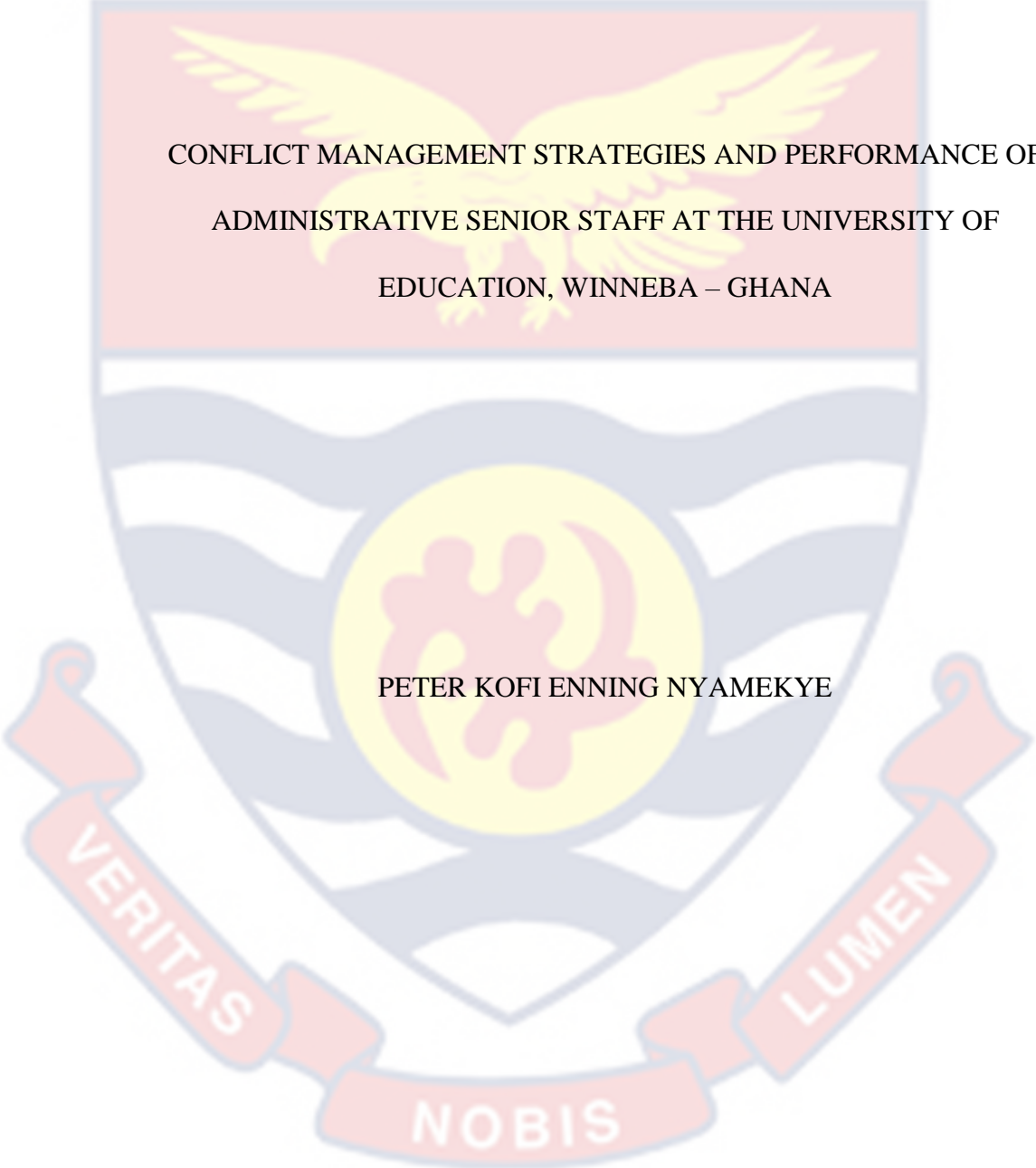


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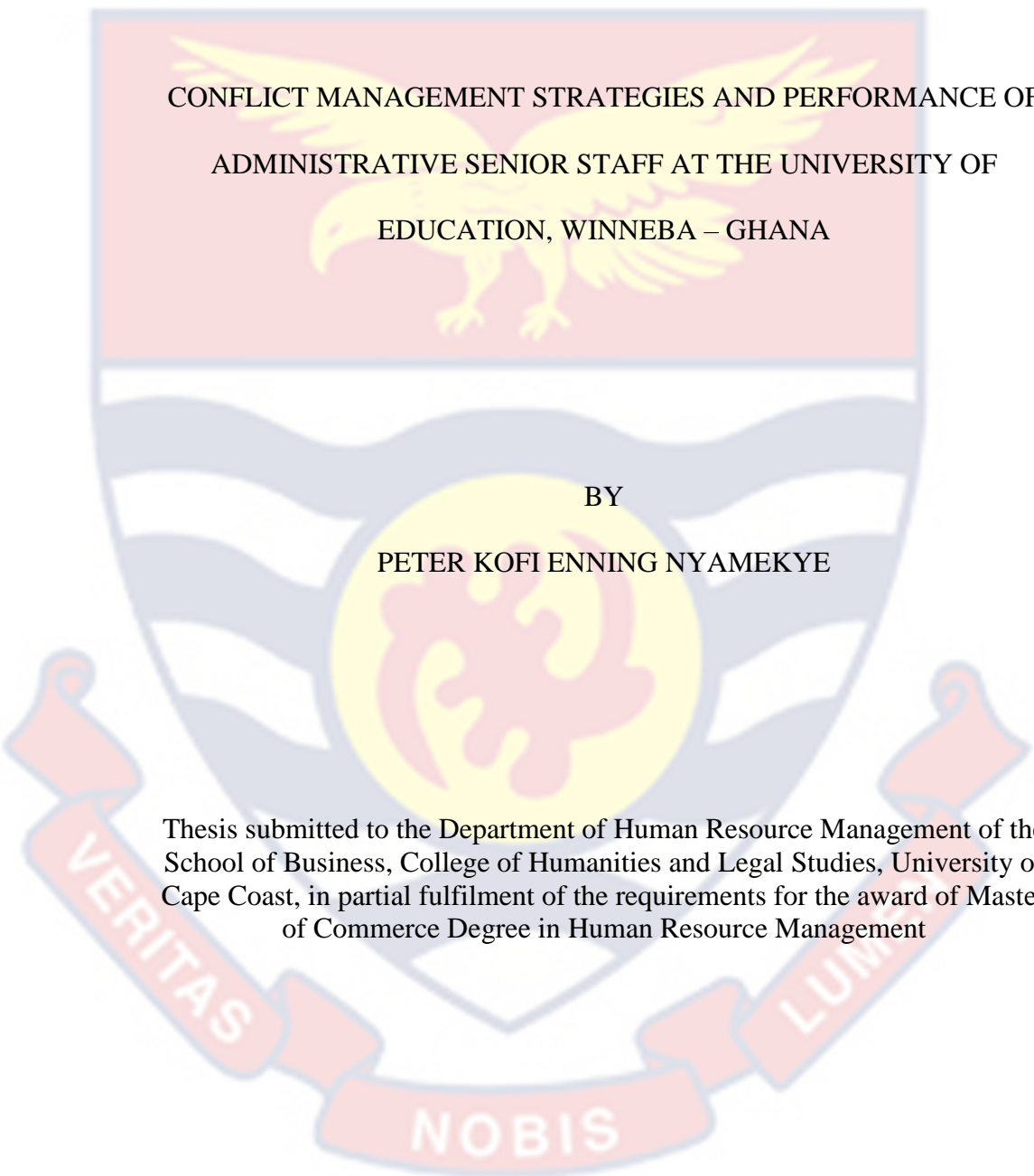


CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE OF
ADMINISTRATIVE SENIOR STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
EDUCATION, WINNEBA – GHANA

PETER KOFI ENNING NYAMEKYE

2023

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE OF
ADMINISTRATIVE SENIOR STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
EDUCATION, WINNEBA – GHANA

BY
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Thesis submitted to the Department of Human Resource Management of the
School of Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of
Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master
of Commerce Degree in Human Resource Management

SEPTEMBER 2023

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in the university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Peter Kofi Enning Nyamekye

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Prof. (Mrs) Elizabeth Cornelia Annan-Prah

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate conflict management strategies and performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba. Specifically, the study sought to assess the effect of negotiation, third party intervention and communication strategies on performance of administrative senior staff. The study adopted the Post-Positivism philosophy. The study sampled 214 employees from the university using Simple Random Sampling Technique. The explanatory design was used. The partial least square structural equation modelling technique was used to analyse the main objectives of this study using SMART PLS version 3.3. The major findings of the study were: negotiation strategy had a significant effect on performance; third party intervention strategy had a significant effect on performance; communication strategy had a significant influence on performance. Based on the findings, it was concluded that conflict management strategies that are employed in the University of Education, Winneba, have a considerably impact on performance of the administrative senior staff. It is recommended that management of the university should ensure that there is regular dialogue and discussions among the administrative senior staff. This will help management understand and appreciate the underlying factors that generate problems for effective solutions.

KEY WORDS

Conflict Management Strategies

Negotiation

Third-party Intervention

Communication

Performance



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Above all, I would like to thank my sister Hanah Akosuah Enning for her constant source of encouragement and unflinching support throughout the course of my work.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr. John Mensah and Madam Yaa Agyeiwaa for all your love
and support.



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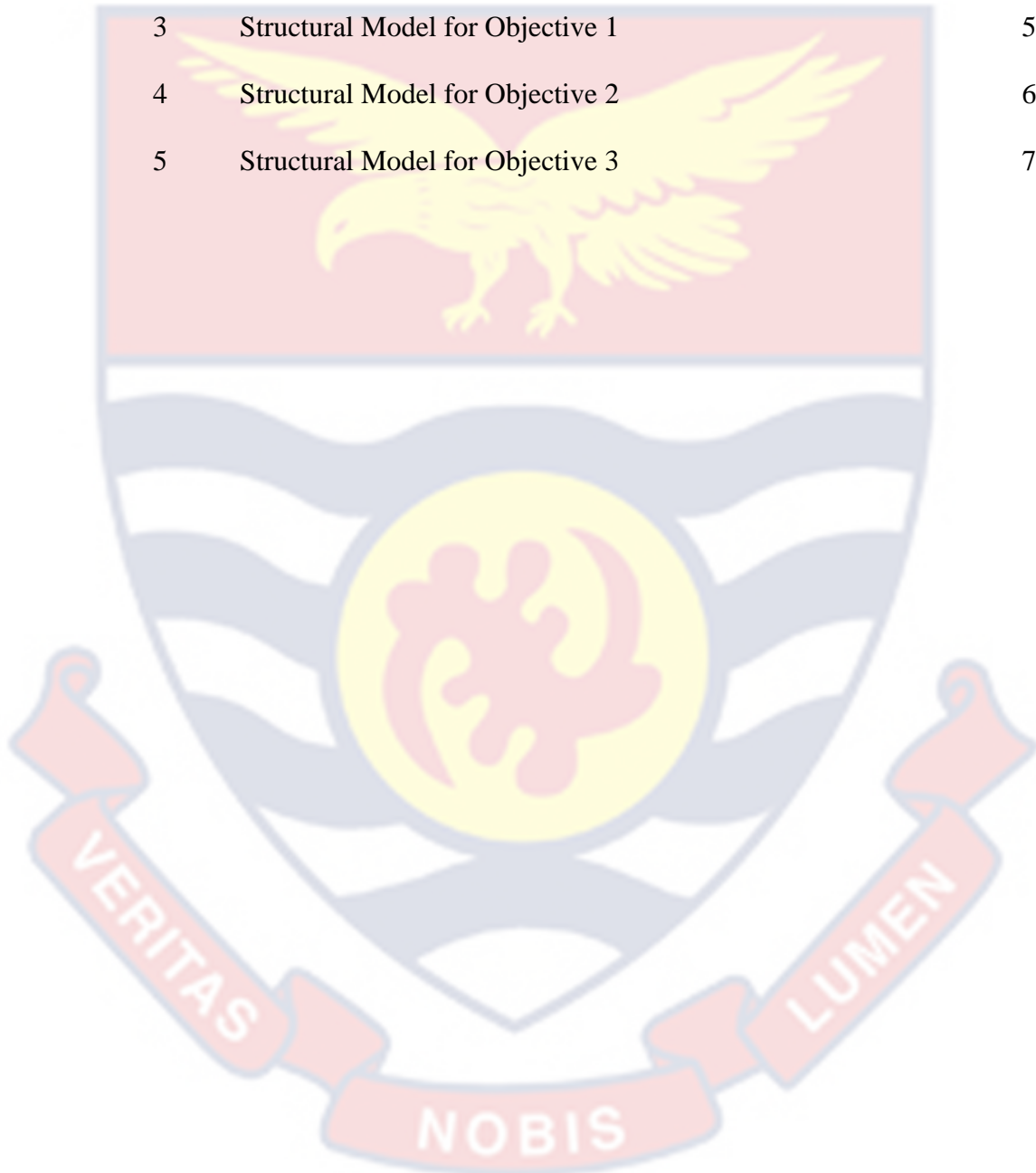
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The establishment and sustenance of organisations in achieving their strategic plan require the continuous and effective functioning of its physical and human resources. The human resource needed to facilitate the achievement of these objectives frequently engage in disagreement over factors such as interests, views and goals. The reactionary effect is attributable to the perceived incompatibilities arising from some sort of intervention which is termed conflict (Agbaeze & Ebirim, 2020). This study therefore assesses conflict management strategies adopted by the management of University of Education, Wiineba and how these strategies influence performance positively or negatively. This chapter presents the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, delimitations, limitations and organisation of the study.

Background to the Study

Conflict among employees in an organisation is not simply inevitable, rather it's a nature of complex organisation. According to Chuol (2023) conflict is a form of disagreement in an establishment between two or more individuals who have a cause to interact formally or informally. Similarly, Agustina and Febrian (2021) assert that the dynamic nature of society has the tendency to bring about incompatibilities, which may eventually lead to conflict. Agana (2020) posits that several organisational conflicts are as a result of lack of information, lack of resources, communication problem, modification of operational form and role ambiguity. Momanyi and Juma (2016) argued that most managers spend about 18% of their time on employee

related conflict while supervisors spend more than 25% of their time on conflict management. Blank (2020) views conflict management as the efforts designed to prevent or resolve disagreement between and among individuals or groups.

Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, establishing structures of conflict models, putting strategic measures as well as approaches in place (Romlall, 2020). The models of conflict management are instruments used to assess the appropriate action required in conflict situation. Strategies to conflicts management are futuristic detailed approach that looks into achieving long term win for the parties involved in conflict (Petkovic, 2008). This study focused on the strategies of conflict management specifically negotiation, third party intervention and communication. Olang (2017) argued that the strategies of negotiation, third party and communication have worked in organisation globally for instance USA, Canada and Nigeria.

Hynes (2011) opined that communication is a process by which individuals stimulate meaning in their minds of other individuals by means of verbal or non-verbal messages. Managers and researchers have agreed that communication processes has a significant effect on performance. Awan and Saeed (2017) viewed negotiation as a process by which compromise or agreement is reached while avoiding arguments and dispute. Hawani and Chikha (2021) explained third party as an actor that helps the conflict parties resolve the conflict or regulate the level of violence. Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016) suggest that there is no one best way of handling conflict which is underpinned by the contingency theory.

The contingency theory which was propounded by an Austrian psychologist Fred E. Fiedler in 1964 emphasised the need to examine the role of contingencies or situations on organisation and their behaviour. The essence of the theory is that best practices depend on the contingencies and thus help analyse situation and determines what variables influence the strategic decisions. The contingency theory provides in-depth explanation of conflict management strategies. For a given conflict situation to be resolved effectively, management must apply the strategy that best fit the conflict (Cameron, 1997). Eseyin and Rotsha (2020) opine that conflict management strategies go a long way in strengthening the bond among employees which increase employee morale and performance.

Job performance according to Kasim and Mishra (2021) is the sum of the anticipated value to the organisation of the different sets of behaviors carried out by an individual over a period of time. Similarly, Sopiah et al. (2021) also viewed job performance as a means to reach a goal or set of goals within a job or organisation. Isa (2015) posits that job performance is affected when conflicts are many and these have impact on how employees perform in the workplace. According to Imperial and Madrigal (2021) workplace conflict creates hurdles before job performance and organisational productivity, they highly recommend that organisations looking forward to enhance growth and market share must avoid any sort of conflict. Thus, implementing strategies in managing conflict is vital towards creating a peaceful and productive work environment.

Although conflict management strategies have been used in minimising conflict issues, the universities in Ghana, especially the University

of Education, Winneba continues to experience internal conflicts among its staff which leads to decrease in performance (Yarboi-Tetteh, 2019). The University of Education, Winneba has a culturally rich, dynamic and diverse workforce comprising a variety of personalities who are in competition within themselves and with the outside market to gain a competitive advantage. The possibility of conflict is therefore high as teams are constantly in competition to meet and surpass target. It is important that conflicts are managed so that the performance of team is not affected. Nonetheless, the strategies that have worked well in an establishment may have different connotation for the other due to culturally differences.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is inevitable given a wide range of goals existing in educational institutions. There is no doubt that tertiary institutions have, or at one time or other experienced both internal and external conflicts (Okoye & Chinazor, 2022). These conflicts such as tight division of labour, narrowly defined jobs, limited employee engagement and managerial decisions making creates performance lapses among staff in the university (Bawah et al., 2019). These issues create internal conflict particularly among its senior staff which are involved in the day-to-day running of the entire university.

In addition, there have been issues of administrative lapses such as conflicting roles, conflicting perception and conflicting needs which have been cited among senior staff in performing their administrative roles in the university (Bawah, et al., 2019). There have been multiple divisions beyond those of senior members, senior staff and junior staff which creates cliques among staff (Agana, 2020). These cliques therefore result in some preferential

treatment by some superiors which result in some interpersonal conflict among staff. These internal conflicts have led to various department heads complaining about performance lapses among senior staff of the university (Bawah et al., 2019).

In a study conducted by Bampoh-Addo and Ansah-Koi (2015) revealed that most public universities particularly UEW are confronted with promotion related- conflicts. They argued that job performance of its senior staff fall below the expected level because of the manner promotion related conflicts are handled. An investigation that was carried out by the researchers revealed that most unsuccessful applicants may become stress up and disappointed with their potential negative consequences for performance and social relationship that are vital for institutional progress. Although UEW has Procedural Appeal System to handle promotion-related conflicts, investigations reveal that the appeal system seems not to be working because the appeal system passes through the hands of the same people who might have created the conflict. This imply that faculty promotion-related conflict may continue to persist in the university particularly among its senior staff.

Although several studies have been conducted to establish the effect conflict management has on performance, ignoring the effect of negotiation, communication and third-party strategies have on performance at the University of Education, Winneba. This study therefore intends to fill this gap in literature by assessing the effect of conflict management strategies on performance as developed by Koopmans et al. (2013).

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to investigate conflict management strategies on performance of administrative senior staff at University of Education, Winneba.

Research Objectives

The major objectives of this study were to;

1. examine the effect of negotiation strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba.
2. assess the effect of third-party intervention strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba.
3. examine the effect of communication strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the effect of negotiation strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba?
2. What is the effect of third-party intervention strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba?
3. What is the effect of communication strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba?

Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study would be beneficial to key stakeholders such as management, policy makers and researchers who may have direct and indirect interest in it. This study will be relevant to the management of University of Education, Winneba by ways of identifying the causes of

conflict and ways of managing them effectively. In addition, the findings in this study will provide relevant information to management, staff and various departmental heads on how to manage conflict effectively in educational settings. For policy makers such as Ministry of Education, the findings in this study will assist them in formulating comprehensive workplace policies on conflict management in educational institutions. Finally, the outcome of the study is expected to contribute to existing literature in relation to conflict management strategies and performance in public universities.

Delimitations

The study was conducted within the scope of examining conflict management strategies and performance at the University of Education, Winneba. Specifically, the study was limited to University of Education, Winneba which is located in the Central Region of Ghana. It does not include any satellite campuses or centres. As such, the study's findings would be more useful to the various departments as well as the management of the university although other educational institutions, especially the public institutions could also benefit from the study's findings.

Limitations

This study instrument was a self-report measure which was made up of a closed-ended questionnaire. The risk of providing incorrect replies may be the most significant limitation of self-report surveys. Respondents may not be genuine while answering the items, especially when it comes to sensitive issues. Furthermore, because the study was completely quantitative and closed-ended questionnaire were utilized, which precluded the participant from offering replies other than those supplied by the researcher, limiting the

study's ability to be further enhanced. Therefore, in order to avoid biases and ensure reliability of the instruments, the researcher used clear and unambiguous language to elicit clear responds from the respondents. In addition, the researcher adopted objective base questions that are specific and focused. These reduced suggestive questions that may influence the participant's response.

Definitions of Terms

Conflict management: It is the maintenance of conflict at the functional levels for a department, work unit, or an entire organisation.

Performance: This is the direct and indirect behaviours involved in the production of goods and services that support the organisational core technical processes.

Conflict management strategies: They are the methods of solving various conflict between individuals or groups such as negotiation and third party strategy.

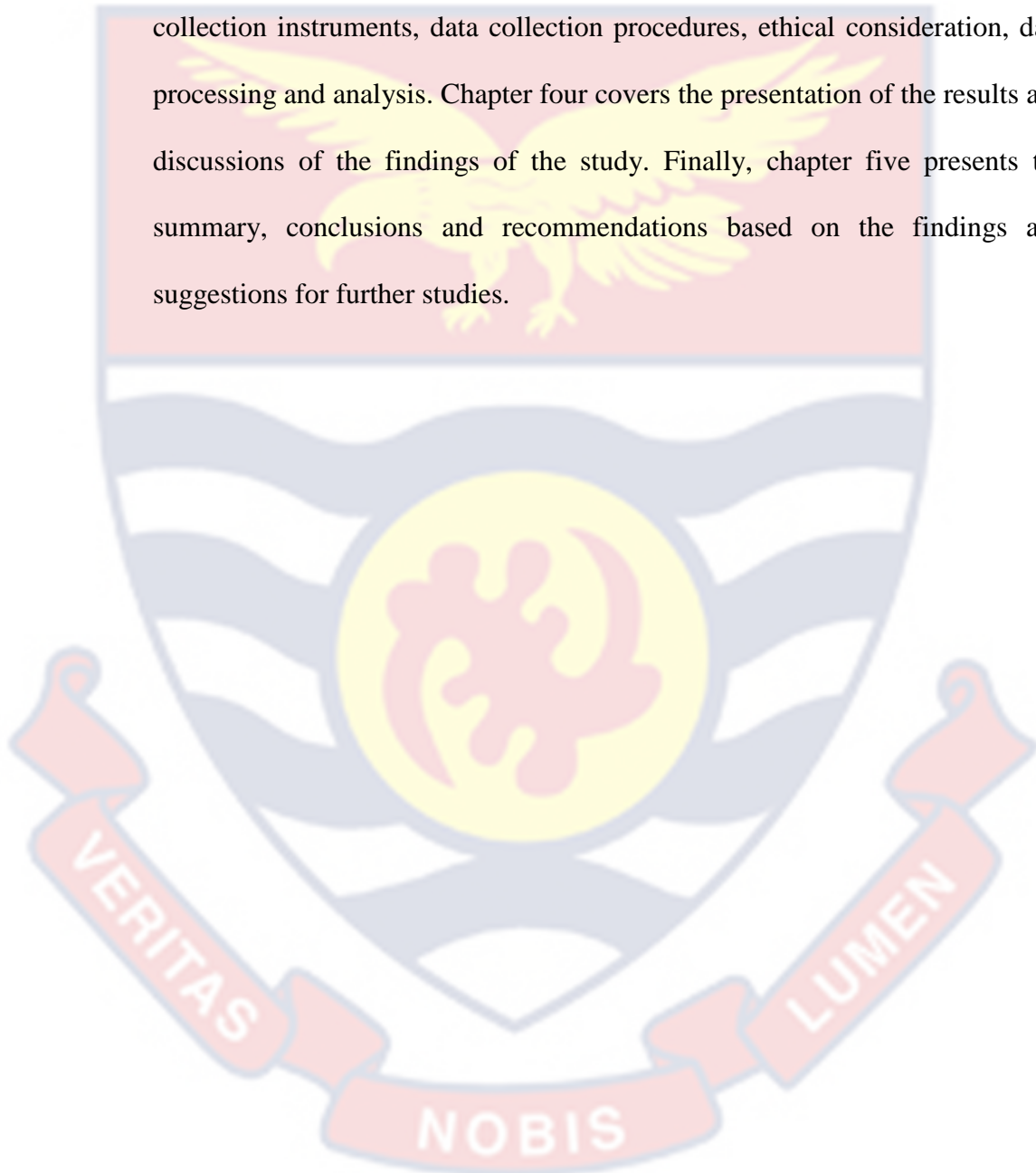
Negotiation Strategy: They are process by which two parties, each with its own view point attempt to reach a mutually satisfying result on a matter of discussion. Examples of negotiation strategy includes compromise, collaboration, avoidance and problem-solving.

Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one covers the introduction which consists of background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definitions of terms and organisation of the study. Chapter two covers the reviews of available

literature which discussed the theoretical, empirical review and explanation of few concepts such as conflict and conflict management.

Chapter three discusses the research methods which is made up of research design, study organisation, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, ethical consideration, data processing and analysis. Chapter four covers the presentation of the results and discussions of the findings of the study. Finally, chapter five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings and suggestions for further studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews extant literature on conflict management and performance with the view of emphasising the strengths and weaknesses in some of the measures employed in the previous studies and limiting the context of the study to University of Education, Winneba. The chapter is structured into three sections: theoretical, conceptual and empirical review underlying conflict management and performance. Reviewing the literature provided theoretical, conceptual and empirical bases and clarity on key concepts, ideas and other related models of the topic understudied. The study therefore assessed conflict management strategies and performance of administrative senior staff of UEW.

Theoretical Review

Contingency Theory

Contingency Theory was propounded by an Austrian psychologist Fred E. Fiedler in 1964 (Bolden et al., 2003). The theory emphasises the significance of the leader's personality and the situation they find themselves within the work environment. It explains that when managers make organisational decision, they consider every aspect of the prevailing situations and acts on those aspects that are important to the current situation. Schein (1997) also explained that in any given situation the best practices depend solely on the contingencies on the specific situation. Fiedler however divided the situation into three contextual aspects: the position power, the leader-member relation and task structure.

The position power is a dimension that is related to a formal power the leader expresses over his followers that is bestowed upon him by the position he has on the organisation. It is easier to lead when the leader is in a powerful position. With the leader-member relation, Fiedler (1964) explained it as a degree of trust between them and the attachment from the group towards the leader or the willingness of the group to follow the leader's instructions. Finally, with the task structure, Fiedler posit that it becomes harder to lead when a task is ambiguous than when it is well defined and structured. Derr (1975) posit that if workers performance is to be improved, they must cope not only with the leader's behaviour but as well as the situational factors that influence him.

Northouse (2009) posit that the basic assumptions underlying the contingency theory is that it is not possible to have one singular suggested method in running a workplace, but the best approach is contingent on the constraints which could be external or internal which are: the scope of the organisation's availability of resources, adaptation to organisational environment, the managers assumptions about the workers and technology needed. Further, assumption to the theory is that efficient decision-making processes are dependent on the situation and the available relevant information and the probability that workers will cooperate with managers in trying for the best outcome of the situation.

Contingency theory has been criticised for lack of clarity and its associated interrelated problems. According to Schoonhoven (1976) contingency theory is more of orienting strategy or metatheory, suggesting ways in which a phenomenon ought to be conceptualised. The lack of clarity is

substantial due to the ambiguous character of the “theoretical” statements. Statements from researchers suggest that a particular structure should be appropriate for a given environment, that organisations are more successful when their structures conform to their technologies and that organisation’s internal states and processes should be consistent with external demands. Harvey (1968), however, posit that the above statement does not differentiate environment from technology since neither separate process distinguish the two.

The relevancy of the theory to this study is that, to influence employees’ performance positively, the management of UEW should scrutinise a given situation to find out what are the variables that are causing the conflict and then choose a specific strategy for managing the conflict. Conflict management is about people and therefore, depends heavily on attitudes, awareness and opinions held by parties in a conflict. Subsequently, as the theory suggests, management can find the best practices through a wide range of conflict management strategies while making sure that to consider the positive outcome that will lead to improvement in employee performance as well as the achievement of overall objectives of the organisation.

According to Woodward (1965) the contingency theory can be distinguished from universalistic theories of organisation which assert that there is “one best way” to organise, meaning that organisational maximum performance comes from the maximum level of structural variable, for example specialization. Classical management is an earlier organisational theory that argues that maximum organisational performance results from maximum formalisation and specialisation and it is therefore, universalistic

type of theory. Contingency theory differs from all such universalistic theories because it sees maximum performance as relating from adopting, not the maximum, but rather the appropriate level that fits the contingency.

Conceptual Review

This section helps in enhancing our knowledge concerning the concepts used in this study. All three concepts were considered relevant for the study. They include conflict, conflict management strategies and performance and they were discussed in the following section. Conflict was covered first, followed by conflict management strategies, and finally performance.

Conflict

Over the years the term conflict has been variously defined by authors and scholars from various field of discipline (McShane & Glinow, 2000). There is no one comprehensive definition of conflict but a superfluity of definitions and hence depends on the perspective from which one is looking at the concepts (Ross, 2003). Defining conflict stem from various discipline such as psychology and behavioural sciences. Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) argued that the predominant theme in these definitions are aspect of goals incompatibility, clash on interest, different needs and the perceived or interference from those needs, interest or goals. However, conflict can be grouped as functional and dysfunctional in organisational setting.

Functional conflict exists in the form of confrontation between individuals or groups that enhance and benefit the organisational performance (Mebratu (2007). Functional conflict produces lot of benefits both to the individual and to the organisation as a whole. To the individual, conflict can

bring out creativity and ingenuity which help the organisation to get the best from its human resources. For instance, functional conflict helps an individual to develop a better awareness of themselves and others. To the organisation, functional conflict could result in positive change and innovation. It also improves quality of decisions by allowing all views to be heard. According to Agana (2020) conflict can be viewed as a catalyst for learning and change which leads to the advancement of knowledge and societal transformation.

Dysfunctional conflict, however, is an unhealthy, destructive disagreement between two or more people (Nelson & Quick, 2000). It takes the attention of staff away from the work to be done and imposes it on the parties concerned. It also drains resources that could have been more productively used. Mebratu (2007) defines dysfunctional conflicts as confrontation between groups that harm the organisation or hinder the achievement of organisational goals. For instance, a disagreement that involves personalised anger and indignation targeted at a particular person rather than specific idea is dysfunctional. Hawani and Chikha (2021) posit that as conflicts continue to erupt in human existence, it is therefore imperative to understand the dysfunctional nature of it and its consequence on the organisation and further formulate strategies for effective management of it.

Conflict management

Conflict management has been conceptualised and operationalised in a variety of ways. Conflict management according to Ross (2003) is defined as formulating strategies to ameliorate the negative impact of conflict whiles increasing the positive impact to influence organisational performance. Management of conflict is one of the most important roles played by managers

in an organisation. According to Momanyi and Juma (2016) most managers spend about 18% of their time on employee related conflict while supervisors spend more than 25% of their time on conflict management. Nnam (2013) argues that the aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes in organisational setting.

In the view of Nelson and Quick (2000) conflict management focuses on maintaining conflict at the functional levels for a department, work unit, or an entire organisation. Conflict management does not mean complete elimination of conflict, nor does it refer only to conflict reduction. It means maintaining conflicts at the right level to help the department, work unit, or organisation reach its goals. According to Deutsch (1991) conflict management is the expanded view of dealing with unresolved differences in organisation. It includes understanding the nature, sources as well as cost and benefits of conflict situations.

The contingency approach to conflict management in universities involves the analysis of conflict situation and necessary action being taken to deal with all and sundry problems. In resolving conflict, the contingency theorists are of the view that there is no best way of handling conflict under all conditions but there is optimal way of managing conflict under certain conditions (Schein, 1997). Lacey (2010) suggested strategies for handling conflicts in organisations arguing that although conflict can be seen as inevitable, there are number of ways in which management can attempt to avoid it. According to Nwokocha (2020) management in public institutions must clarify goals and objectives of the organisation. Edo and Omunakwe (2021) acknowledge that role definitions and performance standards help to

avoid misunderstanding and conflict among staff in their performance of their duties.

Furthermore, Kuofie (2018) posit that a more participative and supportive style of leadership and managerial behaviour are likely to assist in conflict management in Ghanaian universities. Eseyin and Rotsha (2020) corroborates that showing an attitude of respect and trust, encouraging personal self-development and creating a work environment in which staff can work co-operatively. Thus, an open-door policy and identifying the potential causes of conflict can help avoid conflict among staff in universities. Similarly, Dziwinski (2020) added that managers and supervisors should learn to lead by example. This could be in the area of reporting to work earlier than subordinate and strictly following the code of ethics in the university. This help superior to instill discipline without conflict.

Finally, Bawah et al., (2019) identified that human resource policies and procedures should be well drafted in the organisational system. They emphasize that careful and detailed attention to just and equitable human resource policies and procedures may help to reduce possible areas of conflict among staff in Ghanaian universities. Olaleye and Arogundade (2013) suggested that periodic job analysis, review system of reward and punishment, grievance and disciplinary procedures, arbitration and negotiations, and training of various heads of the university may equip them in handling conflict at their respective work setting. Morgan (2000) also indicated that employee related conflict can reduce by development of inter-personal or group process skills. For example, understanding of one's own behaviour, the other person's

point of view, communication processes and problem-solving assist people to work through conflict situations in a constructive manner.

Conflict management strategies

In literature, conflict management strategies have been grouped into different dimensions by several scholars and researchers (Follet, 1940; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Olang, 2017). According to Petkovic (2008) conflict management models are instruments for determining the necessary course of action needed in a conflict situation. For example, Follet (1940) grouped conflict management strategies into domination, avoidance, compromise, suppression and integration which were the main ways to handle industrial disputes. However, the conceptualisation of conflict management strategies was discovered by Blake and Mouton in 1964. Their classification was based on five strategies which are; problem solving, sharing, forcing, withdrawal and smoothing. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) however, relabeled the strategies of conflict management as avoiding, accommodating, dominating, compromising and collaboration.

They explained that avoidance strategy put individuals in a lose/lose situation where a decision is made not to address the views or feelings of the individual. Accommodating strategy on the other hand, is preferable on issues which are of little relevant to the organisation's success and also to maintain a healthy relationship with the employees in the organisation. Similarly, collaborating style may be appropriate when it is necessary to address the interest of multiple stakeholders. Compromise is the willingness of an individuals to accept some of their own views and to focus on other individuals' views to reach a consensus. The dominating strategy is a win/lose

approach where an individual attempt to achieve his/her goals at the expense of another. This study however adopted Olang (2017) mode of conflict management strategies which are negotiation, third-party and communication strategy.

Negotiation Strategy

In literature, negotiation strategy has been defined and investigated in various forms (Aremu et al., 2021). According to De Dreu and Van Vianen (2001) negotiation is defined as the interaction between two or more parties with divergent interest in order to reach a consensus. Maresi (2021) also defined negotiation as a method by which agreement is reached while avoiding conflicts and disputes. Similarly, Ownuegbule (2020) defined negotiation as a process by which two parties, each with its own view point attempt to reach a mutually satisfying result on a matter of discussion. Rahim (2002) viewed negotiation as a procedure by which understanding comes while maintaining a strategic distance from contention and debate.

Mbogo et al. (2019) posit that negotiation is gaining popularity as a common and effective way of settling disputes and transacting business. Since the nature of negotiation includes the opportunity to move beyond current ideas, it can help organisation to develop a successful plan by setting target that will improve performance. Aremu et al. (2021) argued that negotiation is used to minimise conflict affecting individual so as to maximise cooperation and keeping conflicts at the acceptable level. This in return drives performance. Ali (2016) posits that negotiation and its influence on performance can be seen in an organisational performance appraisal process.

Several research papers have emphasised the effect of negotiation strategy on job performance (Aremu et al., 2021; Olang, 2017). Mbogo et al. (2019) in their study on negotiation strategy on Kenyan commercial banks found out that negotiation was required before arriving at compensation packages agreeable by both parties. This reveals that although moderate amount of conflict would be expected in the process, this will barely hinder performance if they are properly handled. In resolving conflict in the educational setting, Ownuegbule (2020) emphasises that conflict management strategies of negotiation used in health institutions are effective in increasing performance since it gives equal parties the opportunity to present their concerns in a constructive manner.

In a similar study, Olang (2017) revealed that employees want to feel involved in decisions that affect them by negotiation with managers before decisions are made. In most cases, employees equated negotiation with fairness since participation leads to creation of shared ideas. The study further revealed that aspects of high-performance workforce included effective voice for employees in strategy and governance, contingent compensation, teamwork and employee involvement through negotiation in problem solving. De Dreu and Van Vianen (2001) also emphasised that in order for managers to recognize that employees had clear expectations from their managers, their actions are critical since employees need to have ownership of strategy if they are to fully realize organisational performance. Thus, negotiation played a key role especially on salary negotiation, performance appraisal and performance related.

According to Petkovic (2008) there are several negotiation tactics that can be applied in conflict resolution. They include persuading tactics which assumes different methods to win over partners and to reach a better negotiation position. In addition, face to face tactics whereby a mutual confidence as a foundation for negotiation can be reached. Promise tactics based on having a better position and more power, with the stronger side persuading the weaker that it will keep its promise. With deceitful tactics it assumes presenting false data and arguments. Threat tactics on the other hand, is based on the deterrence from the sides which holds a better position or have more power.

Third-Party Intervention Strategy

Third party strategy has been defined and conceptualised in a variety of ways (Simons & Peterson, 2000). According to Kozan et al., (2017) third party is defined as an actor that helps the conflict parties resolve the conflicts or regulate the level of violence. Wandiba et al., (2020) also defined third party as someone who gives procedural help to encourage people in strife to determine their distinction, where consideration is put on procedural help to the disputants. Maresi (2021) posit that a third party may be required on the grounds that the gatherings to a contention cannot discover any answer without an outer help. A third party therefore, should possess a good communication skill to be able to understand and moderate the conflict.

According to Petkovic (2008) managers adopt the third-party strategy when all attempt to solve the conflict has been fruitless. In addition, an organisation may involve a third-party consultant when key performance indicators such as sales, return on investment and profit margins have reduced

due to poor conflict management practices (Posthuma, 2011). Therefore, a third party may be needed because the parties to a conflict cannot find a solution without an external assistance. In most cases, they may need help with issues, process and substance. A third party assists in resolving the issues by advising and providing information and options but leaves the final decisions to the parties themselves. Olang (2017) asserts that a third-party intervention is used only when an impasse occurs between the employee and higher management levels or a co-worker.

Simons and Peterson (2000) explained that third party is a process of conflict resolution, related to but distinct from the party's own effort where the disputing parties or their representatives seek the assistance, or accept the offer of help, from an individual, group, state or organisation to change, effect or influence their perceptions or behaviour, without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of the law. Third party is when management hires an external consultant to solve the problem. The third party can be a mediator or arbitrator whose role is to give instructions to sides to a conflict on how to solve the problem.

Communication strategy

Communication has been conceptualised and operationalised in a variety of ways. According to Lunenburg (2010) the word communication is derived from the Latin word "communis" which means common. This underscores the fact that unless a common understanding results from the exchange of information, there is no communication. Communication according to Keyton (2011) is defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another.

Schermerhorn (2011) defines communication as the process of sending and receiving symbols with inherent meaning. This reveals that, in communication, there are stages that are passed, there are senders and receivers, as well as something that is sent in the form of symbols which are understood. Ansah (2020) explained that communication is the sharing of information between two or more individuals or groups to achieve a mutual understanding.

Communication is very important in group or organisation where members show satisfaction and dissatisfaction about their work. Similarly, Hee et al., (2019) posit that communication in groups is a fundamental mechanism by which members show their satisfaction or frustration. Ansah (2020), therefore, defined organisational communication as the central binding force that permits coordination among people and thus allowed for organised behaviour. Atambo and Momanyi (2016) assert that the behaviour of people in organisation is best understood from communication point of view. Therefore, lack of communication that occurs throughout the organisation in a higher degree may cause misunderstanding among employees.

Performance

Scholars have defined performance in various ways and means, but attempt to get one common definition has proved confusing and elusive (Binyana, 2021; Ali, 2016). Surprisingly, the literature does not contain one clear definition or classification of performance that has generally been accepted. Instead, an array of definitions populates the literature. In recent times, there have been different approaches of studying performance. In the view of Koopmans et al., (2014) job performance is a concept that has

engulfed not only in business throughout the world but has also sparked a lot of research in management, occupational health and organisational psychology

Firstly, in the field of management, the concept has focused on how one can make individuals productive as possible. Secondly, in the field of occupational health, the concept has concentrated on how to prevent losses due to sickness or health impairment on employees. Finally, work and occupational psychologists on the other hand are interested on the impact of factors such as job engagement and satisfaction. In all the aforementioned research fields, Elkhder and Onia (2021) posit that performance is a useful outcome of measure in industrial setting. Though the presence of various definitions may provide adequate understanding of the concept, it may also be possible that these opposing definitions may be a source of the interest among scholars (Kandaz, 2021).

Mera (2021) opined that performance are behaviours that are directly involved in the production of goods and services. It also encompasses all indirect services that support the organisational core technical processes. Abbas and Ghayas (2021) defined performance as all behaviours that employees demonstrate while doing their work. This implies that performance is a person's ability to complete duties allocated to him based on his skills, experience and time. Zulkifli et al., (2021) defined performance as a concept that quantitatively and qualitatively indicates the extent to which an individual or group doing their job has accomplished the set goals of the job. Kasim and Mishra (2021) viewed performance as directing and supporting employees to work effectively and efficiently as possible in line with the needs of the organisation.

Mathis and Jackson (2011) also defined performance as most importantly what employee does or does not. It directly combines the abilities of an individual employees together with their motivation to getting a job done. Therefore, an individual performance becomes a function of “ability” and “motivation”. DeGraft (2012) models it as a combination of “ability” and “motivation” which then produce the outcome called job performance.

The model can be mathematically shown as;

Job Performance = Ability + Motivation. Thus, $fJP = A + M$.

(Where A = Ability; P = Performance; M = Motivation; f = function)

This equation implies that performance is the function of ability and motivation. “Ability” according to the equation implies the “can” feature of performance and it provides the solution to the question of whether employees can do the job. Competencies, resources and work environment are the indicators that enhance the ability of employees to perform a particular assignment. Secondly, “Motivation” according to the model is the “want” feature of job performance and it provides answers to the question of whether employees are willing to do the job. It is the degree to which employee are willing to commit their time and effort to their work (DeGraft, 2012).

In line with the aforementioned definitions, Mera (2021) definition of performance was adopted for this study. Following this definition, of performance is defined in this study as the direct and indirect behaviours involved in the production of goods and services that support the organisational core technical processes.

Classification of Performance

According to Jex and Britt (2014) classification of performance is accomplished through a combination of task related aspect and expected behaviour. They posit that performance can be generalised as the performance of the entire organisation. They further stated that the absolute value of a performance is determine by factors such as totals sales and productivity. In their perspective, performance can be grouped into task performance and contextual performance. Whiles contextual performance measures the general environment within which the work is carried out, task performance measures the job to be perform itself.

Task and contextual performance contribute greatly in the overall measurement of employee performance ratings in an organisation (Koopmans et al., 2014). They are used to evaluate the overall employee performance. As a result, supervisors should be encouraged to take task and contextual performance into account when evaluating performance because they both contribute to the achievement of overall organisational goals. Hart and Bennet (2021) buttress it by saying that task and contextual performance are requisite for the achievement of organisational objectives.

Employers within the organisational setting measures performance as a series of behaviours that are demonstrated by employees. Therefore, performance consists of various work behaviors rather than a single construct. These work behaviours are demonstrated in the organisation on regular basis when performing various tasks. Nathwani (2021) posit that employees' performance are contributions of various tasks perform by the employees on their daily basis. However, Koopmans et al., (2014) present that performance

are classified into three broad aspects such as contextual performance, task performance and adaptive performance.

Contextual Performance

They are behaviours that goes beyond task performance. They support the organisational, social and psychological context that are critical for effective task accomplishment. Thus, it is employee behaviours that helps others creates a positive work environment. Koopmans et al. (2014) argued that indicators for measuring contextual performance can be grouped into two dimensions. These are the indicators that focused at the inter-personal level and indicators that focused at the organisational level. Examples of the indicators that are identified as interpersonal level are; taking initiative, demonstrating effort, cooperating with other, accepting and learning from feedback and then communication. Further, at the organisational level, the indicators that measure performance are; creativity, customer oriented, showing responsibilities and taking on challenging jobs.

Task Performance

According to Koopmans et al. (2014) task performance refers to the proficiency with which employees perform their core job tasks. Jabbourri and Abdullah (2021) posit that they are behaviours that are directly involved in the production of goods and services. With task performance the individual performs activities that are been assigned by his/her superiors. Task performance can also be termed as task proficiency or technical proficiency. Koopmans et al. (2014) posit that the indicators for measuring task performance are; work quality, efficiency at work, planning and organising work, being results oriented and prioritising.

Adaptive Performance

According to Koopmans et al. (2014) adaptive performance is the ability of an employee to respond to the demand of their work or the working environment. It is the degree to which an employee adjusts to the changes in their work system or assign responsibilities. In recent times, due to the fast-changing effect like technology, it has become increasingly imperative for employees to respond to their work environment. Adaptive performance includes behaviour such as: dealing with uncertain work situations, learning new tasks and technology, solving problems and coping with fellow employees. However, Koopmans et al., (2014) identified significant indicators in measuring adaptive performance which are; showing resiliency, coming out with creative solutions to a difficult problem, keeping abreast with current knowledge on the work and adjusting work goals when necessary.

Empirical Review

This section discusses the reviews of extensive literature related to the study's purpose and objectives.

The relationship between negotiation strategy and performance has been investigated in several research. Tumwebaze et al. (2020) for example, carried out a study on exploring the effect of negotiation as conflict resolution strategy on employee performance in KCCA. Primary data was gathered using questionnaires and means, standard deviation and linear regression was used to present the results. The study revealed that both the level of negotiation (average mean=4.15), Std=0.618) and employee performance (overall average mean 4.04, Std=0.602) were satisfactory. The regression analysis revealed that negotiation can explain the total variance 7.9% in employee performance

(Adjusted R Square=0.079, $p=0.00$). The study concluded that negotiation has a significant influence on employee performance therefore, management should adopt the use of negotiation strategy in its conflict resolution strategies before conflict break open or escalate.

In a related study, Mbogo et al. (2019) conducted a study on effect on negotiation strategy on the performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The study sought to determine the extent to which negotiation strategy influence the performance of employees. The study population was made up of 43 banks employees in Kenya who were in operation from the period of 2011 to 2016. Questionnaires were used to collect a data from the banks' employees. Using the stratified random sampling, a sample population of 272 bank employees of various cadres were selected for the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted and positivist paradigm guided the study. The findings revealed that 64% of the respondents agreed that effective bank negotiation strategy is the main driver of employee performance. The study therefore concluded that negotiation strategy has a significant influence of employee performance of commercial banks in Kenya.

In the work of Aremu et al. (2021) on conflict management strategies and organisational sustainability, the multistage sampling technique which involve purposeful and random sampling techniques was used to sample 50-line managers as participants for the study. The aim of the study was to examine negotiation strategy of workplace conflict management on organisational sustainability in selected manufacturing organisations in Nigeria. Structured questionnaires were design as research instrument in collecting primary data from the respondents. The findings showed that

negotiation as workplace conflict management strategy significantly influenced organisational sustainability in manufacturing companies. This reveals that the ability of managers to effectively adopt negotiation in guiding conflict with diverse people increasingly become significant competency in ensuring improved organisational performance.

Maresi (2021) conducted a study on conflict management on organisational performance in Nairobi Microfinance Institution. Using the integrative approach as conflicts resolution strategy, the study sampled ninety managers from Microfinance Institution that operated in Kenyan capital city - Nairobi. The study adopted the descriptive survey design research. The findings of the study revealed that cooperation within the context of negotiation strategy, leads to an improvement on performance of Microfinance Institution. Further, the respondents revealed that cooperation reinforces mutual trust and it ensures win-win situation for both parties in a conflict resolution.

On the level of career satisfaction Ownuegbule (2020) conducted a study on conflict management styles and career satisfaction in tertiary health institutions in Rivers State. To establish the objectives of the study, three conflict management styles were drawn from the work of Jones and George (2006). These are compromise, negotiation and accommodation styles of conflict management. Using the Taro Yamane formulae, the study sampled 241 population of medical doctors, nurses and administrative staffs from University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Braithwaite Memorial Specialist Hospital (BMSH). The study revealed that conflict management styles have a significant relationship on career satisfaction. The study

recommended that managers should adopt negotiation style of conflict management to resolved disagreement at the workplace and improve career satisfaction of workers.

Kagwiria (2019) carried out s study on workplace conflict management strategies and performance of telecommunication industry in Kenya. The study sought to investigate the influence of various strategies such as third-party intervention on employee performance. The descriptive research design was adapted for the study. The study sampled 130 respondents comprising of 120 support staff and 10 HRM managers from Safaricom Kenyan Ltd. and Airtel Kenya Ltd. from in Nairobi Kenya. Primary data was gathered through questionnaires to elicit the study data. The finding revealed that third party intervention strategy has a positive and significant influence on organisational performance. Also, majority of the respondents revealed that arbitration has been embraced in the organisation as third-party intervention to influence performance and that third party helps in settling various inter-personal conflicts among the support staff in the organisations.

Makau and Thomas (2021) carried out a study on employee relations strategies and employee performance in hotel industry in Machakos County, Kenya. The aim of the study was to find out the extent to which third party strategy influence the performance of employees. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Using the census method, the study sampled 100 respondents from selected hotels in Machakos County. Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression model at a significant level of 5% to established the strength and direction of the relationship between the

independent variable and dependent variable. The findings revealed that third party intervention strategy did not significantly influence employee performance with a beta coefficient of -0.523, t-test of -0.930, and sig value of 0.357 indicates a negative effect on performance.

In a related study, Wandiba et al. (2020) conducted a study on effect of third-party intervention as conflict resolution strategy on employee performance in Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Uganda. Using the simple random sampling technique, the study sampled 498 technical staff from KCCA. Primary data was collected through questionnaires. The study adopted the quantitative descriptive cross-sectional design. The findings revealed the effect of third-party intervention on employee performance ($F=47.245$, $p=0.000$) is significantly and confirm that every unit of change in third party intervention would significantly predict a variance in employee performance by (Beta=0.420, $p=0.000$). The study concluded that third party intervention strategy significantly affect employee performance at KCCA due to the involvement of third party whom the conflicting party are well acquainted with hence the best way of resolving conflicts.

Finally, Kozan et al. (2017) in their study investigated the influence of third-party intervention strategies of managers. The focus of the study was to investigate strategies used by managers when intervening in subordinates' conflict and the factors affecting choice of strategy in Turkish organisations where emphasis is placed on intermediaries in managing conflict. Primary data was collected through administered questionnaires. Using the convenient method to sample 59 organisations, the data was collected from 392 employees within the city of Ankara. The findings of the study revealed that

most managers in Ankara utilise as many as five different strategies such as mediation, arbitration, motivational tactics, conflict resolution through restructuring and educating the parties which were proven to be effective in inter-personal conflict among employees.

Earlier researchers have agreed to the relationship between communication strategy and job performance. For Example, Ansah (2020) carried out a study on communication styles on employee performance in Takoradi Technical University. Using the quantitative and descriptive study design the researcher sampled 378 respondents from Takoradi Technical University. Questionnaires were used for the data collection and multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis. The study concluded that communication strategy significantly influences employees' performance. Further, the study concluded that communication strategy significantly influences employees' commitment. Lastly, it was concluded that communication strategy does not have significant influence on employee turnover. Therefore, organisations seeking to achieve employee performance should exhibit communication strategies with stronger prediction.

Atambo and Momanyi (2016) conducted a study on effects on internal communication on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company at South Nyanza Region in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to explore the effects of communication on employee performance in the context of Kenyan Power and Lighting Company. The study sampled 77 respondents from a population of 256 employees using the stratified sampling technique so as to improve on precision and representative of the whole population. Data was collected through questionnaire which were availed to the population. The

findings of the study revealed that timely delivery of information enhance the performance of employees. The respondents further acknowledge that through effective communication, management get feedback on performance and employees are able to raise complaints to the management hence improving performance.

Similarly, Nwata et al. (2016) carried out a study on internal organisational communication on employees' performance in selected banks in Port Harcourt. The data was generated from a sample 315 respondents through personally self-administered questionnaire. The study using descriptive and inferential statistical methods empirically investigated the association between organisational communications and employee performance in selected banks in Port Harcourt. The results of the study showed a significant effect of organisational communication on the measures of employee performance. The study concluded that recommended that organisation incorporates adequate measures in ensuring that communication within organisation is consistent, clear, and follows well recognised channels for the purpose of avoiding ambiguities since such actions facilitate employee performance.

In a related study, Femi (2014) carried out a study on the impact of communication on workers' performance in selected organisations in Lagos State, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to examine the significant relationship between communication and workers' performance in some selected organisation in Lagos State Nigeria. Using the stratified sampling technique, the researcher sampled 120 respondents from a population of 150 employees. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The study

findings revealed that a relationship exist between effective communication and worker's performance, productivity and commitment. Also, further findings revealed that poor communication can affect workers' performance. The study concluded that effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helps in building genuine relationship.

Hee et al. (2019) investigated the impact of communication on employee performance in a property development company in Malaysia. The aim of the study was to find out how downward, upward and horizontal communication affect employee performance. The researchers adopted the survey questionnaire in their data collection. A total of 120 respondents participated in the research. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between horizontal communication and employee performance ($\beta = 0.229$, $p < 0.001$). Subsequently, downward communication was found to have a significantly related to employee performance ($\beta = 0.672$, $p < 0.001$). This means that downward communication is expected to share information between senior staff and management which help reduce unnecessary burden and improve employee performance in the organisation.

Finally, Shonubi and Akintaro (2016) conducted an empirical study on the impact of effective communication on organisational performance. The discussion was based on several empirical studies on communication and organisational performance. The purpose of the study was to look at how effective communication influence organisational performance. The study findings, validated the synerginous relationship between communication

strategy and efficient organisational performance. The study recommended that there can still be more room for improvement and eventually better performance if management embrace the following recommendations: more clarity of ideas before attempting to communicate, better understanding of the physical and human environment when communicating.

Lesson Learnt from Literature Review

It was reviewed from the literature that conflict management strategies and performance have been variously defined. This means that any definition given to the constructs or the concepts are accepted in literature. The usage of the definition depends on how it is conceptualised and operationalised within the study. The divergent views expressed by various authors concerning the definitions of the variables in the study also add to the problem of generalisability of the studies' findings. Secondly, it can be seen from literature that establishing a common theory that defines the scope and boundaries of conflict management has been very controversial. While the theoretical foundation is considered important, there is, however, little agreement on a particular theory that underpins conflict management research (Rahim, 2011).

Majority of the study reviewed above was grounded in the Contingency theory and Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and neglected other equally relevant theories in the study area even though few studies utilised other theories such as Human Relations Theory, Human Needs Theory, Structural Theory of Conflicts, Social Identity Theory etc. Furthermore, little has been done in Africa about the relationship between conflict management and performance. Almost all the studies were conducted

in advanced countries such as America, Asia and Europe raising questions regarding the applicability of their findings to the developing countries particularly in Ghana. Therefore, conducting explanatory research design on conflict management strategies and performance in Ghana particularly administrators will fill this gap.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on pioneering works which were evident in the preceding empirical studies reviewed. The framework drawn was based on the study objectives and it shows how the constructs are related to each other. The framework is group into two sections. The first section is conflict management strategies followed by performance (see Figure 1). Conflict management strategies are considered independent variables whilst performance is considered the dependent variable. This framework describes the various conflict management strategies that employees implement daily in handling conflict situations in their respective jobs.

According to the framework, conflict management strategies have a direct positive influence on performance. Thus, negotiation strategy, third party intervention strategy and communication strategy have a direct and indirect impact on job performance (Aremu et al., 2021; Olang, 2017). Communication strategy has a positive influence on job performance. However, there was an instance where third party strategy did not have significant impact on job performance (Makau & Thomas, 2021). Nonetheless, Kagwiria (2019) was of the view that there exists a relationship between conflict management strategies and performance. Because of this, it can be

established that conflict management strategies have a direct effect on job performance. (See Figure 1).

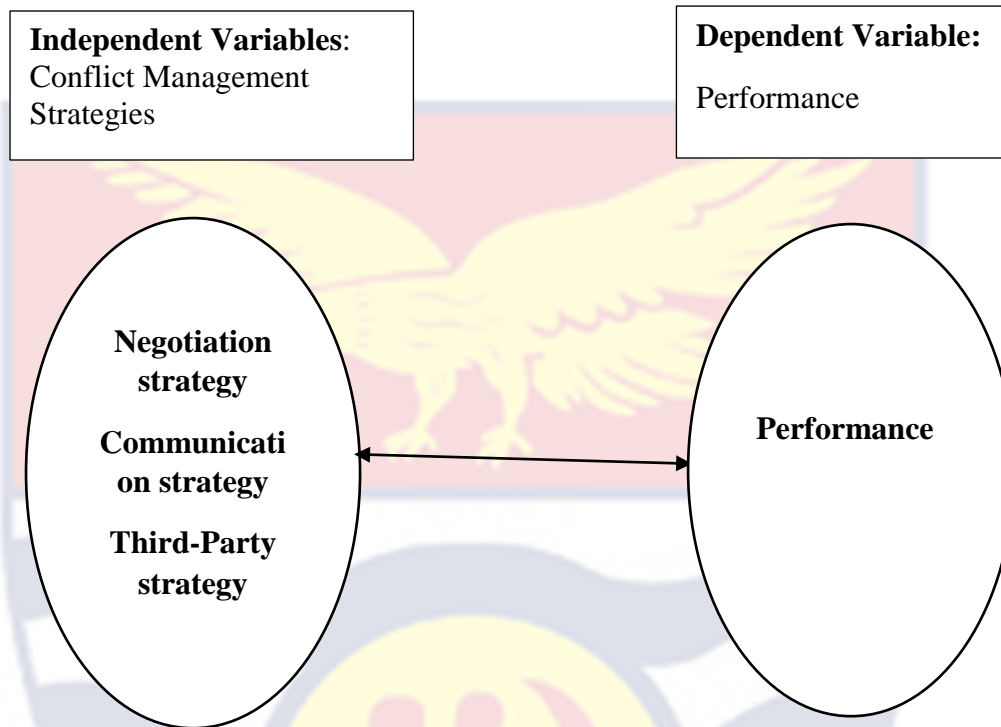


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for conflict management strategies and performance.

Source: Author's construct (2022)

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of related literature based on the study's objectives and the purpose for which the study was carried out. Firstly, the chapter presented the theoretical review by providing the theory that underpinned the study. Further, the chapter provided a review of concepts used in the study which included; conflict, conflict management strategies and performance. The chapter also reviewed related studies conducted in the area of conflicts management and performance. The chapter concluded with the conceptual framework with the variables and how they are related in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods followed by the researcher in conducting this study. The methodology shows how the researcher went about this study and the reasons behind the methods being used. In the previous chapter, the study review theories and empirical sources. These reviews were done because they provided evidences to support the research questions that guided this study. The elements to be discussed under this chapter include research philosophy, study organisation, research approach, research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations and chapter summary.

Research Philosophy

According to Neuman (2020) a research philosophy is a set of common beliefs and agreements shared among scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed. Philosophy encompasses the general orientations of a research, and define the theories that underpin the research methods and interpretations. Benton and Craib (2001) assert that a researcher must be guided by a philosophy and paradigm that underpin the piece of research. Philosophies include the general orientations of a research, and define the theories that support the research methods and interpretations (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). They represent the basic assumptions and convictions about how the universe is viewed, which then acts as a context of perception that directs the researcher's behaviour (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). In this study,

post-positivism philosophy was considered appropriate because of the quantitative nature of the data to be collected.

Post-positivism is a philosophical approach to knowledge and research that builds upon the principles of positivism, but recognises the limitations of the positivist approach. Post-positivism asserts that there is no one objective reality that can be known with certainty, but rather that reality is constructed by individuals through their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations. (Babbie, 2007). Post-positivism acknowledges that all knowledge is subjective, and that there is no single "truth" that can be discovered through scientific inquiry. It recognises that scientific theories are always provisional and subject to revision based on new evidence and changing cultural and social contexts. (Ridenour & Neuman, 2008).

According to Zikmund et al. (2019) post-positivists hold a deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcome. Thus, the problem studied by post-positivists reflect the need to identify and assess the causes that influence outcome such as found in experiment. It is also a reductionist in that the intent is to reduce an idea into small, discrete set of ideas to test, such as the variables that comprise hypotheses and research questions. According to Saunders et al. (2016) the knowledge that develops through a post-positivists lens is based on careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exist "out there" in the world. Thus developing numeric measures of observation and studying the behaviours of individual becomes paramount for a post-positivist.

Research Approach

A research approach consists of large body of assumptions for systematic data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes (Yin, 2014). It is also a plan that includes everything from the broad assumptions to data gathering, analysis and interpretation (Hair et al., 2021). Based on the post-positivists' philosophy, this study adopted the quantitative research approach. The quantitative research approach emphasises quantification in empirical investigations, using surveys and experiments to gather data that is revised and tabulated in numbers, allowing for statistical analysis of the data collected (Creswell, 2014).

According to Bryman and Bell (2015) quantitative researchers' measure variables on a sample of subjects and express the relationship between variables using statistics, such as correlation, regression, and relative frequencies to test theories. Generally, a quantitative researcher begins with a set of hypotheses and or research questions based on a theory that the researcher intends to test either to support or reject the hypotheses formulated (Bui, 2009). Almost all quantitative researchers depend on the post-positivist approach to social science research as they follow a linear research path, surveys, statistics, and test hypotheses to predict general patterns of human activity (Faulkes, 2021).

Research Design

Research design is defined as the plan, structure and strategy of investigation adopted by the researcher in order to obtain appropriate answers to a set of research questions (Wallwork, 2016). The study adopted the explanatory research design. Explanatory research design is a type of research

methodology that aims to uncover the underlying relationships between variables. It seeks to establish cause-and-effect relationships by testing hypotheses and analysing data to understand why a particular outcome occurred (Creswell, 2014). Key (1997) notes that in this design it typically involves the use of experiments, surveys, and statistical analysis to examine the relationships between variables. Explanatory research often involves quantitative data analysis, which helps researchers to make generalisations about a population based on the data collected.

According to Hair et al. (2021) the goal of explanatory research is to provide a deeper understanding of the relationships between variables, rather than just describing them. By identifying the causal mechanisms behind a particular outcome, researchers can develop theories and models that explain how and why certain phenomena occur. Creswell (2014) added that the explanatory research design is useful for testing hypotheses and understanding the causal relationships between variables, and can be applied in a variety of fields, including social sciences, business, and medicine. Thus, explanatory design is a design in which the researcher is interested in the extent to which two variables (or more) co-vary, that is, where changes in one variable are reflected in changes in the other (Babbie, 2007).

Study Organisation

In social science research, the study area is a geographic boundary created to define the extent of the researcher's analysis (Neuman, 2004). These are created when starting a project to ensure that the data and analysis are confined to a specified area. The study was conducted at the University of Education, Winneba in the Effutu Municipal District in Central Region of

Ghana. The region is bordered by Kumasi (Ashanti Region) and Koforidua (Eastern Region) with a population of 2,859,821 representing 9.3 percent of Ghana's population (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2021). Winneba is a town lying on the south coast, 140 kilometres east of Cape Coast. The study focused mainly on the administrative senior staff of the UEW because these employees within the administrative set up are the pivot around which all administrative activities in the institution revolve. The mapping of Winneba showing the UEW is provided in figure 2.

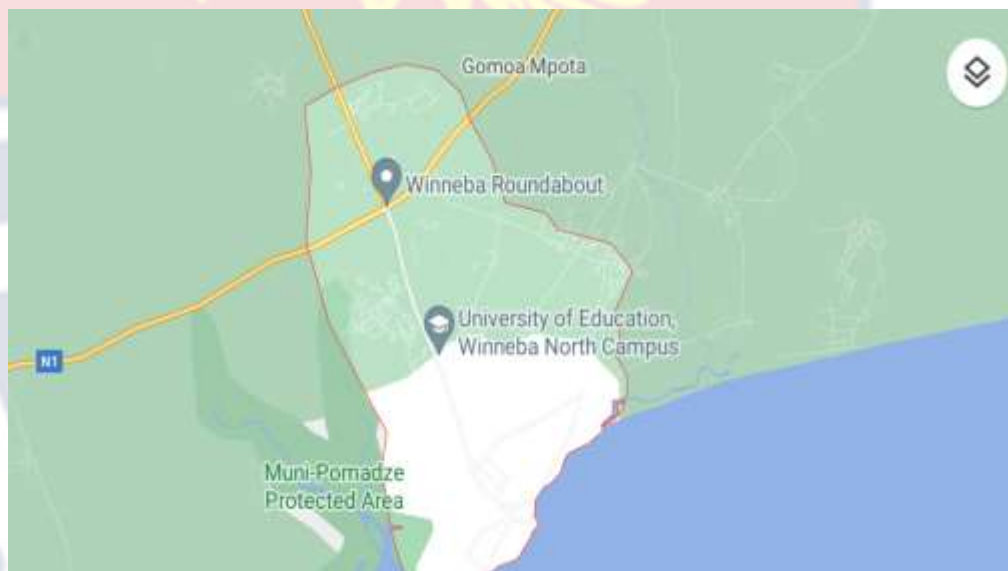


Figure 2: Winneba Map Data ©2022

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Winneba>

Population

Population is a complete set of elements (persons or objects) that possess some common characteristic defined by the sampling criteria established by the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The population considered for this study was four hundred and eighty-one (481) employees, made up of administrative senior staff in the University of Education, Winneba. Out of this population, the males are made up of two hundred and seventy-six (276) employees while the females are made up two hundred and five (205)

employees. In addition, this study specifically focused on employees within the registry of UEW at the main campus.

Sampling Procedure

Punch (2005) defined sampling procedure as the process of choosing a part of a population to test hypotheses about the entire population. From a population of four hundred and eighty-one (481) a sample of two hundred and fourteen (214) employees were selected for the study. A sample for this study were selected from the population in accordance with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. In determining of the sample size the study met the assumption of the sample size such as confidence level, margin of error and variability of the population. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique in collecting data from the respondents. According to Bryman (2016) the simple random technique is a probability sampling technique that ensure each case in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample.

However, in selecting of the respondents, the lottery method was adopted for the study. In doing this, the researcher obtained the list of all senior staff administrators' staff from the Directorate of Human Resource, University of Education Winneba. In the sampling of the respondents, the names of respondents for each category were first listed and assigned numbers. The researcher then wrote the numbers of the respondents on an identical sheet of paper and folded it equally and mixed them up into a bowl. The slips were drawn from the container one by one until the desire number was obtained for the sample size for the study. The justification for this sampling technique is that according to the Directorate of Human Resources

Revised Unified Scheme of service for Senior Staff (2020) describes administrative senior staff as homogeneous group who perform essentially the same function in their job.

Data Collection Procedures

The study adhered to various ethical consideration and requirement to ensure that the rights, safety and well-being of the research participants were safeguarded. Therefore, ethical clearance from the Institutional Review Board, University of Cape Coast was obtained before the data was collected. With the assistance from the Division of Human Resource at UEW, the various participants were access from their offices with the provision of database from the Registrar. The data collection commenced on 5th September and ended on 23rd September, 2022 which was 15days duration. The first 5 days were used for the administering of the questionnaires whiles the remaining 10 days were used for collection of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to the staff from the hours 9:00am to 4:00pm each day. This was to allowed them to have enough time for the filling of the questionnaire. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the staff in their various offices and each of the activity took approximately 30 minutes or more in filling the questionnaire. During the data collection period, the researcher was available to clarify any issues that the respondents encountered which did not have any effect on the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instrument used was survey questionnaire. A set of written questions on conflict management strategies and performance were adapted from empirical literature. Zikmund et al. (2019) point out that survey

research is based most often on a questionnaire because these data are standardized, allowing easy comparison. Despite this, Zikmund, caution that much time will be spent in designing and piloting the questionnaire. The researcher also indicated that, the questionnaire, however, is not the only data collection device which belongs to the survey category. As indicated by Denscombe (2007) the use of questionnaire allows the respondents to have privacy to respond to the questions. Denscombe cautioned that the limitations of using a questionnaire are that it is difficult to check errors and omissions, and cannot be used for populations of low educational level.

The questionnaire was made up of three sections. In the first section of the questionnaire, demographic questions were asked including, sex, age, number of year's worked and academic qualification. In the second section, fourteen items for measuring conflict management strategies were included. Items were measured with 5-Likert-Scale where 1= *strongly disagree* and 5= *strongly agree*. In the final section, ten items for measuring performance were included. Items were measured with 5-Likert-Scale where 1= *strongly disagree* and 5= *strongly agree*. Opie (2004) posit that the use of questionnaire is relatively economical; respondents in distant locations can be reached; the questions are standardised and also anonymity can be assured.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis involves turning a series of recorded observations into quantitative and descriptive statements for practical application. This depends largely on the analytical strategy that will help the researcher treat the evidence fairly, produce compelling analytic conclusions, and thereby rule out alternative interpretations. On the other hand, data processing refers to a series

of screening and transformation procedures that aim at resolving problems commonly associated with missing data, presence of outliers, non-normality, non-linearity, heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity and singularity (Hair et al., 2021). Consequently, these issues will be taken into consideration during the data processing and analysis.

The data collected through survey questionnaire will be processed and analysed using the Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This technique is suitable for this study because, it combines the advantage of numerous traditional multivariate processes such as regression analysis, factor analysis, canonical correlation and discriminant analysis (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). The model is employed to make sure that sufficient levels of validity and reliability are met in the study. The Composite Reliability and Cronbach alpha will be employed to measure the reliability of the questionnaire items and the convergent and discriminant validity will be used to measure the validity of the results.

Ethical Considerations

The main ethical issues considered in this study were informed consent, confidentiality, and integrity. With the informed consent, the researcher provided information about the study including, the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits in a way that the respondents can understand. The employees were then provided their voluntary consent to participate in the study. It will be unacceptable for the researcher to involve any person against the person's voluntary will. The researcher would have to seek the appropriate consent of all the persons and subjects of the study.

Further, confidentiality was largely required of the researcher since information will be gathered from the respondents and subjects of the study. It will be highly unethical to disclose such information to a third party especially without the consent of the persons involved. The researcher therefore, took steps to ensure the respondents' personal information were kept confidential and their identities were not disclosed without their consent. On the other hand, the researcher will be hopeful that the respondents will provide truthful answers on the same grounds of ethics, to help come up with accurate findings that will help solve the problem at hand.

Furthermore, to ensure procedural ethics, the researcher adhered to the code of conducts of research by the University of Cape Coast. As a requirement, the researcher submitted the research instruments, consents form and other required documents to the Institutional Review Board for scrutiny, possible suggestions and approval. In addition, an introductory letter was obtained from Department of Human Resource Management of School of Business, University of Cape Coast to introduce the researcher to the institution and seek permission from the management of the institution to carry out this study within the university.

Chapter summary

This chapter presented a detailed discussion on the methods followed by the researcher in conducting the study. The items discussed under this chapter were research philosophy, study organisation, research approach, research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations and chapter summary. Explanatory research design was used for the study.

The post-positivism philosophy was underpinned in the study. Data was taken with through a questionnaire that was developed based on already validated scales as reported in the existing literature. PLS-SEM was adopted in processing the data.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study sought to examine the effects of conflict management strategies on performance of administrative senior staff at University of Education, Winneba. The specific objectives were to assess the effect of negotiation, third party and communication strategy on performance of administrative senior staff of UEW. The findings and explanations of the data obtained from 214 employees who took part in the study are covered in this chapter. The research objectives were analysed using the Structural Equation Model (Smart PLS-SEM, version 3.3) while the demographic variables were analysed using frequencies and percentages. This chapter is organised into two parts: The respondents' socio-demographic characteristics are presented in part one, while the study's research objectives, measurement and structural models are discussed in part two.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This part describes the demographic features of the respondents who took part in answering the research questionnaires. The demographic features were measured with descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. These tools were appropriate for analysing the variables under consideration given the nature of measurements of those variables. Each respondent provided complete demographic characteristics of himself or herself. Following the literature review, four demographic characteristics were considered relevant for this study: sex, age, number of years worked/years of service and educational qualification.

The demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

The preview of respondents' demographics shows that more males (n = 111), representing 52.8% participated in the study as compared to 103 females, representing 47.2%. This is relatively expected since the gender distribution of the workforce in Ghana is male-dominated Graham and Kankpi (2020) with a slight margin of eight respondents as the difference between the males and the females' population for this study. This notwithstanding provides input from both sexes given the nature of the constructs and variables under consideration.

In Table 1, majority of the staff (n = 105) were within the age group of 26-35 years representing 49.1%. The age group 20-25 came second with n = 50 constituting 23.4%. The age group 36-45 years accounted for 16.8% (n = 36). The age group 46-55 years accounted for 8.9% (n = 19). And lastly, 1.8% (n = 4) of the respondents were above 55 years. The results show that majority of the participants fell within the ages of 20 to 45 years. This indicates that the university has potential staff who could be with the university for a longer time. However, the results reveal that most of the staff upon reaching their retirement years tend to leave the university for other opportunities. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the job responsibilities become monotonous and less satisfying as they stay on the job for a long time (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Afsar, & Umrani, 2019).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	111	52.8
	Female	103	47.2
Age	20- 25 years	50	23.4
	26-35 years	105	49.1
	36-45 years	36	16.8
	46-55 years	19	8.9
	Above 55 years	4	1.8
Educational Level	Degree	115	53.8
	Masters	85	39.7
	Others	14	6.5
Years of Service	1 year and below	70	32.7
	2-5 years	81	37.9
	6-9 years	42	19.6
	Above 9 years	21	9.8

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Concerning educational qualification, 53.8% (n = 115) of the staff had Degree, 39.7% (n = 85) held Masters, while 6.5% (n = 14) had other certificates. This is evident that universities' administrative senior staff is dominated by first degree holders. This means that, majority of the senior staff possess the requisite qualification for conducting their administrative roles.

With reference to years of service, majority (n = 81) of the staff had served for 2-5 years worked representing 37.9%, 32.7% (70) had worked for 1 year and below, 19.6% (n = 42) had worked for 6-9 years and 9.8% (n = 21) had worked more than 9 years. From the years of service, it can also be noted that majority of the staff reduces with increasing number of years of service to the university. This implies that majority of the respondents (70.6%) have worked in the university within the range of 1 to 5 years. This category of staff

has the propensity to leave the university during their early years of employment. This is due to the fact that when certain expectations are not met, the staff are likely to leave for greener pastures. Also, the prevalence of differences in educational levels of the respondents may influence their job performance at UEW.

In conclusion, it can be said that, in addition to their implication for enhancing job performance, the background characteristics of respondents have shown that they possessed the required level of maturity and authority to give relevant and meaningful information for research reports and judgments.

Predictive Capacity of the Model

The specific research objectives formulated were tested reflectively through SMART PLS configuration. Consistent PLS Algorithm and Consistent Bootstrapping were dully marshalled for the analysis after the model specification with these setting up features: Test type=2-tailed; significance level=0.05; maximum number of iterations=5000. The measurement model was first examined and then thereafter, the structural model. Once measurement model is accurately measured, structural model together with significance level (Consistent bootstrapping) is then computed accordingly.

Examine the effect of negotiation strategy on performance of administrative senior staff of UEW

Measurement Model

This objective sought to assess the predictive capacity of negotiation strategy to cause a change, if any, on performance of administrative senior staff, in a single reflectively specified model. A population of 214 were

sampled and the Structural Equational Modelling was used to establish the relationship between negotiation strategy and performance. The measurement model includes assessment of the reliability and validity of the scales and data. The assessment of reflective outer model involves examining reliability of the individual items [indicator reliability], reliability of each latent variable, internal consistency [Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, rho_A], Construct Validity- Convergent validity [Average Variance Extracted] and Discriminant Validity [Fornell-Lacker criteria] (Ringle et al., 2015).

The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Performance	0.897	0.906	0.919	0.622
Negotiation strategy	0.836	0.856	0.883	0.604

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The most common measurement used for internal consistency is Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability (Ringle et al., 2015). Cronbach's alpha evaluates the reliability of the items in terms of unidimensionality of a set of scale items. Particularly, it measures the extent to which all the variables in the scale are positively related to each other (Savelle, 2018). A close observation of the Cronbach's Alpha value (Table 2) indicated that the internal consistency was reliable because the CA value for all the items exceeded the minimum 0.7 cut-off point (Hair et al., 2016). The facts are as follows: negotiation strategy (CA=0.836) and performance (CA=0.897).

According to Henseler et al. (2012) composite reliability is considered a preferred alternative to Cronbach's Alpha to test for reliability in reflective

model because Cronbach's Alpha may either over-estimate or under-estimate scale reliability. A close observation also shows that all the constructs were reliable because the constructs had composite reliability scores higher than 0.7 (Afum et al., 2019). These are the facts: negotiation strategy (CR=0.883) and performance (CR=0.919). It is however argued that even though the values of the composite reliability are somehow very high, this may signal some design problem, however, the indicators were representative of the desired constructs and simply correlate highly and were therefore considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2016).

The rho_A is therefore indicated as the most important PLS reliability measure Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) which is currently the only consistent reliability measure of PLS construct scores. The reliability measure rho_A is an estimate for the squared correlation of the PLS construct score with the (unknown) true construct score. It must have a minimum score of 0.7 (Afum et al., 2019; Henseler, 2017). From the findings all the constructs had a rho_As higher than 0.7. These are the facts: negotiation strategy (rho_A=0.856); performance (rho_A=0.906).

Convergent validity was measured with the Average Variance Extracted [AVE]. Convergent validity measures the level of correlation of multiple indicators of the same construct that are in agreement (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). AVE values must be or exceed 0.5 before they can adequately measure convergent validity (Ringle et al., 2015). A close observation for the AVEs for the constructs therefore proves that they accurately measured the convergent validity. These confirm the claim: negotiation strategy (AVE=0.604); performance (AVE=0.622).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	Performance	Negotiation strategy
Performance	0.788	
Negotiation strategy	0.741	0.777

Source: Field Survey (2022)

As part of the measuring model evaluation, discriminant validity was also assessed. Discriminant validity means that a concept is distinct from others in the model and captures phenomena that aren't represented by other constructs (Schaller et al., 2015). In this study, the Fornell-Lacker criteria was used to establish discriminant validity. The values for the Fornell-Lacker criteria were, performance (0.788), negotiation (0.777). This means that the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than the latent variable correlations (Hair et al., 2006). This is a more conservative approach. The findings in Table 3 demonstrate that all the constructs accurately measured discriminant validity. This, notwithstanding is acceptable in so far as it is less than 1 (Gaskin et al., 2018).

Outer Loadings

Outer loadings can also be considered a form of item reliability coefficients for reflective model (Garson, 2016; Henseler et al., 2012). Hair, et al., (2016) disclose the outer loadings are single regression results with a particular indicator in the measurement model as independent variable. Measurement loadings are standardized path weights connecting the factors to the indicator variables and ranges from 0 to 1. Loadings should be significant (Garson, 2016). By convention, for a well-fitting reflective model, path loadings should be above 0.70 Ringle, et al., (2020) Items with threshold less than 0.7 were retained because their deletion could not improve CA and CR

(Hair, et al., 2006). In general, the larger the loadings, the stronger and more reliable the measurement model. The outer loadings of the indicators of each of the constructs considered in the model are presented Table 4

Table 4: Outer Loadings

	Loadings	P-values
JP1	0.617	0.000
JP10	0.743	0.000
JP2	0.806	0.000
JP5	0.857	0.000
JP6	0.847	0.000
JP8	0.861	0.000
JP9	0.759	0.000
NCM1	0.635	0.000
NCM2	0.759	0.000
NCM3	0.818	0.000
NCM4	0.826	0.000
NCM5	0.830	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Results relating to the factor loadings indicate almost all the indicators had loading more than 0.7 which shows that they strongly measured the constructs they purported to measure, especially as attested by their respective p-value.

The p-values provide indication of the level of significant predictions of the indicators to accurately measuring the respective constructs. The outer loadings were all statistically significant because they had $p < 0.05$. Thus, in all instances, T-Statistics for the indicators were larger than 1.96.

Table 5: Coefficients of Determination

	Original Sample (O)	Adjusted R ²	R ²	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P- values
Negotiation Conflict Management -> Performance	0.741	0.548	0.550	20.614	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The results revealed that negotiation strategy significantly influence performance (Beta=0.741; t=20.614; p=0.000). This imply that a unit change negotiation strategy will lead to 0.741 change in employee performance of administrative senior staff of UEW. As the p-value is less than 0.05, it is confirmed significant, meaning that negotiation strategy have a substantial beneficial influence on employee performance.

The coefficient of determination R² was 0.550 showing that negotiation strategy account for 55.0% of the variations in performance. This means that aspects of employee performance improved as a result of effective negotiation strategy in place to manage conflict that is aligned with university vision which inspire them to pursue the organization's goals (Maresi, 2021). This vindicates the position held is some previous studies by Mbogo et al., (2019) who described negotiation strategy as a critical variable in dealing with conflict resolution processes in order to inspire and stimulate workers in their work activities.

The findings are consistent with those of Tumwebaze et al. (2020) that negotiation has a significant influence on employee performance. Similarly, Neck and Manz (2017) confirms that the use of more integrative approach in conflict management strategy is likely to have higher commitment in

employees than less integrative strategy while a supportive leader causes respect and higher productivity from employees. Therefore, negotiation strategy is seen as the best approach for conflict management which can lead to improvement in performance. The findings are also in line with the submission by Mbogo et al., (2019) that effective bank negotiation strategy is the main driver of employee performance.

In the findings Powel and Moanz (2014) they confirm that negotiation strategy used in handling group conflict to an extent is higher in low performing institutions and that negotiation strategy brings joint benefits for the parties involved in the conflict situation. Furthermore, the findings confirm the claims of Aremu et al., (2021) that negotiation as workplace conflict management strategy significantly influenced manufacturing organisation and that the ability of managers to effectively adopt negotiation in guiding conflict with diverse people improved organisational performance.

Finally, the study supported the claims of Azamosa (2004) that negotiation strategy realises that employees are proactive rather than passive inputs into production process. Therefore, they are capable of being developed and worthy of trust. Thus, the performance of employees is achieved through integrative and informed choices. This proves that negotiation strategy does not require to give up a valued position. Preferably, both parties seek new and higher grounds. Hence requiring an atmosphere of trust and respect, openness in sharing of hidden ideas and a genuine willingness by parties involved in resolving the conflict.

As empirical studies (Aremu et al., 2021; Tumwebaze et al., 2020; Mbogo et al., 2019) and the findings in this study have shown that negotiation

strategy has significant influence on job performance. This shows that negotiation strategy is a viable tool that can be used by management of UEW to minimise the adverse effects of inter-personal conflict so as to enhance maximum cooperation and keep conflict at acceptable level. Further, management should formulate negotiation policies that are suitable to the needs and aspirations of the staff. This will enable the staff to have a sense of involvement in decision making process that affect them within the university. This will then promote a sense of belongingness and provide the organisation's stakeholders especially the staff with useful feedback leading to creation of shared values.

In conclusion, it could be said that, negotiation strategy has influence on job performance as highlighted in this study and other several research studies.

Structural Model

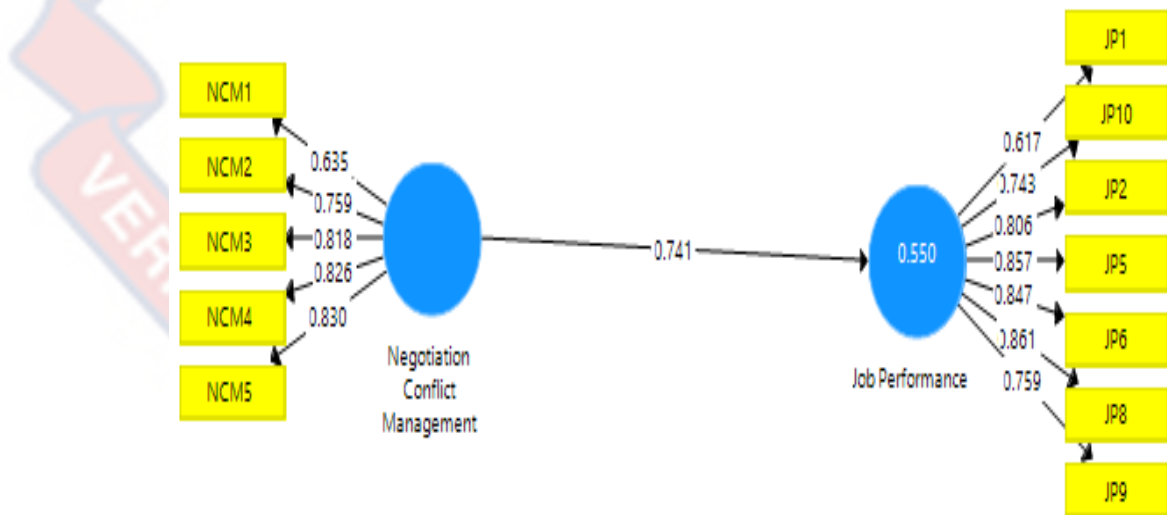


Figure 3: Structural model for objective 1
Source: Field Survey (2022)

Examine the effect of third-party intervention strategy on performance of administrative senior staff of UEW.

Measurement Model

This objective sought to examine the effect of third-party intervention strategy on performance of administrative senior staff in UEW. Thus, it measures how much third-party intervention strategy contributes to the employees performance in a single reflectively specified model. The model was reflectively specified and assessed based on recognised procedures for assessment of reflective models. The measurement model includes assessment of the reliability and validity of the scales and data. The assessment of reflective outer model involves examining reliability of the individual items [indicator reliability], reliability of each latent variable otherwise internal consistency [Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, rho_A], Construct Validity- Convergent validity [Average Variance Extracted] and Discriminant Validity [Fornell-Lacker criteria] (Schuberth, et al., 2018; Garson, 2016). The findings are presented as follows.

Table 6: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Performance	0.897	0.898	0.919	0.620
Third party strategy	0.769	0.790	0.854	0.597

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The most common measurement used for internal consistency is Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability (Ringle et al., 2015). Cronbach's alpha evaluates the reliability of the items in terms of unidimensionality of a set of scale items. Particularly, it measures the extent to which all the variables

in the scale are positively related to each other (Savela, 2018). A close observation of the Cronbach' Alpha value (Table 6) indicated that the internal consistency was reliable because the CA value for all the item exceeded the minimum 0.7 cut-off point (Hair et al., 2016). The facts are as follows: third party strategy (CA=0.769) and performance (CA=0.897).

According to Henseler et al. (2012) composite reliability is considered a preferred alternative to Cronbach's Alpha to test for reliability in reflective model because Cronbach's Alpha may either over-estimate or under-estimate scale reliability. A close observation shows that all the constructs were reliable (Afum et al., 2019) because the constructs had composite reliability scores higher than 0.7 (Garson, 2016). These are the facts: third party strategy (CR=0.854) and job performance (CR=0.919). It is however argued that even though the values of the composite reliability somehow very high, this may signal some design problem, however, the indicators were representative of the desired constructs and simply correlate highly and were therefore considered acceptable (Garson, 2016).

Both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability refers to sum scores, not composite scores (Henseler, 2017). The ρ_A is therefore recognized as the most important PLS reliability measure (Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) which is currently the only consistent reliability measure of PLS construct scores (Aker et al., 2011). The reliability measure ρ_A is an estimate for the squared correlation of the PLS construct score with the (unknown) true construct score. It must have a minimum score of 0.7 (Afum et al., 2019; Henseler, 2017). From the findings, all the constructs had a ρ_A s higher

than 0.7. These are the facts: third party strategy ($\rho_A=0.790$); performance ($\rho_A=0.898$).

Convergent validity was measured with the Average Variance Extracted [AVE]. Convergent validity measures the level of correlation of multiple indicators of the same construct that are in agreement (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). AVE values must be or exceed 0.5 before they can adequately measure convergent validity (Ringle et al., 2015). A close observation for the AVEs for the constructs therefore proves that they accurately measured the convergent validity. Thus, these confirm the claim: third party strategy (AVE=0.597); performance (AVE=0.620).

Table 7: Discriminant Validity

	Performance	Third party strategy
Job performance	0.788	
Third party strategy	0.760	0.773

Source: Field Survey (2022)

As part of the measuring model evaluation, discriminant validity was also assessed. Discriminant validity means that a concept is distinct from others in the model and captures phenomena that aren't represented by other constructs (Schaller et al., 2015). In this study, the Fornell-Lacker criteria was used to establish discriminant validity. The values for the Fornell-Lacker criteria were, performance (0.788), third party (0.773). This means that the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than the latent variable correlations (Hair et al., 2012). This is a more conservative approach. The findings in Table 7 demonstrates that all the constructs accurately measured discriminant validity. This, notwithstanding is acceptable in so far as it less than 1 (Benitez et al., 2020).

Outer Loadings

Outer loadings can also be considered a form of item reliability coefficients for reflective model (Garson, 2016; Henseler et al. 2012). Hair, et al., (2016) disclose the outer loadings are single regression results with a particular indicator in the measurement model as independent variable. Measurement loadings are standardised path weights connecting the factors to the indicator variables and ranges from 0 to 1. Loadings should be significant (Garson, 2016). By convention, for a well-fitting reflective model, path loadings should be above 0.70 (Ringle, 2006; Henseler et al., 2012; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). However, indicators with not less than 0.5 loading can be retained. Items with threshold less than 0.7 were retained because their deletion could not improve CA and CR (Hair, et al., 2016). In general, the larger the loadings, the stronger and more reliable the measurement model. The outer loadings of the indicators of each of the constructs considered in the model are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Outer Loadings

	Loadings	P-values
JP1	0.671	0.000
JP10	0.743	0.000
JP2	0.797	0.000
JP5	0.854	0.000
JP6	0.838	0.000
JP8	0.848	0.000
JP9	0.745	0.000
TCM1	0.860	0.000
TCM2	0.622	0.000
TCM3	0.849	0.000
TCM4	0.736	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Results relating to the factor loadings indicate almost all the indicators had loading more than 0.7 which shows that they strongly measured the constructs they purported to measure, especially as attested by their respective p-value. The p-values provide indication of the level of significant predictions of the indicators to accurately measuring the respective constructs. The outer loadings were all statistically significant because they had $p < 0.05$.

Table 9: Coefficient of Determination

	Original Sample (O)	R^2	Adjusted R^2	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P- values
Third party Conflict Management -> Job Performance	0.760	0.578	0.576	30.388	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The results (Table 9) revealed that third party strategy significantly influence performance ((Beta=0.760; $t=30.388$; $p=0.000$). This imply that a unit change negotiation strategy led to 0.760 change in employee performance of administrative senior staff of UEW. As the p-value is less than 0.05, it is confirmed significant, meaning that third party strategy have a substantial beneficial influence on employee performance.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.578 showing that third party strategy account for (57.8%) of the variations in performance. Among these strategies includes: a third party who assists in resolving the disputes by providing information and options for decision making by the parties themselves and a mediator who helps with communication between parties to reach agreement that is congruence with university's vision and mission (Wandiba et al., 2020).

The results are consistent with the results of Kagwiria (2019) that third party intervention strategy has a positive and significant influence on organisational performance. The findings also affirm the assertion of Wandiba et al., (2020) that the effect of third-party intervention on employee performance is significant. The results also confirm a similar conclusion by Kozan et al., (2017) that mediation, arbitration and motivational tactics as third-party intervention strategy have positive influence on inter-personal conflict among employees. Nevertheless, the results controvert the findings of Makau and Thomas (2021) that third party intervention strategy did not significantly influence employee performance, and they argued that third party strategy can escalate a conflict if the intervention level is not sufficiently accepted.

The results imply that management of UEW can liaise with the Human Resource Department who can act as consultant on staff conflict issues for peaceful resolution. In addition, since third party intervention significantly influence performance, various department within the university can conduct training session for their superior leaders, administrative heads or neutral but well-respected person who will serve as a third party in an employee related conflict. In conclusion, it can be said that, third party intervention has significant influence on job performance as indicated in this study and other several research studies.

Structural Model

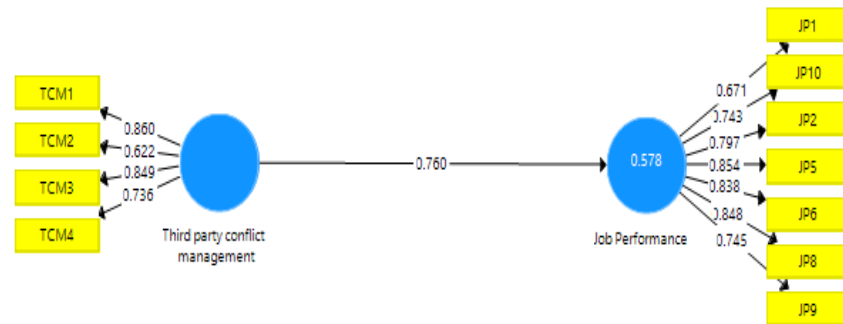


Figure 4: Structural model for objective 2
Source: Field Survey (2022)

Examine the effect of communication strategy on performance of administrative senior staff of UEW

Measurement Model

The third objective sought to examine the predictive capacity of communication strategy to cause a change, if any, on performance of administrative senior staff in UEW, in a single reflectively specified model. The model was reflectively specified and assessed based on recognized procedures for assessment of reflective models. The measurement model includes assessment of the reliability and validity of the scales and data. The assessment of reflective outer model involves examining reliability of the individual items [indicator reliability], reliability of each latent variable otherwise internal consistency [Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, rho_A], Construct Validity- Convergent validity [Average Variance Extracted] and Discriminant Validity [Fornell-Lacker criteria] (Ringle et al., 2015; Garson, 2016). The findings are presented as follows.

Table 10: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Job Performance	0.897	0.898	0.919	0.620
Communication Strategy	0.859	0.861	0.898	0.639

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The most common measurement used for internal consistency is Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability (Ringle et al., 2015; Hulin et al., 2001). Cronbach's alpha evaluates the reliability of the items in terms of unidimensionality of a set of scale items. Particularly, it measures the extent to which all the variables in the scale are positively related to each other (Savela, 2018). A close observation of the Cronbach' Alpha value (Table 10) indicated that the internal consistency was reliable because the CA value for all the items exceeded the minimum 0.7 cut-off point (Hair et al., 2016). The facts are as follows: Communication strategy (CA=0.859) and performance (CA=0.897).

According to Henseler et al., (2012) composite reliability is considered a preferred alternative to Cronbach's Alpha to test for reliability in reflective model because Cronbach's Alpha may either over-estimate or under-estimate scale reliability. A close observation also shows that all the constructs were reliable Afum et al., (2019) because the constructs had composite reliability scores higher than 0.7 (Garson, 2016). These are the facts: Communication strategy (CR=0.898) and Performance (CR=0.919). It is however argued that even though the the values of the composite reliability somehow very high, this may signal some design problem, however, the indicators were

representative of the desired constructs and simply correlate highly and were therefore considered acceptable (Garson, 2016).

Both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability refers to sum scores, not composite scores (Henseler, 2017). The rho_A is therefore indicated as the most important PLS reliability measure Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) which is currently the only consistent reliability measure of PLS construct scores (Henseler, 2017; Kassem et al., 2020). The reliability measure rho_A is an estimate for the squared correlation of the PLS construct score with the (unknown) true construct score. It must have a minimum score of 0.7 (Afum et al., 2019; Henseler, 2017). From the findings all the constructs had a rho_A higher than 0.7. These are the facts: Communication strategy (rho_A=0.861); Performance (rho_A=0.898).

Convergent validity was measured with the Average Variance Extracted [AVE]. Convergent validity measures the level of correlation of multiple indicators of the same construct that are in agreement (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Kumar & Kumar 2019). AVE values must be or exceed 0.5 before they can adequately measure convergent validity (Ringle et al., 2015). A close observation for the AVEs for the constructs therefore proves that they accurately measured the convergent validity. Thus, these confirm the claim: Communication strategy (AVE=0.639); performance (AVE=0.620).

Table 11: Discriminant Validity

	Performance	Communication strategy
Job performance	0.788	
Communication strategy	0.819	0.799

Source: Field Survey (2022)

As part of the measuring model evaluation, discriminant validity was also assessed. Discriminant validity means that a concept is distinct from others in the model and captures phenomena that aren't represented by other constructs (Schaller et al., 2015). In this study, the Fornell-Lacker criterion was used to establish discriminant validity. The values for the Fornell-Lacker criteria were, performance (0.788), communication (0.799). This means that the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than the latent variable correlations (Hair et al., 2012). This is a more conservative approach. The findings in Table 11 demonstrates that all the constructs accurately measured discriminant validity. This, notwithstanding is acceptable in so far as it less than 1 (Gaskin et al., 2018; Nikitina et al., 2019).

Outer Loadings

Outer loadings can also be considered a form of item reliability coefficients for reflective model (Garson, 2016; Sarstedt et al., 2020). Hair et al., (2016) disclose the outer loadings are single regression results with a particular indicator in the measurement model as independent variable. Measurement loadings are standardized path weights connecting the factors to the indicator variables and ranges from 0 to 1. Loadings should be significant (Garson, 2016; Yilmaz, 2013). By convention, for a well-fitting reflective model, path loadings should be above 0.70 (Ringle, 2006; Henseler et al., 2012). Items with threshold less than 0.7 were retained because their deletion could not improve CA and CR (Hair et al., 2016). In general, the larger the loadings, the stronger and more reliable the measurement model. The outer loadings of the indicators of each of the constructs considered in the model are presented in Table 12

Table 12: Outer Loadings

	Loadings	P-values
JP1	0.675	0.000
JP10	0.743	0.000
JP2	0.797	0.000
JP5	0.853	0.000
JP6	0.837	0.000
JP8	0.847	0.000
JP9	0.743	0.000
CCM1	0.818	0.000
CCM2	0.758	0.000
CCM3	0.812	0.000
CCM4	0.791	0.000
CCM5	0.816	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Results relating to the factor loadings indicate almost all the indicators had loading more than 0.7 which shows that they strongly measured the constructs they purported to measure, especially as attested by their respective p-values. The p-values provide indication of the level of significant predictions of the indicators to accurately measuring the respective constructs. The outer loadings were all statistically significant because they had $p < 0.05$. Thus, in all instances, T-Statistics for the indicators were larger than 1.96.

Table 13: Coefficient of Determination

	Original Sample (O)	R^2	Adjusted R^2	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P- values
Communication Conflict Management -> Job Performance	0.819	0.671	0.669	38.252	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The coefficient results (Table 13) revealed that communication strategy significantly influence performance ((Beta=0.819; t=38.252; p=0.000). This imply that a unit change in communication strategy will lead to 0.819 change in employee performance of administrative senior staff of UEW. As the p-value is less than 0.05, it is confirmed significant, meaning that communication strategy has a substantial beneficial influence on employee performance.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.671 showing that negotiation strategy account for 67.1% of the variations in performance.

Aspects of employee performance improved as a result of well-established corporate communication channels that are utilised for timely resolution of conflict which inspire the staff to pursue the organisational goals (Ansah 2020). This vindicates the position held in some previous studies by Kuofie (2018) who described communication strategy as a critical variable in dealing with conflict management in Ghanaian universities.

The results corroborate the findings of Ansah (2020) that communication strategy significantly influence employees' performance. Further, the findings confirm the study of Tulung et al. (2020) that

communication has a positive direct effect on job satisfaction. Thus, the suitability of communication leads to an increase in job satisfaction of teachers in Wanea District. In the findings of Atambo and Momanyi (2016) they affirm that ineffective communication is detrimental for administrative heads, employees and the organisation since it can lead to poor performance, poor service and strained interpersonal relations. Therefore, timely delivery of information enhances the performance of employees.

Furthermore, the results are in line with the findings of Hee et al., (2019) that there is a significant positive relationship between horizontal communication and employee performance. Again, the findings confirm the assumptions by Femi (2014) that a relationship exist between effective communication and workers' performance, productivity and commitment. Moreover, the results affirm the findings of Nwata et al., (2016) that communication within the organisations should be clear and well recognised for the purpose of avoiding ambiguities, since such actions have been revealed to facilitate a more efficient and effective workforce. Their findings reveal that organisational communication was positively correlated with employee performance.

The preceding results imply that management of UEW should assist the staff to resolve conflict by putting in place appropriate conflict resolution strategies. This can be achieved by putting in place channel of communication that meet the needs and aspirations of the staff. Therefore, management should ensure effective flow of communication and to ensure that communication is done on timely manner within the organisation. Further, management should communicate the hierarchical structure of the university so that the staff can

channel their grievances to the appropriate domain for resolutions. Finally, various department within the university should develop training programmes to realise effective communication in the university.

In conclusion, it can be said that communication strategy has a significant influence on job performance as indicated in this study and other research studies.

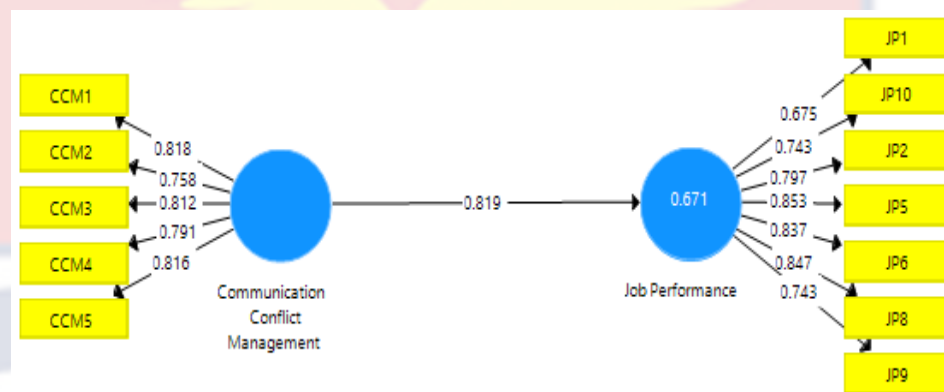


Figure 5: Structural model for objective 3
Source: Field Survey (2022)

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided information relating the findings in line with specific research objectives of the study. The first objective sought to assess the effect of negotiation strategy on job performance of administrative senior staff in UEW. Thus, it measured how much negotiation strategy contributes to the employees' performance. The underlying assumption was that negotiation strategy influence performance. The study proved that 55.0% positive variance in job performance of administrative senior staff of UEW was attributed to changes in negotiation strategy. These findings were consistent with other empirical studies as cited in this research.

Again, the second objective sought to examine the effect of third-party intervention strategy on performance of administrative senior staff in UEW. In

order to examine the extent of the strategy on the performance, the structural equation modelling was used. The underlying assumption was that third party intervention strategy influence performance. The study proved that 57.8% positive variance in performance of administrative senior staff of UEW was attributed to changes in third party intervention strategy. However, the results controvert the findings of Makau and Thomas (2021) that third party intervention strategy did not significantly influence employee performance and they argued that third party strategy can escalate a conflict if the intervention level is not sufficiently accepted.

Finally, the study sought to examine the effect of communication strategy on performance of administrative senior staff in UEW. It measured how much communication strategy contributes to the employees' performance. The underlying assumption was that communication strategy influence performance. The findings reveal that communication strategy made a statistically significant positive effect on performance. The results imply that a change in communication strategy will help improve performance. It was proven significant since the p-value is less than 0.05, implying that communication strategy has a substantial beneficial impact on performance. These findings were consistent with other empirical studies as cited in this research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to wrap up the whole study by examining the major results and their significance for the University of Education, Winneba's personnel. There are four sections to this chapter. The first section contains a three-part description of the study: the study's major and particular aims, certain features of the study's techniques, including the study organisation, research design, sampling procedure, data processing and analysis. The second portion summarises the key results and conclusions, while the third piece offers policy recommendations for resolving conflicts among senior staff of UEW. The final part highlights suggestions for further research.

Summary

The research examines conflict management strategies and performance of administrative senior staff at UEW. Three objectives were established to achieve this goal: (a) examine the effect of negotiation strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at UEW; (b) assess the effect of third-party intervention strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at UEW; (c) examine the effect of communication strategy on performance of administrative senior staff at UEW.

The administrative senior staff was carefully chosen for the study with a population of 214. The simple random sampling technique was used to sample the employee. The study used a quantitative research approach which was underpinned by post-positivism research philosophy. The rationale for

using post-positivism was that it follows a linear research route, employ experiments, surveys, and statistics, and test hypotheses to forecast broad patterns of human behaviour (Neuman, 2020). The research was conducted using explanatory research design. Because the study's goal was to describe the effect of conflict management strategies on performance among administrative senior staff of UEW. The data was gathered with the help of survey questionnaire.

Three research question were formulated and evaluated in order to meet the study's goals. The major statistical approach for assessing the assumptions was partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). With the use of descriptive statistics, the demographic characteristics of respondents were investigated (Frequencies and percentages). SMART PLS version 3.3 was used to analyse the study's principal objectives, whereas SPSS version 22 was employed to handle demographic data. All significance tests had an alpha level of 0.05.

The key findings of the study were as follows:

1. Negotiation strategy has a significant influence on performance. The findings from the co-efficient of determination indicate that 55% of the variation in job performance was explained by changes in negotiation strategy. The study results attributed this to the presence of policies to enhance performance.
2. Third party intervention strategy was found to have a significant influence on job performance. The findings from co-efficient of determination indicates that 57.8% of the variation in job

performance was explained by changes in third party intervention strategy.

3. It was also found that communication strategy has a significant influence on performance of the staff. The coefficient of determination indicates that only 67.1% of the variations in performance was explained by changes in communication strategy.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and findings, the author made some conclusions on this study. Conflict management strategies that are employed in the University of Education, Winneba, have a considerably impact on performance of the administrative senior staff.

Specifically,

The findings of the study led to the conclusion that there was a significant influence of negotiation strategy on performance of administrative senior staff. This reveal that the higher the university employed the negotiation strategy, their level of performance of the administrative senior staff increase. The implication of this is that the use of negotiation strategy as a conflict management strategy helps the administrative senior staff to have a sense of involvement in decision making process within the university. This promotes a sense of belongingness and provide the staff with useful feedback which influence satisfaction and performance.

Subsequently, the findings of the study concluded that there was a significant influence of third-party intervention strategy on performance of the administrative senior staff of the university. This reveal that the higher the university adopt the third-party intervention strategy, their level of job

performance of the administrative senior staff increase. This concludes that the use of the third party in the university where both parties are well acquainted help dig deeper in ascertaining the root causes of the conflict which brings well satisfying results thereby increasing the performance of the staff.

Finally, the findings of the study conclude that there was a significant relationship between communication strategy and performance of administrative senior staff of the university. This reveals that the more the university adopt communication strategy, the level of performance of the administrative senior staff increase. The study concludes that the establishment of corporate communication channels and staff reporting in the university, help the administrative senior staff decode messages and give proper feedback. These channels of communication help in creating mutual understanding between themselves which reduce inter-personal conflict which ultimately lead to the improvement in the level of performance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in accordance with the study's findings and conclusions:

Management of the university should focus on developing soft skills of the administrative senior staff to increase their ability to express and communicate among themselves. Management should also endeavor to eliminate all barriers of communication and create efficient and transparent communication channels to improve performance.

The study recommends that management of the university should ensure that there is regular dialogue and discussions among the administrative senior staff. This will help management understand and appreciate the underlying

factors that generate problems for effective solutions. In such discussions and meeting, it is recommended that management should make sure that the views and of the staff are taken into consideration when making critical decisions.

It is recommended that management of the university should adopt the use of third-party intervention strategy in its conflicts management strategies. Thus, the university through the Human Resource Department could mediate in conflict resolution among the administrative senior staff.

Suggestions for further research

Based on the findings and conclusions the following suggestions were made for further studies.

1. The research framework and objectives for the study could be expanded and modified to include other conflict management strategies that can also enhance performance.
2. In addition, this research couldn't not cover all the staff categories in the university due to limited time on this research work. Therefore, further study can be carried out across all staff categories such as the junior staff and the senior members to affirm if the findings in this research can be generalised across all staff in the university.
3. This research was limited to only one public university due financial constraints on this research work, therefore, with adequate grants and support, further research can be carried out across all public and private organisations in Ghana to identify other dimensions to conflict management strategies and performance relationship.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309
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 OUR REF: UCC/IRB/A/2016/1514
 YOUR REF:
 OMB NO: 0990-0279
 IORG #: IORG0009096

24TH AUGUST, 2022

Mr. Peter Kofi Enning Nyamekye
 Department of Human Resource Management
 University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr. Nyamekye,

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CHLS/2021/79)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research **Perception of Conflict Management Strategies and its Effects on Job Performance of Administrative Senior Staff at the University of Education, Winneba**. This approval is valid from 24th August, 2022 to 23rd August, 2023. You may apply for a renewal subject to submission of all the required documents that will be prescribed by the UCCIRB.

Please note that any modification to the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation. You are required to submit periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

Samuel Asiedu Owusu, PhD

UCCIRB Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
 UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

Dear Sir/Madam

This survey is designed to gather information on *Perception of conflict management strategies and job performance of administrative senior staff at the University of Education, Winneba*. This research is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Master of Commerce (Human Resource Management) degree at the University of Cape Coast.

By this survey questionnaire, you are invited to share your views on the issues under this investigation. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses are required for purely academic purposes.

Thank you.

PETER KOFI ENNING NYAMEKYE

SECTION A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondent

1. **Sex:** Male [] Female []
2. **Age:** 20-25 [] 26-35 [] 36-45 [] 46-55 [] Above 55 []
3. **Number of years you have worked**
- 1 year and below [] 2-5 years [] 6-9 years [] Above 9 years []
4. **Educational level:** Degree [] Masters [] Others []

SECTION B: Conflict Management Strategies

INSTRUCTION: Please assess the various conflict management strategies used in managing conflict situations in your faculty/department. Please tick the most appropriate response to the questions below. The columns are on a scale of 1–5, with **1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Unsure, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree**

Negotiation Strategy of Conflict Management		1 SD	2 D	3 U	4 A	5 SA
1	UEW has an effective negotiation strategy in place to manage conflict					
2	Disagreements among staff requires intervention through negotiation					
3	Employees want to feel involved in decision that affect them by negation with their heads of department before decisions are made					
4	The ability to negotiate with diverse people has become an important factor in resolving daily conflicts					
5	Good negotiation in UEW requires good homework and teamwork for making long term agreements					

Third Party Intervention Strategy of Conflict Management		1 SD	2 D	3 U	4 A	5 SA
1	UEW has an effective third party intervention to manage conflict situation.					
2	A third party assists in resolving the disputes by providing information and options but leaves the decision to themselves					
3	A mediator helps with communication and promotes reconciliation between parties to reach agreement					
4	Performance in UEW is improved when a third party is introduced in resolving employee disputes					
Communication Strategy of Conflict Management		1 SD	2 D	3 U	4 A	5 SA
1	UEW has a well-established Corporate Communication Channel					
2	Conflict in UEW is often brought about by breakages in communication					
3	Communication is used in timely resolution of conflict in UEW					
4	Communication creates understanding and enhances cooperation					
5	Communication provides an avenue by which conflicts can be successfully resolved or worsen					

SECTION C: Evaluation of Performance

Instruction: Based on the various conflict management strategies, evaluate your job performance in carrying out the following duties by ticking the most appropriate response to the questions below. The columns are on a scale of 1 – 5, with **1=Strongly Disagree**, **2=Disagree**, **3=Unsure**, **4=Agree**, **5=Strongly Agree**

Job Performance		1	2	3	4	5
		SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I am able to prioritise multiple activities and assignment effectively and efficiently.					
2	I am able to perform my duties in an efficient way					
3	I use time effectively and stay focused until a work is completed					
4	I am able to meet commitment and deadlines consistently.					
5	I accurately and carefully follow process for completing work					
6	I ensure high quality output at work resulting in minimal errors					
7	I am able to keep attentiveness to all details of my job to ensure complete and high quality output					
8	I am able to conduct my work within the established and acceptable departmental practices.					
9	I can conduct my work within the established and approved work schedule					
10	I am able to apply knowledge and skills to meet job requirements.					