediation Dispute Resolution Strategy on Employee Performance in Selected Universities in North-East, Nigeria

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***Abstract***
*This study examined the impact of expert determination and mediation dispute resolution strategies on employee performance in selected universities in North-East Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and focused on five universities: Modibbo Adama University, Yola; Taraba State University; Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi; University of Maiduguri; and Yobe State University. The population comprised 12,755 academic and non-academic staff, from which a sample size of 426 was determined using Yamane's formula and an additional allowance for non-response. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, with 379 valid responses retained for analysis, representing an 89.0% usable response rate. Multiple linear regression was employed to test the hypotheses at a 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that expert determination dispute resolution had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.553$, $t = 8.342$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, mediation dispute resolution had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.399$, $t = 6.005$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model produced an $R^2$ of 0.414, indicating that the two dispute resolution strategies jointly explained 41.4% of the variation in employee performance. The study concludes that effective expert determination and mediation mechanisms contribute significantly to improving employee performance in the selected universities. It recommends that university management strengthen independent, transparent, and impartial dispute resolution procedures and establish functional mediation committees supported by trained internal mediators.*

***Keywords:*** *Expert determination, mediation, dispute resolution, employee performance, universities, North-East Nigeria*

## Introduction

Employee performance is a critical determinant of organizational success because it influences efficiency, productivity, service delivery, and the achievement of institutional objectives. In contemporary organizations, employee performance is shaped by several factors, including

motivation, job satisfaction, leadership style, workplace policies, and the broader organizational environment (Dessler, 2021). In higher education institutions, employee performance is particularly important because the effectiveness of academic and non-academic staff directly affects teaching, research, administrative services, and the overall quality of institutional operations (Okonkwo & Adebayo, 2022). However, workplace conflicts between employees, between employees and management, and among academic and non-academic units can adversely affect morale, cooperation, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. In Nigeria, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has increasingly attracted attention as an approach to managing labour and employment disputes, particularly because prolonged conflicts can disrupt the activities of tertiary institutions. The National Industrial Court of Nigeria has promoted ADR mechanisms for the resolution of employment and labour disputes involving academic staff, non-academic staff, and university management (Ajayi & Oloruntoba, 2023). Evidence reported by Onwuamaeze and Okonkwo (2022) suggests that organizations that emphasize appropriate ADR mechanisms may experience improved employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, and better employee performance. Nevertheless, inadequate awareness, limited institutional capacity, insufficient legal and procedural structures, and resistance to alternative approaches may constrain the effective application of ADR in Nigerian educational institutions. Among these mechanisms, expert determination is particularly relevant where workplace disputes involve technical, professional, contractual, financial, or other specialized issues. It involves the appointment of an independent expert to provide a determination based on specialized knowledge. Amadi (2022) argued that efficient resolution of workplace disputes can reduce employee downtime and enable employees to concentrate on their responsibilities. The certainty associated with an expert determination may also strengthen employees' confidence in organizational dispute-resolution procedures. Thus, when appropriately implemented, expert determination may contribute to a stable work environment and improved employee performance. Mediation dispute resolution is another important ADR mechanism relevant to employee performance. Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process through which a neutral mediator assists disputing parties to communicate, negotiate, and reach a mutually acceptable settlement. Unlike arbitration or litigation, the mediator does not normally impose a decision on the parties. Instead, mediation provides a structured environment in which employees and management can address disagreements constructively. Okonkwo and Adeyemi (2020) reported that reducing workplace conflicts through mediation can enhance employee commitment and performance. Effective mediation can therefore contribute to improved communication, stronger interpersonal relationships, reduced workplace tension, and a more harmonious organizational environment.

Despite the potential benefits of ADR, its effective application remains constrained by several challenges. These include inadequate awareness of ADR procedures, insufficient training of personnel responsible for dispute management, resistance among stakeholders, and inconsistent institutionalization of ADR mechanisms (Giwa & Oyedepo, 2022). Aliyu and Zubairu (2019) further indicated that the absence of fully institutionalized dispute-resolution practices may limit the ability of organizations to obtain the full benefits associated with ADR. These challenges raise questions concerning whether particular ADR mechanisms are being effectively utilized to improve employee outcomes in university environments.

A further concern is that ineffective management of workplace disputes can adversely affect employee morale, commitment, and productivity. Where employees perceive dispute-resolution processes as biased, slow, or ineffective, unresolved grievances may persist and negatively influence workplace relationships. Prolonged conflicts can distract employees from their responsibilities, reduce cooperation, and undermine efficiency (Uche & Okoye, 2020). In universities, the consequences may extend beyond individual employees to teaching, research, administrative services, and institutional effectiveness (Aliyu & Zubairu, 2019). Expert

determination and mediation provide potentially important mechanisms for addressing these challenges. Expert determination can provide specialized and professionally informed decisions in disputes requiring technical expertise, while mediation can provide a confidential and participatory process through which disputing parties work toward mutually acceptable solutions. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms cannot simply be assumed; their actual relationship with employee performance needs to be empirically established within the university environment. Accordingly, this study examines the impact of expert determination and mediation dispute resolution strategies on employee performance in selected universities in North-East Nigeria. The study specifically investigates whether expert determination and mediation significantly influence employee performance and provides empirical evidence that may assist university management in strengthening workplace dispute-resolution practices.
The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of expert determination and mediation dispute resolution strategy on employee performance in selected Universities in North-East, Nigeria, while the specific objectives are to:

i. assesses the impact of expert determination dispute resolution strategy on employee performance in selected Universities in North-East, Nigeria;
ii. examine the impact of mediation dispute resolution strategy on employee performance in selected Universities in North-East, Nigeria;

**The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study:**

$H_0$i. Expert determination dispute resolution strategy has no significant impact on employee performance in selected Universities in North-East, Nigeria;
$H_0$ii. Mediation dispute resolution strategy does not have significant impact on employee performance in selected Universities in North-East, Nigeria;

## Literature Review

### Expert Determination Dispute Resolution Strategies

In his comparative analysis of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in Nigeria, Babatope Ore-Adebiyi (2016) describes expert determination as a consensual process in which a neutral third party, usually an expert in the field in which the dispute arises, gives a binding determination on the issue in dispute based on the exercise of his professional judgment. This definition emphasizes the consensual nature of the process and the reliance on the expert's specialized knowledge to render a binding decision. According to Brodies (2020) expert determination is a process whereby parties appoint an independent expert in a particular field to resolve a specific issue. This definition highlights the selection of an expert with relevant expertise to address specific disputes, often related to valuation or technical matters, providing a binding resolution that is typically faster and more cost-effective than traditional litigation.
Paul McMahon (2017) defines expert determination as a process where an independent expert qualified in the subject matter of the dispute is appointed by the parties to resolve the matter," differing from arbitration in that the expert does not act in a quasi-judicial manner" and "can and should draw on his own expertise in the field." This perspective emphasizes the expert's active application of their specialized knowledge to resolve the dispute, distinguishing it from more formal adjudicative processes like arbitration. For the purpose of this study, expert determination is defined as a consensual dispute resolution process in which parties appoint an independent and neutral expert, with specialized knowledge in the subject matter of the dispute, to render a binding decision. It differs from arbitration in that the expert does not act in a quasi-judicial capacity but instead relies on professional judgment and technical expertise to resolve specific issues, often related to valuation, contractual interpretation, or complex technical matters. The process is recognized for its impartiality, flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and speed compared to litigation and arbitration.

**Mediation Dispute Resolution Strategies**

Moore (2016) defines mediation as "the intervention into a dispute or negotiation by an acceptable, impartial, and neutral third party who has no authoritative decision-making power, to assist disputing parties in voluntarily reaching their own mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute. This definition highlights the voluntary nature of mediation and the role of the mediator as a facilitator rather than a decision-maker. The mediator's primary responsibility is to guide the disputing parties towards a resolution that is agreeable to all involved. Unlike litigation or arbitration, where a binding decision is imposed, mediation empowers the parties to take ownership of the resolution process. Brown and Mariot (2017) describe mediation as a facilitative process in which disputing parties engage the assistance of an impartial third party, the mediator, who helps them to try to arrive at an agreed resolution of their dispute. This definition emphasizes the facilitative role of the mediator rather than a directive or evaluative one. Mediation is designed to foster dialogue and negotiation between parties, ensuring that both sides have a voice in crafting a solution. The mediator does not impose a decision but provides structure and guidance to help parties explore mutually beneficial resolutions. For the purpose of this study, mediation is defined as a voluntary and consensual dispute resolution process in which disputing parties seek the assistance of an impartial, neutral, and independent third party (mediator) who facilitates communication, negotiation, and joint decision-making without imposing any binding outcome. The mediator's role is primarily facilitative structuring dialogue, fostering mutual understanding, and helping parties explore interest-based solutions tailored to their needs. Unlike arbitration or litigation, mediation preserves the disputants' autonomy and ownership of the resolution, ensuring that agreements are reached through consensus rather than coercion. It is grounded in principles of good faith, confidentiality, and mutual respect, promoting fairness, efficiency, and satisfaction for all involved.

**Employee Performance**

Nassazi (2013) considers employee performance as the contribution an individual makes toward achieving the organization's goals. This definition places emphasis on the role of employees in the success of an organization. It acknowledges that performance is not an isolated metric but a collective effort that aligns with an organization's vision, mission, and overall strategic objectives. Shafudah (2011) describes performance as an action taken by an employee that produces an output relevant to organizational or individual goals. This definition integrates both effort and results, recognizing that performance is not just about working hard but also about ensuring that efforts translate into meaningful contributions that align with organizational priorities. Baser et al. (2018) define performance as the way organizations or systems apply their capabilities and the results that follow. This definition extends beyond individual efforts to incorporate organizational performance as a whole. It implies that performance is driven by both human resources and operational systems working in synergy to achieve goals. Armstrong (2016) defines performance as the result of appropriate behavior, particularly discretionary behavior, combined with the effective application of knowledge, skills, and competencies. This definition acknowledges that employee performance is influenced by individual initiative and the ability to leverage expertise effectively. It suggests that performance is driven by a mix of skills, motivation, and autonomy.

**Impact of Expert Determination Dispute Resolution Strategies on Employee Performance**

The significant advantages of expert determination is its ability to provide a more efficient and cost-effective alternative to lengthy court cases. Traditional litigation processes can drain organizational resources in terms of legal fees and time, whereas expert determination ensures disputes are resolved promptly. This efficiency is essential in fostering a productive workplace,

as employees can remain focused on their tasks rather than being distracted by ongoing disputes. From a financial standpoint, expert determination also allows organizations to allocate resources more effectively. Instead of spending excessively on litigation, businesses can invest in employee welfare programs and training, ultimately boosting morale and performance. Research by Usman et al. (2025) highlights that ADR mechanisms have significantly reduced litigation-related costs, thereby creating an environment conducive to collaboration and high employee engagement. Employees are more likely to trust a system that respects their privacy, leading to increased cooperation in resolving disputes amicably. Atoyebi and Afolabi (2025) assert that ADR mechanisms such as arbitration maintain confidentiality, thereby making the process more appealing to employees who fear reputational damage or workplace retaliation. In conclusion, expert determination has proven to be an effective Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) strategy that fosters workplace harmony, enhances employee trust, and promotes organizational productivity. By emphasizing neutrality, confidentiality, speed, and specialized knowledge, expert determination addresses disputes efficiently while minimizing the financial and emotional costs associated with litigation. Its ability to deliver fair, flexible, and context-specific resolutions not only prevents prolonged conflicts but also strengthens employee motivation, job satisfaction, and loyalty. Ultimately, the adoption of expert determination in Nigerian workplaces provides a sustainable pathway to improving employee performance, nurturing positive employer-employee relationships, and aligning with global best practices in conflict management

**Impact of Mediation Dispute Resolution Strategies on Employee Performance**

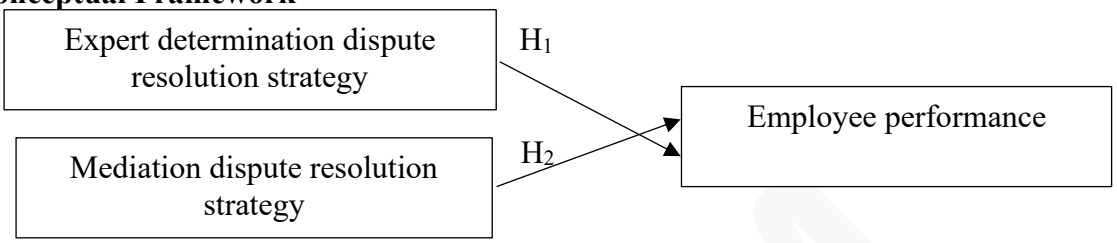
One of the primary way's mediation improves employee performance is by reducing workplace stress and anxiety. Conflicts that remain unresolved can escalate, leading to heightened stress levels among employees, which negatively affect performance and morale (Okolie, 2021). Mediation provides a structured framework that allows employees to voice their concerns and find solutions in a non-adversarial manner, ultimately reducing stress and improving job satisfaction (CIPD, 2020). When stress is mitigated, employees become more focused on their tasks, reducing errors and improving output quality. Additionally, a less stressful work environment promotes employee well-being, which directly correlates with higher efficiency and engagement levels. Poor communication is often a root cause of workplace disputes, and mediation helps address misunderstandings by encouraging open dialogue and active listening (Ugwuzor & Amadi, 2022). When employees communicate effectively, they work more efficiently and collaboratively, leading to improved overall performance (Saundry, Bennett & Wibberley, 2019). Enhanced communication skills also reduce the likelihood of conflicts arising in the future, creating a more resilient and adaptable workforce. Effective workplace communication contributes to increased trust and cooperation, fostering a culture of teamwork and mutual respect. Another significant benefit of mediation is the enhancement of workplace relationships.

**Impact of Arbitration Dispute Resolution Strategies on Employee Performance**

Arbitration as a dispute resolution mechanism has increasingly gained recognition in workplace conflict management due to its efficiency and effectiveness in resolving disputes between employers and employees (Ogunyemi, 2022). Arbitration is a structured process where an impartial third party (arbitrator) reviews the evidence presented by both parties and issues a binding decision, ensuring that disputes do not escalate into prolonged legal battles. The need for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as arbitration has become particularly crucial in labor relations, where conflicts can significantly disrupt workplace harmony and employee performance. In the Nigerian context, arbitration has been instrumental in fostering industrial harmony and improving employee performance (Adewumi & Adeniji, 2021). Given

the complexities of employment relationships in various industries, conflicts are inevitable, and traditional court proceedings often take time and drain financial resources. The introduction of arbitration as a faster and cost-effective method of dispute resolution ensures that employees remain focused on their responsibilities without prolonged legal uncertainties that could negatively impact their performance.

**Conceptual Framework**




Source: Researcher's Design, 2025

Expert determination provides technical and professional judgments in complex disputes, reducing prolonged conflicts that could otherwise disrupt academic and administrative efficiency. Mediation promotes mutual understanding and voluntary agreement, improving interpersonal relationships and sustaining a conducive work environment necessary for high performance.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Equity Theory**

Adams' (1963) equity theory highlights the role of fairness in workplace dynamics. Employees compare their inputs (effort, skills, and dedication) and outcomes (salary, recognition, and career growth) with those of their peers to assess whether they are being treated equitably. When employees perceive unfairness in workplace conflict resolution, it can lead to dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and lower performance. ADR strategies help maintain perceptions of fairness by providing neutral, transparent, and inclusive processes for resolving disputes, ensuring that all parties involved receive a fair hearing and resolution. Folger and Cropanzano (2015) support this view by arguing that fairness in conflict resolution significantly influences employee attitudes and behaviors. Organizations that adopt ADR strategies demonstrate their commitment to equity and justice, reducing perceptions of bias and favoritism. When employees believe they are treated fairly, they exhibit higher levels of job engagement and performance. This ultimately leads to a positive work environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute effectively to organizational success.

**Procedural Justice Theory**

Procedural justice theory (Leventhal, 1980) emphasizes that employee's value fairness in decision-making processes, including dispute resolution. Employees who feel that workplace decisions are made through transparent and unbiased procedures are more likely to trust their employers and remain committed to their jobs. The use of ADR strategies ensures that employees feel heard and respected in workplace conflicts, which increases their trust in management and commitment to organizational goals. By establishing clear, structured, and fair procedures for resolving disputes, organizations foster a culture of mutual respect and cooperation, leading to improved employee performance. Colquitt et al. (2015) suggest that procedural fairness in workplace conflict resolution has a direct impact on employee performance. Employees who perceive procedural justice are more likely to demonstrate higher job performance and lower turnover intentions. Furthermore, Tyler and Blader (2003) argue that fair dispute resolution mechanisms promote a sense of inclusion and fairness within the

organization, making employees more willing to comply with workplace policies and contribute positively to their roles. Thus, implementing ADR strategies that align with procedural justice principles enhances overall workplace harmony, motivation, and efficiency. For the purpose of this study, conflict management theory has been adopted, because conflict management theory is essential in understanding how Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) strategies influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness. It provides a framework for addressing workplace conflicts through structured mechanisms such as mediation, arbitration, and negotiation, which help organizations foster a cooperative and productive work environment.

**Empirical Review**

Various scholars have contributed in establishing the existence of relationship between independence and dependent variables.

Chukwuemeka, et al., (2024) studied the effect of dispute resolution strategies on employee performance in the Nigerian banking industry. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting employees of selected banks in Delta State. Using simple random sampling, 162 respondents were selected. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study found that compromising and integrating strategies had a significant positive effect on employee performance, while avoidance strategies also played a notable role. The study concluded that effective dispute resolution strategies enhance employee performance within the banking sector. The researchers recommended that banks organize seminars and workshops to train employees on conflict resolution techniques. However, the study only focused on a limited number of dispute resolution strategies. Future studies should consider the impact of other ADR mechanisms, such as arbitration and mediation, in banking institutions. Emmanuel, et al., (2024) examined how different conflict management strategies influence employee performance in Nigeria's banking sector. The research adopted a survey design, with a study population comprising employees of six different banks. A sample of 135 respondents was selected, though the sampling technique was not specified. Data analysis was conducted using correlation and linear regression via SPSS. The study revealed that compromising and avoiding strategies had a significant impact on employee performance, whereas accommodating and competing strategies had no effect. Based on these findings, the study concluded that adopting the right conflict management strategies can positively affect employee performance. The researchers recommended that banks should hold regular employee-management meetings to address conflicts early. A key gap identified in the study was the lack of consideration for the role of organizational culture in conflict management. Future research should examine how organizational culture influences the effectiveness of various conflict resolution strategies. Ezeocha, et al., (2024) conducted a study on the effectiveness of arbitration in resolving workplace disputes and its impact on employee morale in Nigerian universities. The study used a case study research design and focused on three federal universities in Nigeria. A total of 150 academic and administrative staff participated in the study, and data analysis was performed using thematic analysis and chi-square tests. The findings revealed that arbitration was effective in resolving disputes related to promotions, disciplinary actions, and workplace grievances. However, employees perceived arbitration as time-consuming and sometimes biased. The study concluded that while arbitration is useful in conflict resolution, it must be made more transparent and inclusive to boost employee morale. It recommended that universities should establish independent arbitration panels to enhance trust in the process. A major gap identified was the lack of comparative analysis with other ADR methods. Future research should compare the effectiveness of arbitration with mediation and negotiation in university settings.

**Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The study focused on describing the characteristics of the population. This study was carried out on five selected Universities in North East, Nigeria; i.e. Modibbo Adama University (MAU), Yola, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, University (ATBU), University of Maiduguri, (UNIMAID) and Taraba State University (TASU), Taraba and Yobe State University (YSU). The population of the study comprised the total number of academic and non-academic staff of the selected institutions, as presented in Table 1 below. The population of Modibbo Adama University, Yola (MAU), Taraba State University (TASU), Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, and University of Maiduguri comprised both academic and non-academic staff.

**Table 1: Population of the Study**

| University | Location | Staff | Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| Moddibo Adamawa University, Yola (MAU) | Adamawa | Teaching Staff | 806 |
| | | Non-Teaching Staff | 1247 |
| Taraba State University (TASU) | Taraba | Teaching Staff | 766 |
| | | Non-Teaching Staff | 1798 |
| Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) | Bauchi | Teaching Staff | 870 |
| | | Non-Teaching Staff | 875 |
| University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) | Maiduguri | Teaching Staff | 1758 |
| | | Non-Teaching Staff | 3351 |
| Yobe State University, Damature | Yobe | Teaching Staff | 587 |
| | | Non-Teaching Staff | 697 |
| **Total** | | | **12,755** |

**Sources: Field survey, 2025**

The study's total sample size was determined using Yamane's formula,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where;
n = Number of the sample size of the target respondents.
N = Number of the target population the sample is to be drawn.
e = Level of margin of error 5%

In determination of the sample size, the researcher adopted the use of Yamani (1964).

N = 12,755

$$n = \frac{12,755}{1 + 12,755(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{12,755}{1 + 12,755(0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{12,755}{}$$

33
= 387

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 387 with addition of extra 10% of the sample size (39) as recommended by (Isral, 1992) to guard against non-response by the target respondents making a sample size of 426.

**Table 2: Apportionment of Sample size**

| Institution | Level | Staff |
|---|---|---|
| Modibbo Adama University, Yola | Academic staff | 51 |
| | Non-academic staff | 33 |
| Taraba State University, Wukari, Taraba | Academic staff | 53 |
| | Non-academic staff | 21 |
| Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, (ATBU), Bauchi | Senior staff | 48 |
| | Non-academic staff | 49 |
| University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) | Senior staff | 24 |
| | Non-academic staff | 13 |
| Yobe State University, Damaturu | Senior staff | 73 |
| | Non-academic staff | 61 |
| **Total** | | **426** |

**Source:** Researcher's Computation, 2026

The study adopted the convenience sampling method of the non-probability sampling technique to administer the instrument to the target respondents. The study adopted primary data as its main source of information. Primary data are original data collected directly from respondents or participants specifically for the purpose of the research. A well-structured questionnaire with close ended questions was used to collect data in this study. The study used inferential statistics methods for data analysis.

**Data Analysis and Findings**

The results in the response rate table indicate that a total of 426 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, representing 100% of the sample. Out of this number, 389 questionnaires were successfully returned, representing a 91.3% response rate, while 37 questionnaires (8.7%) were not returned. Of the returned questionnaires, 10 (2.3% of the distributed questionnaires) were rejected because they were either incomplete or improperly completed and were therefore unsuitable for analysis. Consequently, 379 questionnaires, representing 89.0% of the total questionnaires distributed, were retained and used for the final data analysis.

**Hypotheses Testing**

The hypotheses of this study were tested using multiple linear regression statistics at 5% level of significance as indicted in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Model Summary of the impact of expert determination and mediation dispute resolution strategy on employee performance in selected Universities in North-East, Nigeria**

| Variables | Coefficients | Std. Error | t-Values | p-values | Hypothesis Testing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | 27.369 | 2.787 | 9.822 | 0.000 | |
| EDDR | 0.553 | 0.066 | 8.342 | 0.000 | $H_0$3: Rejected |
| MRD | 0.399 | 0.066 | 6.005 | 0.000 | $H_0$4: Rejected |

| | |
|---|---|
| R | 0.563 |
| $R^2$ | 0.414 |
| Adjust. $R^2$ | 0.412 |
| F-Stats | 16.861 |

**a. Predictors: (Constant), EDDR, MRD**
**b. Dependent Variable: EP**
**Source: Computed using SPSS 27 from Field Survey data, 2026.**

Table 3 shows that expert determination dispute resolution (EDDR) and mediation dispute resolution (MRD) both have positive and statistically significant effects on employee performance. The model recorded an R-value of 0.563, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the dispute resolution strategies and employee performance. The $R^2$ of 0.414 indicates that EDDR and MRD jointly explain 41.4% of the variation in employee performance, while the remaining 58.6% is explained by other factors outside the model. The adjusted $R^2$ of 0.412 further confirms the explanatory power of the model, while the F-statistic of 16.861 indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant.

EDDR recorded a coefficient of 0.553, t-value of 8.342, and p-value of 0.000, while MRD recorded a coefficient of 0.399, t-value of 6.005, and p-value of 0.000. Since both p-values are below the 0.05 significance level, $H_o1$ and $H_o2$ were rejected, indicating that both expert determination and mediation dispute resolution significantly influence employee performance.

**Summary of Findings**

The following findings were derived from the above analysis:

i. The findings showed that Expert Determination Dispute Resolution (EDDR) exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on employee performance (β = 0.553, t-value = 8.342, p-value = 0.000).

ii. The study further revealed that Mediation Dispute Resolution (MRD) has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance in selected universities in North-East Nigeria (β = 0.339, t-value = 6.005, p-value = 0.000).

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings revealed that Expert Determination Dispute Resolution (EDDR) significantly and positively influences employee performance (β = 0.553, t = 8.342, p < 0.05). This suggests that the involvement of competent and knowledgeable experts in resolving workplace disputes substantially enhances employee confidence in organizational justice and improves workplace productivity. The relatively high regression coefficient further indicates that expert determination represents one of the strongest predictors of employee performance among the variables investigated. The finding supports Usman et al. (2025), who reported that expert-based ADR mechanisms substantially reduced litigation costs while simultaneously improving employee engagement and organizational collaboration. Their study established that organizations utilizing expert determination redirected resources previously spent on litigation toward employee development initiatives, thereby improving employee morale and productivity. The present study validates this conclusion by demonstrating that expert determination contributes significantly to employee performance within Nigerian universities.

The study established that Mediation Dispute Resolution (MRD) has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance (β = 0.339, t = 6.005, p < 0.05). The result corroborates Ubabudu and Naibo (2024), who found that mediation significantly improved employee performance at the Air Force Institute of Technology, Kaduna. Their study showed that mediation facilitated constructive dialogue, increased employee satisfaction, and strengthened workplace harmony. Similarly, the present study demonstrates that mediation enhances employee performance within universities by promoting peaceful conflict resolution

and organizational trust. The finding also supports Acas (2021), who described mediation as an effective voluntary dispute resolution mechanism that promotes harmonious workplace relationships through neutral facilitation. Likewise, Adewumi and Adeniji (2020) argued that mediation enhances employee performance by minimizing workplace conflicts and fostering cooperation among employees. These theoretical assertions are empirically confirmed by the present study.

**Conclusion**

The study concludes that dispute resolution strategies play an important role in enhancing employee performance in selected universities in North-East, Nigeria. Specifically, expert determination dispute resolution and mediation dispute resolution were found to have positive and statistically significant effects on employee performance, leading to the rejection of $H_0 1$ and $H_0 2$. The findings indicate that effective use of these dispute resolution strategies can contribute to improved employee performance within the university environment. The study further concludes that the two strategies jointly provide a meaningful explanation of employee performance, accounting for 41.4% of its variation. This suggests that although other factors may influence employee performance, effective dispute resolution constitutes an important factor within the selected universities. Therefore, strengthening appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms can support a more productive and effective work environment.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations were derived from the above findings and conclusion:

1. The universities management should ensure that dispute resolution procedures operate independently and without bias. Transparent and fair dispute resolution processes will enhance employee confidence in management decisions, reduce perceptions of favoritism, and improve overall workplace performance.
2. Management of selected universities should strengthen mediation mechanisms by establishing functional mediation committees and training internal mediators to facilitate amicable resolution of workplace conflicts.

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