

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND STAFF PERFORMANCE IN GHANA

EDUCATION SERVICE: EVIDENCE FROM GOMOA SENIOR HIGH

TECHNICAL SCHOOL

BY

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VERITAS

LUMEN

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

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

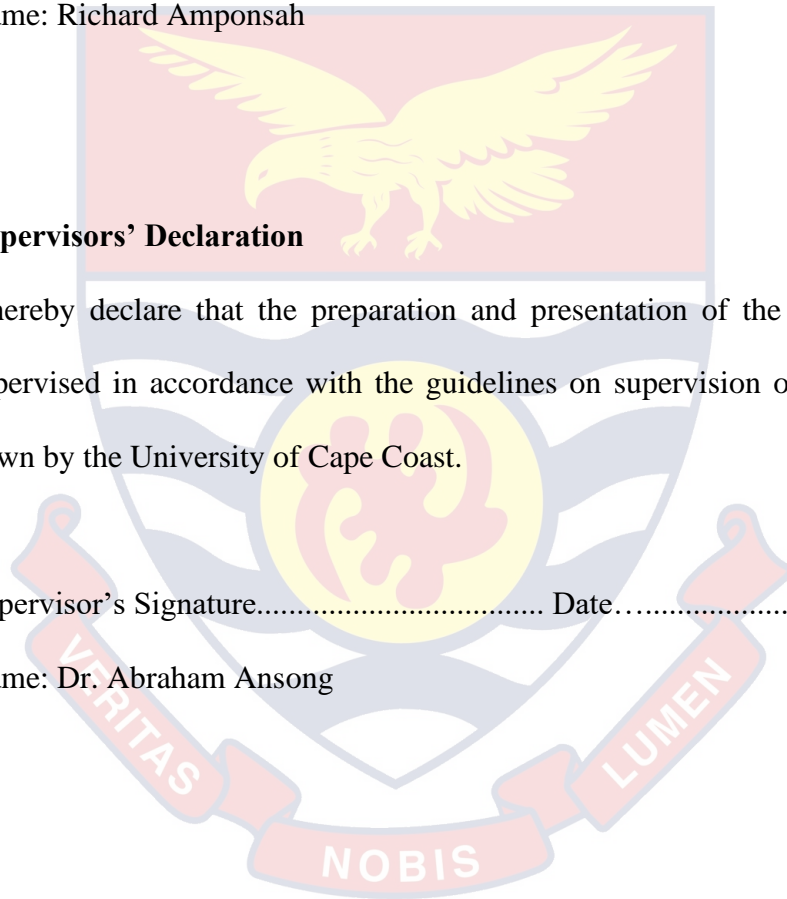
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Supervisors' Declaration

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

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is endemic to all social life and seen as inevitable component of living simply because it is in relation to differences in power, role, function and resources. The success or failure of almost every organisation greatly depends on how management or leaders handle misunderstanding between and among conflicting parties in such organisations. Conflict has become a necessary evil to many organisations in recent times. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of conflict resolution on staff performance in Ghana Education Service. The study adopted a descriptive research design to get answers for the research questions formulated. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select and sample the opinions of 74 staff of Ghana Education Service in Gomoa Senior High/Technical School (GSHTS) on the issue. Data collected from the field survey was later processed using SPSS and analyzed. The study pointed out that conflict affects the performance of staff negatively, except few who were indifferent. The study, however, also found that the most common tools used by GES to handle conflict are negotiation, compromise and arbitration. There is a positive relationship between conflict resolution tools and performance except compromising which showed a negative relationship. In view of this, it is recommended that appropriate reward system, effective communication, and good conflict settlement procedure be established.

KEY WORDS

Conflict

Conflict Resolution

Performance

Productivity

Staff

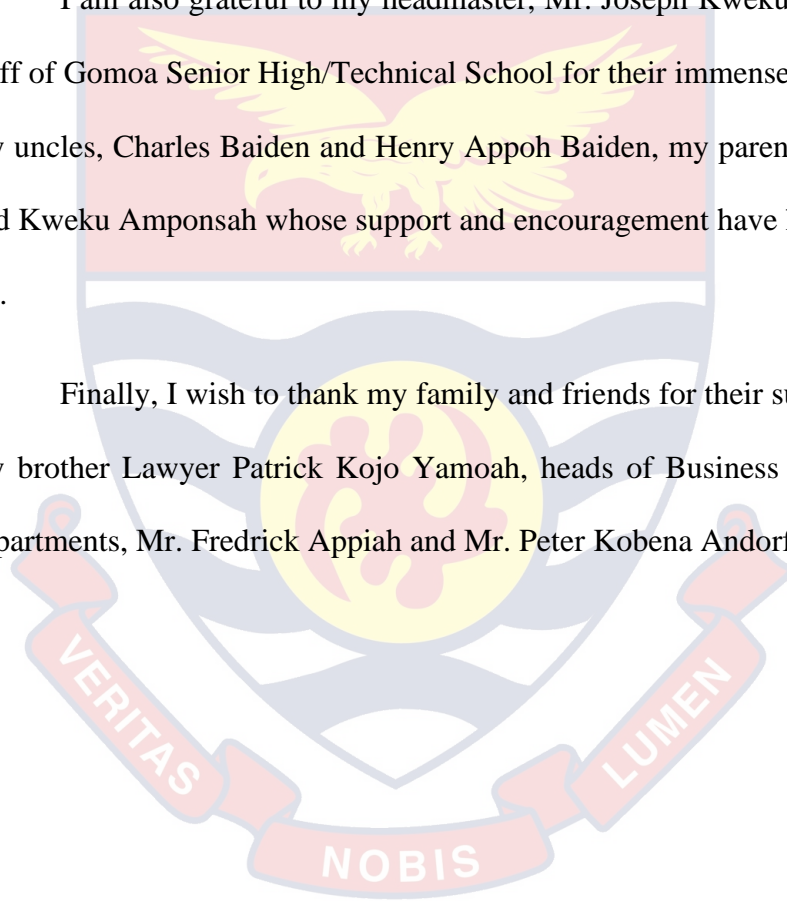


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DEDICATION

To my family



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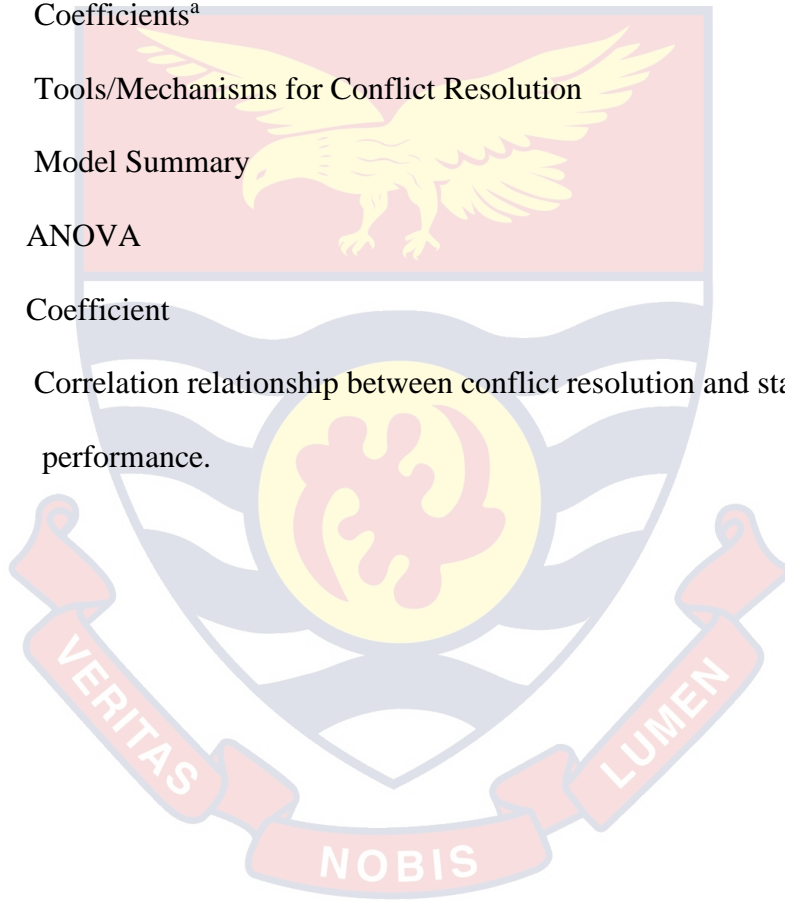
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Ghana Education Service has the responsibility of ensuring high quality education in our country. Education is not sacrificed to the detriment of students. Stakeholders in our education attribute this to misunderstanding between Ghana Education Service and its working partners (staff). To accomplish this such misunderstanding should be resolved to pave way better performance.

Background to the Study

Conflict among employees in an organisation is inevitable and therefore if properly resolved, it will serve as catalyst for change and can positively influence employee satisfaction and the organisation at large. However, unresolved conflict may negatively affect the individual employees satisfaction, hence a decline in job performance. When leaders of organisations brush aside conflict at the workplace, they send a signal that unsatisfactory job performance and inappropriate job-related behaviours are welcomed.

According to Awan and Anjum (2015), properly managed conflict promotes open communication, collaborative decision making, regular feedback, and timely resolution of conflict. When there is open communication and collaboration, it opens doors for new ideas/initiatives and creates harmonious relationship at the workplace, which can positively affect employee morale. Continuous feedback and

timely resolution of conflict has the potential of improving employee job satisfaction and performance.

Awan et al (2015) argue that a negative work environment that does not promote conflict resolution can lead to poor employee behaviour and job performance. Any unresolved conflict promotes dysfunctional communication and poor behaviour among staff. Poor behaviour exhibited by one employee has the potential to affect the total employee morale, leading to low production. According to Dana (2000), conflict is not just an annoyance. It costs money and those costs can be calculated, in terms of wasted time, bad decisions, lost employees. In the health care sector, patients' health and even their lives can be affected by unmanaged conflict. The same thing can be said in the educational sector where students suffer as a result of unmanaged conflict especially between employees and the employer (GES).

Awan and Ahson (2015) contend that conflict is a natural and inevitable part of people working together and should be kept at a manageable level where it will not disorganize the activities of the organisation towards the accomplishment of its objectives. They plead that conflict may also be beneficial to the organisation where it brings about radical change in the organizational power structure, current interaction pattern and entrenched attitude and also can lead to increase in productivity. While some conflicts are functional others are not. It can also negatively affect the organisation when it is associated with decreased employee satisfaction, insubordination, decreased productivity, leads to economic loss, fragmentation to mention but a few. According to Lebars and Euske (2006),

performance is a set of financial and nonfinancial indicators which offer information on the degree of achievement of objectives and results. According to Babin and Boles (2000), employee performance is about directing and supporting employees to work as effectively and efficiently as possible in line with the needs of the organisation. This includes job satisfaction, commitment and perceived psychological contract.

Obassan (2011) observed that it is a state of disagreement over issues of substance or emotional antagonism and may arise due to anger, mistrust or personality clashes. Irrespective of the factors resulting in conflict, it has been observed that industrial conflicts produce considerable effects on organisations and should be consciously managed as much as possible. It affects quality, performance and profit of organisations. Conflict is essential for life and dynamic for team performance (Medina, Munduate, Dorado & Martinez, 2005). Employee dissatisfaction is always unpleasant leading to employees looking for actions to resolve their problems. Most often than not, these dissatisfactions arise due to improperly managing issues affecting the employees and poor organizational management practices. Dissatisfied employees may feel reluctant to work, leave the organisation, stay but adopt certain mechanisms to curb their dissatisfaction. It is therefore, imperative on the management's part to find out the cause and effect of employee dissatisfaction and the best solutions to remedy them. According to Branham (2005), lack of communication in the organisation, underpayment, limited career growth and advancement, lack of interest, poor management practices are the major causes of employee unhappiness at the workplace.

It must be observed that the above factors have led labour unions embarking upon plenty actions just have their issues resolved. But these actions negatively affect productivity of the organisations that experience this. The study therefore seeks to determine the causes, effects of conflict and how it can be resolved.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict resolution recently has gained a lot of interest. Studies have stimulated interest in the strategies and approaches adopted to handling conflict which in the old days were resolved through court settlement. This, we all know, is very time and energy consuming. Traditional workplace setting and practices with their hierarchical structures, tight divisions of labour, narrowly defined jobs, detailed regulations, limited employee involvement, and managerial decision making, authority, and control are no more adequate since they foster conflict (Daud, 2010). The high performance workplace emphasizes conflict management as the center of the high performance workplace.

Employees with no or little job satisfaction may give off their maximum best at the early stage. However, they may subsequently become furious as a result of absence of inward factors that motivate them. Issues like low pay, absence of career growth and development, lack of interest and many more result in dissatisfaction. To the employees, to resolve these issues is to resort to certain industrial actions, which cause a lot of interruptions at the workplace

Embarking on industrial actions especially by public sector workers has become the way forward to these workers in the public institutions despite the

presence of the Labour Department and the Labour Act, (2003). Nice policies are always drawn by policy makers but the implementation of these policies is yet to be seen. Some studies have been conducted on how certain mechanisms are being used to manage conflicts but did not touch on how conflict management influence performance. Primary stakeholders of Ghana Education Service, especially teaching staff are confronted with a lot of issues of which some are inadequate supply of teaching-learning materials (TLMs), three month pay policy, difficulties in getting study leave, lack of better conditions of service just to mention a few. These parties have over the years gone through several processes just to have conflicts settled. Much attention is given to how such conflicts are resolved and its effect on employee performance. This research aims at filling the gap that existed in the literature by examining the influence of conflict resolution on staff performance in Ghana Education Service.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of conflict resolution on staff performance in Ghana Education Service.

Research Objectives

The research therefore sought to address the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the causes of conflict in Ghana Education Service.
2. To determine the effects of conflict on staff performance in Ghana Education Service.

3. To identify the tools/mechanisms for conflict resolution in Ghana Education Service.
4. To assess the influence of conflict resolution on staff performance in G.E.S.

Research Questions

The following below are the questions to solicit the opinions of respondents.

These are asked based on the research objectives.

1. What are the causes of conflict in Ghana Education Service?
2. What are the effects of conflict on employee performance in G.E.S?
3. What are the tools for managing or resolving conflict in G.E.S?
4. What impact does conflict management has on employee performance G.E.S.?

Significance of the Study

This study was considered beneficial in the sense that it tried to establish the different theories that connect conflict resolution and performance and how practicable they are in modern situations. Findings from the study are anticipated to bring to light the causes of conflict, effects of conflict and how properly resolved conflict affect the level of organizational performance. Knowing the causes of conflicts enables staff of GES to partially remedy such conflicts. Teachers contact hours with students not lessened but rather increased to do more the students. Also, the findings served as a guide for policy makers with regards to conflict resolution and the best practices to accomplish that, and foundation for future research work.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to staff of Ghana Education Service (G.E.S). It was further delimited to only the staff of Gomoa Senior High/Technical School. With respect to the variables in the study, conflict, conflict resolution, productivity, and job performance were considered.

Limitations

The critical factor that impeded the study was the collection of data. The reason behind this was the fact that, the study assumed all staff could understand issues concerning conflict resolution and staff performance in G.E.S. However, this was not validated before carrying out the research. The sample size was reduced because of the introduction of double track. Some teachers were not in school at the time of administering questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

Conflict: all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction (Armstrong, 2009).

Staff: A group of persons, as employees, charged with carrying out the work of an establishment or executing some undertaken.

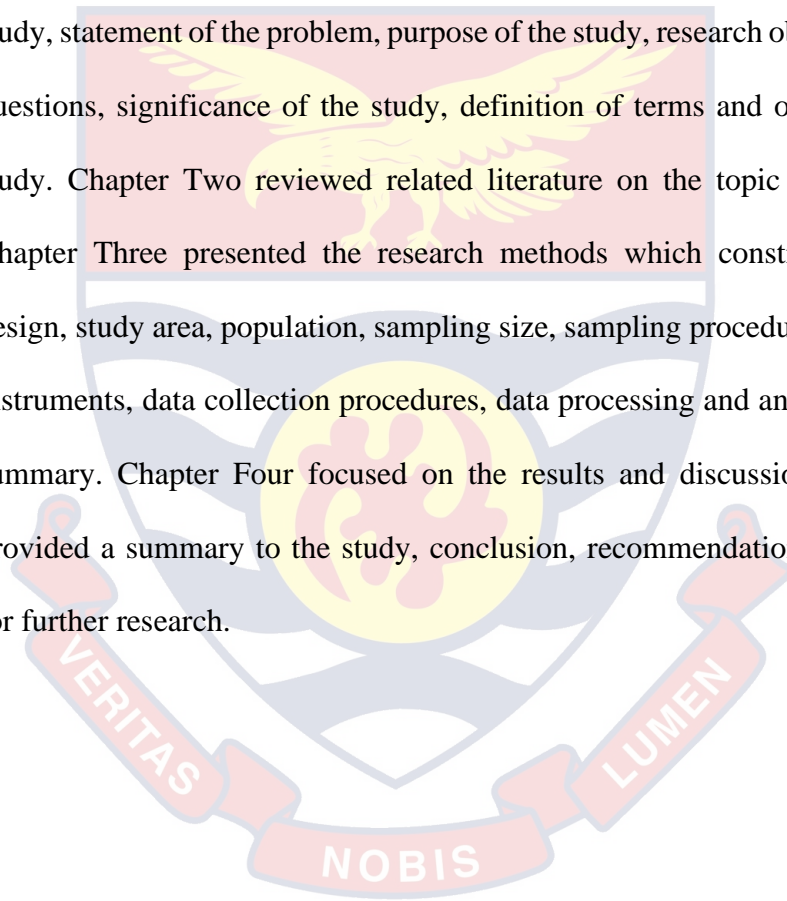
Conflict Resolution: Conflict management is the ability of an organisation to identify the sources of conflict and put strategic measures in place to minimize or control it (Armstrong, 2006).

Productivity: The efficient use of resources (i.e. labour, capital, land, materials, energy, information) in the production of goods and services.

Performance: Is the completion of task with application of skills, knowledge and abilities.

Organisation of the Study

This study consisted of five chapters and it was presented as follows. Chapter One covered the introduction which comprised the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms and organisation of the study. Chapter Two reviewed related literature on the topic and subheadings. Chapter Three presented the research methods which constitute the research design, study area, population, sampling size, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis and chapter summary. Chapter Four focused on the results and discussions. Chapter Five provided a summary to the study, conclusion, recommendation and suggestions for further research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Disputes often occur between employees and managers. Divergent views, opposite stands, contrasting demands characterize employee management relations. Employees want more jobs, high wages, better working conditions whereas management wants to reduce staff, raise productivity, pay fewer wages, on account of technological advancement and computerization, requirement of labour force falls which is opposed by the trade unions. In such an environment of opposite interests, dispute or conflict arises. The conflicts manifest in the form of strikes, picketing, boycotts, lockouts etc. The consequences of conflicts are loss of production, loss of profit, loss of market and even closure of plant.

It is palpable that organizational theorists have in a broad spectrum acknowledged that human resource is the most valuable assets of an organisation because things are done through them. Alternatively, the success of almost every organization in attaining its stated goals and objectives ponderously depends on the satisfaction of its employees. It is, therefore, important to focus on the factors that affect performance of employees in an organisation (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002). All institutions, being it public or private, need satisfied workforce, together with other factors in order to be effective and efficient in their performance.

Employees who are satisfied to work actively and creatively toward attainment of organisational goals are one of the most crucial inputs to the success of the organisation. Consequently, the challenge for organizations is to ensure that

their employees are highly satisfied, hence avoidance of organizational conflict. Conflict resolution does a lot of good to organisational success and as such needs to be given a more serious attention. To actualize this, the following areas should be given much consideration: concept of conflict, causes of conflict, effects of conflict and performance.

The Concept of Conflict

Conflict is endemic to all social life, it is an inevitable part of living because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation (Bercovitch, 1984). Because of its ubiquity and pervasive nature, the concept has acquired a multitude of meanings and connotations presenting us with nothing short of a semantic jungle. With the absence of a comprehensive definition of conflict, various definitions have been offered by many researchers from multiple disciplines. Some of these have originated from disciplines such as psychology, behavioural science, sociology, communication and anthropology.

To have a clear picture and better understanding of the term “conflict”, it is prudent to categorize conflict theories in functional, situational, and interactive. Those behind the functional approach opined that conflict serves as a social function. Followers of the situational approach believe that it suggests an expression under certain situations and the last theory views conflict as interactive in nature.

Simmel (1995), a German sociologist and a functionalist defines conflict as designed to resolve divergent dualisms; it is a way of achieving some kind of unity, even if it will be through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties. Simmel therefore held the view that conflict served as a social purpose and reconciliation is achievable even with the total destruction of one party. Conflict socializes members into a group and reduces the tension between group members (Simmel, 1995). He further determined three possible ways to end a conflict. First amongst them is the conflict ending with a victory of one party over another. Secondly, conflict is resolved through compromise and the last but not least is the conciliation. However, not all conflicts may be ended as discussed. For instance, those conflicts that are characterized by high level of emotions involved cannot be resolved by compromising (Simmel, 1995). He made a huge stride in the study of conflict as he clearly determined a positive social function for conflict.

A representative of the situational approach, Bercovitch (1984), says any condition which produces incompatible goals or values among different parties is regarded as conflict. For him, conflict depends on the situation. Conflict arises because of different conditions such as the influence of a person and external factors. In the explanation of Ongori as cited by Adomi (2005) conflict is a fact of life in any organisation, as long as people compete for jobs, resources, power, recognition and security. In addition, dealing with conflicts is a great challenge to management. Furthermore, Ikeda (2005) observed that organizational conflict involves interpersonal conflict between colleagues or supervisors or inter-group conflict between different sections of an organisation. Conflict is the clash of

interest that find expression in disagreements, hatred, chaos, and confusion, with a tendency to disrupt individual or organizational expectations. In business organisations, conflicts usually erupt from issues of work responsibility, power, authority, ethics and interpersonal matters like misunderstandings, difference of opinion and poor communication between two persons (Elizabeth & Salormey, 2015).

Conflicts are dissimilarities between among individuals as noted by Borisoff and Victor (1998). The differences are created by the conflict, for instance values, goals, motives, resources and ideas. Each person has an individual way of thinking and behaves differently from others in similar situations. It can be concluded that conflict can affect everyone to varying extent (Leung, 2010).

The opinion by Rahim (2001) indicates that conflict is an interactive process which manifests itself in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities (that is individual, group, organisation, etc.). Conflict is defined as a situation in which interdependent people express (manifest or latent) differences in satisfying their individual needs or interest and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals as stated by (Rose, 2006).

Deutch (as cited in Adebile & Ojo, 2012) opined that conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. An action which is incompatible with another action prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures, or in some way makes it less likely or less effective. Rahim, (2002) noted that organizational conflict occurs, as actors engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues

within their network, members of other organisations, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organisation. As human being interacts in organisations, differing values and situations creates tension. Conflict is thereby viewed as a situation in which two or more individuals operating within a unit appear to be incompatible.

The above divergent views, definitions, and explanations offered by the various writers clearly depicts that conflicts arise when there is a disjoint or incompatibility between or among varied elements. This could be a thing, an idea, a philosophy, values, opinion, goals, interest, resources etc. These varied definitions fail to comprehend that it is human nature. The bible categorically states that where two or more are gathered, there I am in their midst. In the secular, allow me to say that where two or more are gathered, there is conflict.

Types/Forms of Conflict

Depending on the situation, management may need to take different steps to resolve conflict. Sometimes this might be simple, like asking a frustrated employee to take a personal moment. Understanding the different forms of workplace conflict can make it easier to identify and resolve. Further, conflict has come to form part of our daily lives since we operate together and each has its own personality, values, objectives, interest, and views in life. Consequently, people in organisation cannot avoid conflict in the workplace. Organisations have changed in recent years, so is their attitude to conflict resolution. Institutions try as much as

possible to adopt strategic means to resolve organizational conflict (Aula & Sura, 2010). The following are some types of organizational conflicts.

Relationship Conflict

Relationship conflict, also called interpersonal or emotional conflict, takes place on an emotional or personal level between employees. Relationship conflict results from team members' disagreeing with one another and thus viewing themselves as opposed to one another. It is basically a clash of personalities. Relationship conflict results in considerably more stress between employees and can be more difficult to manage than task conflict. Conflict that can take an interpersonal form and comes from personal dislikes or personality differences (Gareth & Jennifer, 2008). A California State University Sacramento reports that people respond in different ways to disagreements with personal feelings, attitudes and goals contributing to the conflict. The manager normally wants his employees to settle their differences without his personal intervention, but sometimes he needs to intervene (Green, 2012). Usually personality conflict commences from insignificant irritations. Kinicki and Kreitner (2008), cited a real life example:

“When Adam Weisman arrives at his public relations job he starts his working day not by grabbing a cup of coffee with his co-workers, but instead the account executive with DBA Public Relations always goes to his office and turns on his iPod to listen to music through the speakers. To his mind the music helps him to be more focused. Weismann does not

mind that he could irritate other people with his behaviour. His colleagues admitted that it is annoying when he drums on his desk or sing along. In such a way, interpersonal conflict was born between Weismann and his co-workers”.

Scenario like this is very common at workplaces. The impoliteness of people can end in interpersonal conflict (Kreitner, 2008). Furthermore, interpersonal conflict is used to indicate the disagreement that most people call a personality clash. This clash may take place in the form of antagonistic remarks that relate to the personal characteristics of a group member or disregard any organizational goals to antagonize a particular group member. Conflict of this type is expressed through more subtle nonverbal behaviours. There are may be icy stares or, at the other extreme, an avoidance of eye contact. Interpersonal conflict is inevitable and must be managed for optimum group coexistence.

Intragroup Conflict

It is the type of conflict within a particular group, team, division, unit or department. This conflict involves more than one person in a group (Gareth & Jennifer, 2008). The harmony within departments of the organisation is essential. It helps to maintain productivity and workplace morale, amongst other things. When two or more people do not get along together, that personal conflict can influence everyone around them. Intragroup conflict may be associated with ethnic, religious, race, creed, social, economic or gender prejudice, and also various personality differences. Depending on how strong the conflict is, a manager may

need outside help to resolve the issues. At this stage, it could be useful to a trusted third party who is well versed in conflict resolution.

Procedural Conflict

This conflict exists when group members disagree on the procedures to be followed in accomplishing the group goals. New procedures may be formulated and a new agenda suggested. Even the group goals may be modified. Change is difficult to embrace. Procedural conflict, like task conflict, may be productive.

Task Conflict

Task conflict, also called task-led conflict, occurs when employees disagree over their understanding of their goals and tasks. It is a disagreement between two people or in a group of people over the decisions they should make. Team members will have different perceptions of their goals, different solutions and opinions about the issue. Task conflict is normal in the workplace and doesn't need to be managed as assertively as relationship conflict (Mitchell, 2009). Group members may disagree about facts or opinions from authorities. The interpretation of evidence may be questioned. Disagreement about the substance of the discussion is called task conflict. It can be productive by improving the quality of decisions and critical thinking processes.

Intergroup Conflict

This arises when two or more workgroups of any type clash or disagree with each other – but it isn't always about personality differences. In a nutshell, such a conflict develops when at least one person in a group behaves inappropriately, feels rejected or offended or perceives opposition of any sort from at least one person on another team or side. It's no secret that this type of strife is ever-present between religious groups and even countries that disagree with or develop a dislike or hatred for each other. In the business world, intergroup conflicts can arise between various levels of employees or management or can flare up when workers naturally gravitate to each other, forming an in-group and causing a divide that offends the out-group. A conflict of this nature or type must be resolved quickly as if, if it continues it can destroy the organisation (Green, 2012). Conflict between different groups or teams can become a threat to organizational competitiveness.

Inter-organisational Conflict

The types of organizational conflict vary from one organization to another. Some of the most common types of conflicts are individual conflict, interpersonal, intra-group, inter-organizational and intergroup (Lewicki, Weiss & Lewin, 1992). By perceiving how the above conflict types vary managers can effectively deal with conflict. Conflict that is developed between organizations is named as Inter-organizational conflict. Inter-organizational conflict usually when there is high level of competition between two firms. Mergers, takeovers and acquisitions may also result in Inter-organizational conflict (Likert & Likert, 1976).

The opposite attitudes and values of two different organizations can lead to high level of inter-organizational conflict. Besides, it develops when situations in which managers in one organization feel that other organization is not behaving ethically and is frightening the well-being of stakeholder groups. The pricing strategies formulated by enterprises may also cause inter organizational conflicts. A majority of inter organizational conflicts result in the productivity of an organization rather than deterioration in performance. Some level of inter-organizational conflict is essential for organizations to compete in the market.

Inter-organizational conflict must be handled in a positive way in order to make it beneficial to the organization (Gross & Guerrero, 2000). Organizations must avoid adopting unethical practices to resolve such a conflict. Inter-organizational conflict can be resolved only in few situations. However, due to varied culture, structure and policies existing in different organizations, Inter-organizational conflicts remain unresolved most of the times.

Also, Imazai (2002) identifies two essential types conflict in organisations: vertical and horizontal. Vertical conflict occurs in groups of different hierarchical levels, such as manager and subordinate, whereas horizontal conflict occurs between individuals at the same level. Instances of vertical conflict occur more frequently and have greater impact than horizontal conflict because causal factors tend to equalize in people of equivalent hierarchical levels (Robbins, 1983). When vertical conflict occurs, employees are more likely to feel they are not properly involved in the organisation and neither are their needs met. In short, they feel powerless and alienated. Ikeda (2005) argues that types of organizational conflict

usually stem either from differences in value and ideology or from disagreements over benefits, salary, and working conditions.

Conflict Process/Model

What goes on in a conflict? It is important to be aware of important variables that may influence conflict behaviors as a basis for intervening productively in conflict situations. The following model is a slight modification of the process model of Thomas (1976). It is a useful way of viewing conflicts.

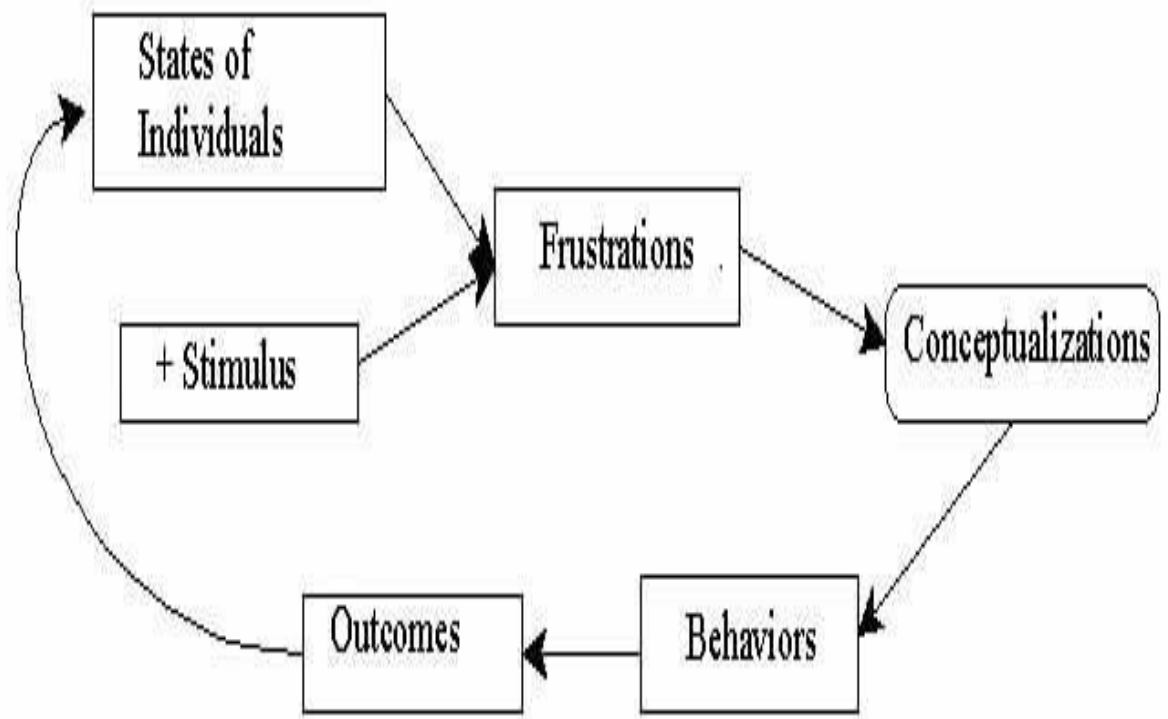


Figure 1: Conflict Process/Model

Source: Mitchell, (2009).

Conflicts are considered to occur in cycles or episodes, each of which may be quite short, for example, a few seconds or minutes. Each episode is influenced

by the outcomes of previous episodes and also influences future episodes. The model of a conflict episode has six components or stages. For simplicity, the description below deals with only two individuals in conflict, although the model extension to multiple individuals is direct.

Entering State

The first stage represents each individual's entering state, which is determined by such variables as his or her behavioral predispositions (personality, if you please), events and pressures from the social environment, recent experiences with significant others, and previous experiences, especially conflict episodes, with the other party.

Stimulus

Typically, some stimulus (the second component) occurs that initiates or catalyzes an episode, although it need not be an explicit event.

Frustration

The entering state and stimulus lead to frustration (the third stage of the model). Frustration may result from a wide variety of stimuli for example, active interference with one group member's actions by another, competition for recognition, the breaking of an agreement, or the giving of an overt or imagined insult (for example, you do not agree with my ideas, you prevent me from getting the information, money, time I need, you undermine my influence with someone else). In both this and the following stage, the inferences and attributions of each

individual are primary determinants of behavior, and the resulting perceptions of the conflict situation often vary widely across individuals.

Conceptualization

The fourth step, conceptualization, is vitally important. The conceptualization of the situation by each group member forms the basis for his or her reactions to the frustration and subsequent behavior. This step in the episode could be thought of as each party answering and reacting to the imagined answers to such questions as: What's going on here? Is it good or bad for me? Why is this other person doing this to me? An example of a conceptualization is: "You just can't trust that (type of) person." A dispute between a group member and the leader might be conceptualized by the leader as "this guy is acting out his counter-dependent position and trying to take over the group" and by the member as "I must push this issue for the sake of the group because nobody else has the guts to stand up to this arrogant show-off." Conceptualizations involve inferences, attributions, and evaluations that may be far removed from the actual words and actions of the individuals during the episode.

Each party in a conflict develops his or her own implicit conceptualization of the situation. This is done quickly and usually tacitly (i.e., the individual doing it is not conscious of the process). There are many different ways to conceptualize and respond to the same situation - seldom will the parties conceptualize in the same way. Usually they are blind to and/or want to ignore any alternative conceptualizations, e.g., a conflict between teachers and administration in a school

district was conceptualized by the school board as "this is anarchy, trying to take over the running of this district" ...and by teachers as "we must push this issue to retain quality in the education of our students." The ways each party conceptualizes the problems and episode have a great deal of influence over the chances for a constructive outcome, the behaviors that will result, and the kinds of feelings that will be created during the conflict episode.

Behavior

The fifth step in the conflict model is behavior (i.e., a sequence of behaviors and interactions between the two parties). The initial behavior of each individual is determined heavily by his/her conceptualization. The behaviors of each party have an effect on the subsequent behavior of the other. This interaction tends to increase or decrease the level of conflict.

Outcome

The sixth and final step in the conflict episode model is the outcome or result of the conflict episode. The outcome refers to the state of affairs that exists at the end of the episode, including decisions, actions taken, agreements made, and feelings of the participants. Subsequent episodes may happen, with similar or different issues. The process described above is repeated for each episode, with the outcome of previous episodes affecting the entering state of each individual in subsequent episodes. Succeeding episodes can move higher in conflict intensity (escalation) or lower in intensity (de-escalation).

Causes of Organizational Conflict

Organizational conflict appears in a variety of forms and has varying causes. These can generally be separated into several categories. Kilmann (2008) identifies three causes of conflict. These are structural conflict (conflict arising out of the need to manage the interdependence between different organizational sub-units); role conflict (conflict arising from set of prescribed behaviour) and resources conflict (conflict resulting from interest groups competing for organizational resources).

Also, Tjosvold and Sun (2002) identify three sources of organizational conflict and indicate that an understanding of the sources of a conflict improves the probability of effective conflict resolution. The main factors which serve as sources of conflict are identified as communicational (conflict from misunderstandings), structural (conflict related to organizational roles), and personal (conflict stemming from individual differences).

The causes of organizational conflict could be structurally or interpersonally related. When conflict in an organisation results from the nature of the organisation and the associated work, it is said to be structurally related. On the other hand, conflicts resulting from differences between the individual employees of the organisation are described as interpersonal causes of conflict (Annan-Prah & Appiah Ofori, 2015).

Structural Causes of Organisational Conflict

Specialization

According to Annan-Prah and Appiah Ofori (2015), this occurs in organisations where services involve the integration of the work of different departments, groups or individuals that specialize in different aspects of the final service or product. In other words, one party may be dissatisfied with another's performance when it fails to meet the expected objectives, but the dissatisfied party is incapable of performing the task that is unsatisfactory.

Scarcity of resources

When a resource is scarce, the desire to achieve an objective with the resource by one unit of an organisation may undermine the interests of other units in the same resource (Annan-Prah & Appiah Ofori, 2015). This leads to conflict arising from a clash of interests.

Goal Incompatibility

In situations where different units or departments of the same organisation have different and incompatible goals, conflict could arise (Annan-Prah & Appiah Ofori, 2015).

Interdependence

According to Annan-Prah and Appiah Ofori (2015), it is when units in an organisation are such that their activities are interdependent, a failure by one unit to enable the flow of work in another could lead to conflict between the two units. This means the success of one party largely depends on the other and it is so common in large industries where there is flow or mass production.

Ambiguities in Regulations

An organisation that has unclear regulations or the complete lack of regulations is more likely to experience conflict between its departments or units. That is because unclear regulations means that employees of separate units would be uncertain as to what conduct could mean interfering with the goals of another unit. Such situations are common in mergers; where two or more companies are joined for a specific project. Each of the companies would certainly have its original regulations, values and beliefs that might be different from the others (Annan-Prah & Appiah Ofori., 2015).

Roles and Expectations

Usually, large organisations recruit employees and assign them to specific units or departments. Each unit performs specific functions, and employees are recruited based on some qualifications and/or experiences that are relevant to the unit to which they are assigned. The roles of the unit and those of individual employees are usually defined in appropriate documents, including the employees' appointment letters to named positions of responsibilities. In a situation where a unit or employee performs a role contrary to what is expected, and which conflict with the goals of the organisation or the objectives of another unit or employee, conflict could result (Annan-Prah et al., 2015).

Interpersonal Causes of Organisational Conflict

Communication

Interpersonal conflicts in organisations could arise due to communication related problems. For instance, when two parties lack the opportunity to

communicate to each other, one might act on an issue which is of interest to the other using subjective reasoning. If the act appears to conflict with the interest of the other party, conflict could arise (Annan-Prah et al., 2015).

Individual difference

There are differences among employees of an organisation in terms of their beliefs, values, training and experiences. Thus, when two individuals have interest in achieving a common goal, but have different values, experiences and perceptions regarding the activities leading to the goal, conflict is likely to occur. Such differences are common causes of intergenerational conflicts (Annan-Prah et al., 2015).

Threat to status

According to Annan-Prah et al. (2015), the social status of individuals in a group within an organisation is very important in the development of their personalities and influence. Therefore, any act by another party that threatens the personal status of another is more likely to cause conflict as the victim struggles to rebuild his/her tainted image.

Skills and ability differences

Employees of the same unit of an organisation may have different skills and abilities regarding the performance of the same piece of work. For example, a person with long service experience would approach in a different way compared to a new person imbued with adequate theoretical and practical aspects of the job.

If these two people are to undertake a task together, conflict is most likely to occur due to differences in skills and abilities (Annan-Prah et al., 2015).

Types of Conflict Settlement Methods

Conflict resolution is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution. Committed group members attempt to resolve group conflicts by actively communicating information about their conflicting motives ideologies to the rest of the group, for example, intentions, reasons for holding certain beliefs) and by engaging in collective negotiation. Dimensions of resolution typically parallel the dimensions of conflict in the way the conflict is processed. Cognitive resolution is the way disputants understand and view the conflict, with beliefs, perspectives, understandings and attitudes. Emotional resolution is the way disputants feel about a conflict, the emotional energy. Behaviour resolution is reflective of how the disputants act, their behaviour. Ultimately, a wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflict exist, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, diplomacy and creative peace-building.

Negotiations

Organizational conflict occurs, as actors engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other organisations, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization (Rahim, 2002). This often leads to disagreements and buildup of tensions that require intervention through conflict resolution. Negotiation is a

process of decision-making in which two or more parties talk with one another in an effort to resolve their opposing interests. It is a process by which compromise or agreement is reached while avoiding argument and further disputes. Negotiations always results in three outcomes which are win-win negotiation, win-lose negotiation, and lose-lose negotiation.

Akanji (2005) says that constructively managed conflict induces a positive performance, while destructively managed conflict heats up the work environment to bring about dislocation and polarization of the entire group with reduction in productivity and job performance. The win-lose outcome may therefore not adequately resolve conflict resulting into an alternative dispute resolution mechanism of third party intervention. Lose-lose negotiation outcome may result in conflict since the agreement could be viewed by all parties as being inequitable, even though the substance of the agreement may be beyond reproach which will in turn affect performance. In as much as win-win negotiation is effective in solving conflict and improving performance, some issues or questions are simply not amenable to negotiation.

Mediation: It is the use of a neutral third-party to help disputing parties resolve dispute on their own. Mediation is a structured process with a number of procedural stages in which the mediator assists the parties in resolving their disputes. The mediator and the parties follow a specific set of protocols that require everyone involved to be working together. According to Amegashie (2010), a mediator will not resolve the dispute, but will help facilitate a discussion between parties in conflict with an aim of finding a solution. It is a voluntary process in

which an impartial person (the mediator) helps with communication between the parties which will allow them to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. Mediation is often the next step if negotiation proves unsuccessful.

Modern organisations are dynamic and complex, made up of people with increasingly diverse backgrounds, opinions, values and expectations about work and many disputes could potentially be settled without the need to pursue a formal grievance procedure.

Arbitration

Workplace conflict is described as the process of discord that occurs when goals, interest or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and frustrate the other parties attempt to achieve objectives in an organization. It is a communication process and an inevitable consequence of transactional relationship manifesting in disagreement and dissonance with and between individuals and groups in the work environment Parties that fail to resolve their disputes in mediation will often seek arbitration. Unlike in mediation, in arbitration, the arbiter makes a decision resolving the dispute. Arbitration will always bring an end to disputes as long as it is binding, meaning that both parties are required to comply with the decision (Kazimoto, 2013). However, unlike mediation, many arbitrations end up with winners and losers. It may be chosen by parties before the conflict arises (private arbitration) or after conflicts arise (judicial arbitration) as an alternative to litigation before national courts.

Organizational Performance

There are many increasing trends in organisational performance. However, this research work seeks to examine whether employee performance is influenced by conflict resolution in Ghana Education Service. Researchers have different opinions about what performance is. Organisational performance continues to be a litigious issue in the management research circles. Organizational performance is the organization's ability to accomplish its goals by using resources in an effective and efficient manner (Daft, 2000).

We can put organizational performance as the actual output or result of an organization as measured against its intended output that is goals and objectives. Performance should not be confused with productivity. According to Ricardo (2001), productivity is a ratio depicting the volume of work completed in a given amount of time. Performance is a broader indicator that could include productivity as well as quality, consistency, effectiveness, efficiency and other factors.

Performance Management

According to Gilbert and Ivancevich (2000), performance refers to the act of performing or carrying into execution or recognizable action, achievement or accomplishment in the undertaking of a duty. Performance is a means of getting better results from the whole organization or team or individuals within it by understanding and managing performance within an agreed frame work of planned goals, standards and competence requirements. Performance is the accumulated end results of all the organization's work processes and activities (Santos & Brito, 2012). It is about how effectively an organisation transforms inputs into outputs

(Robbins, 2009) and comprises the actual output or results as measured against its intended outputs.

Organizational performance is one of the most important constructs in management research (Trade, 2000). Continuous performance is the objective of any organization because only through this, can organization grow and progress. Moreover, knowing the determinants of organizational performance is important especially in the context of the current economic crises because it enables the identification of those factors that should be treated with an increased interest in order to improve performance. Performance measurement estimates the parameters under which programmes, investments, and acquisitions are reaching the target results (Perez, 2007). This study will adopt the definition according to Trade (2000), that most performance measures could be grouped into six general categories effectiveness, efficiency, cost, quality, innovation, timeliness and productivity. Therefore, organizational performance is measured using some of these parameters.

Effectiveness is a process characteristic indicating the degree to which the process output (work product) conforms to the requirements (Robbins, 2009). Effectiveness of teams can be hindered by conflict arising from unresolved issues within the group. An individual in the group may encounter some frustrations when a certain obstacle is in the way of him/her achieving his/her goal, thereby creating what is called frustration (Luthans, 2008). According to Luthans (2008), the negative consequences of frustration ultimately affect the morale of individuals working with the affected individual and their performance could be compromised.

Efficiency is a process characteristic indicating the degree to which the process produces the required output at minimum resource cost (Robbins, 2009). In the organizational context, conflict may arise in departments due to the functional nature of their tasks if they are interdependent on each other for service delivery. To Ibid (2013), efficiency may be hampered if one department delays in meeting deadlines which in turn affects all the departments that rely on it.

Cost involves measuring the expenses of a firm's operations in monetary terms taken into account the return on investment to the business (Hitt, 2006). Costs can have an impact on the financial performance of an organisation, especially if the expenses incurred surpass the budget resulting to conflict amongst the shareholders. Maher (2002) argues that it is typical for shareholders views(s) regarding financial performance to result in different statements in an annual general meeting.

Quality is the degree to which a product or a service meets customers' requirements and expectations (Robbins, 2009). Unresolved conflict may prevent an organisation from achieving its goals, and compromise on the quality of service given (Hitt, 2006). For instance, a survey of global employers Dison, (2005) revealed that the quality of customer service was improved when the interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts of the customer service officers was managed. This, in Ghana Education Service will mean the quality of results obtained by West Africa Secondary School Examination Certificate (WASSCE).

Timeliness measures whether or not a unit of work is done correctly and on time. Criteria must be established to define what constitutes timeliness for a given

unit of work (Norreklit, 2003). Conflict management may prevent wasted time and help an organisation achieve its goals (Hitt, 2006).

Innovation consists of institutions developing new products or new production process to better perform their operations, in which case the new product could be based on the new processes (Tufano, 2002; Lawrence, 2010). Importantly, the relevance of innovation keeps advancing as the world becomes a Global village. The need to become visible to the world has made many organizational performance (Scott, 2004). A study on the Bank of China, during 2006-2007, (Yin & Zhengheng, 2010) established that innovation had an impact on a firm's performance. So the question is how innovative are staff of GES in achieving set targets.

Productivity refers to the value added by the process divided by the value of the labour and capital consumed safety which measures the overall health of the organisation and the working environment of its employees (Trade, 2000). Organizational conflict has a negative impact on the motivation and productivity of employees (Ibid, 2013). Therefore, the performance of an organisation must be properly managed to obtain positive results and improve productivity and performance (Robbins, 2009). For this study, performance will be measured on quality, innovation and timeliness.

Different meanings have been ascribed to the term performance being it at the individual level or the organisational level. Performance is the execution of a given task(s) to actualize the objectives of an organisation. Although many proponents have written about performance measurement there has not been a

commonly acceptable format for measuring performance. Organisations use any only when they deem it more appropriate and beneficial.

The understanding gathered from the above shows that conflict and performance are positively related most of the times, if not all the times. The extent to which disagreement in organisations hampers or supports organisational performance has narrowly been brought to bear. It is therefore imperative for many establishments to look into how conflict emanates and how best actions can be taken to prevent their occurrence or resolve them when they occur.

Concept of Performance

Literatures have also supported the concept of performance with proven reviews. Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sager (2013) proposed that performance is a behaviour exhibited or something done by the employee for organisational performance and is evaluated based on the results of operations, turnover and efficiency as well as the effectiveness of services. Similarly, Hargadon and Fuller (2018) defined job performance as, “behaviours or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organization”. Therefore, job performance is not a single unified concept but rather a concept with several perspectives comprising more than one type of behaviour.

Furthermore, Layard, Nickell and Jackman (2010) posit that employees who have acquired enough skills work independently and they do not perform well in circumstances where autonomy is not guaranteed. Aguinis (2009) was also of the view that performance is about behaviour or what employees do and

not what employees produce or the outcomes of their work. Blanchard and Witts (2009) suggested that when health institutions fail to take the time to actively recognize and reward good performance, the desire for the job declines with every unrecognised success.

According to Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard and Bhargava (2012) when employees actively partake in decision making and contribute in the implementation of changes that affect them, they implement these changes faster with higher performance compared to employees who do not partake in these alterations but are only informed and instructed to perform them. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) suggest that performance is a matter not only of what employees do; neither is it only about what they attain, but how they achieve it as well.

Measurement of Employee performance

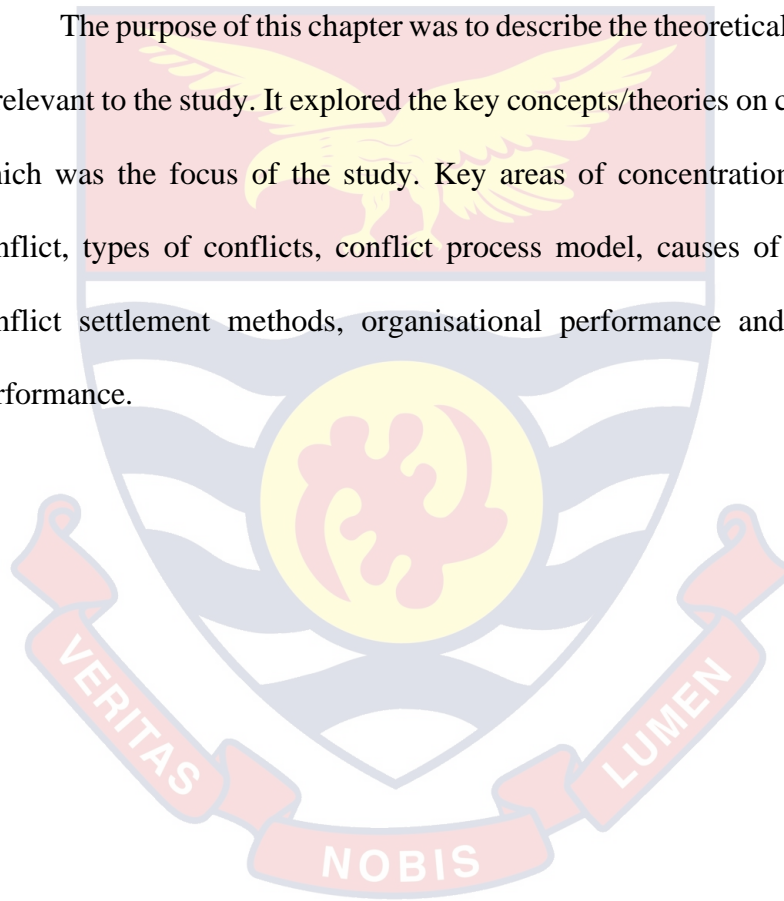
Simões, Gomes and Yasin (2011) in their work 'Performance Measurement and stakeholder Perceptions: Assessing performance through the Dimensions of Stakeholder Expectations' constructed a criterion for measuring performance of workers. Some of their performance measurement factors include work output, punctuality to work, quality of work, loyalty to the service, responsiveness to clients and work efficiency. It is to note that, these factors serve as the basis for measuring workers' performance in a study by (Prytherch, Kagoné, Aninanya, Williams, Kakoko, Leshabari & Sauerborn, 2013).

Similarly, a study conducted by Irimu *et al.* (2014) on "factors influencing performance of workers at a Kenyan Court" used some of these factors to measure

the performance of the workers. In their study, they used work output, work efficiency and quality of work as measurement of performance factors. In view of this, the study also adopted these measurement indicators in bid to measure performance of Gomoa Senior High Technical School in the study area.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the theoretical framework which is relevant to the study. It explored the key concepts/theories on conflicts resolution which was the focus of the study. Key areas of concentration were concept of conflict, types of conflicts, conflict process model, causes of conflict, types of conflict settlement methods, organisational performance and factors affecting performance.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

A research method is a systematic plan for conducting research. It varies by the source from which information is obtained, how that information is sampled, and the types of instruments that are used in data collection. Moreover, research methods vary by whether they collect qualitative data, quantitative data or both. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of conflict resolution on performance of staff in Ghana Education Service.

This chapter focused on the approach to the research work and also it enumerates the steps involved in answering the research questions so as to achieve the objectives of the study. It discussed the methods considered most appropriate for the research work. This comprised research design, research approach, population for the study, sampling procedure, data type, data source, data collection, data processing and analysis.

Research Design

According to De Vaus (2001), research design refers to the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of the data. Research problem determine the type of design a researcher should use.

The study employed the descriptive design to conduct the research work. According to Kothari (2004), descriptive research design seeks to establish factors

associated with certain occurrences, outcomes, conditions or types of behaviours. The purpose, for which this research design was used was to gather comprehensive and fact-based information that demonstrate the current phenomenon. Because among the research objectives were to find out causes, effect of conflict and conflict resolution of conflict in Ghana Education Service, it was most appropriate to obtain detailed information so as to ensure valid analysis.

However, descriptive research design has undergone several criticisms for its narrow scope and limited analysis of events, concepts and theories to only what they are without looking at in-depth components of such concepts (Creswell, 2012). Despite the shortfalls of this design, I find it most suitable for the study because data is fairly easy to obtain and interpret through the use of descriptive statistics.

In addition, quantitative research uses objective measurement and statistical analysis of numeric data to understand and explain a phenomenon. The rationale for adopting the descriptive (quantitative) design was because of the test of effect and relationship with respect to conflict resolution and performance.

Study Area

The research work was carried out in Gomoa Dawurampong which is located in Gomoa West District in Central region of Ghana. Its district capital is Apam, and has a population of about 5,000 with main occupation being farming and petty trading. Fante is the major language of the people in this community. It has four (4) public basic schools, three (3) private basic schools and one senior high school, one magistrate court and a big market center.

Source; (Gomoa West Archive, 2012).

Population for the Study

The targeted population for this study comprised staff of Gomoa Senior High/Technical School. The school has a staff strength of 150.

Source: (Staff Attendance Register)

Sampling Procedure

A sample is a subset of a population that has been selected and contains the characteristics of a population (Nesbary, 2007). The concept of sample arises from the inability of the researcher to test all the individuals in a given population. The sample must be a representative of the population from which it was drawn and have good size to warrant statistical analysis. The sampling technique used for this study was a simple random sampling technique because every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. This is the most common and highly recommended sampling technique. The entire sample size was one hundred and twenty (120) because it is impossible to get all staff to administer the questionnaire at a time. The selection of the sample was based on chance, readiness, and availability of the respondents.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are the tools used to collect information as part of a research. The validity and reliability of data collection and instruments is of extreme importance to any sample survey. It was therefore imperative to properly design data collection instrument that will help arrive at reliable and valid conclusion.

There are a number of methods for data collection. These include interview, questionnaire, direct observation, participant observation and physical artifacts. A number of factors will be considered in deciding which instrument of data collection should be employed for the study. Data for the survey was sourced from both the primary and secondary sources. Since the research approach is quantitative in nature, structured questionnaires will serve the best means of gathering the primary data. The secondary data aspect is in relation with information sourced from books, articles, and other relevant documents which are highly related to the subject matter under study. This category of data form most part of the review of related literature and a few for justifying the choice of certain decisions taken.

The main objective of the use of the questionnaire was to translate the researcher's information needs into a set of particular statements that respondents were willing and able to answer. It was simple to administer, time saving and a lot of information could be gathered in the shortest possible time. Also, it is extremely flexible, most appropriate and could be used to gather information on almost any topic, from a large or small number of people.

The questionnaire was guided by the research objectives which forms the various sections of the questionnaire. The sections were as follows: Demographic characteristics of the respondents, causes of conflict, effect of conflict, conflict resolution and influence of conflict resolution on performance. According to Dawson (2002), there are three basic types of questionnaire items namely closed-ended, open-ended or a combination of them. The questionnaire for this study was a close ended type. Close ended contained boxes that the respondents ticked to

indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the research statement. The questionnaire was designed in a simple, comprehensible language to provide accurate, unbiased and accurate information.

Data Collection Procedures

Sullivan (2001) opined that data analysis can be the most challenging and interesting aspect of research. It refers to deriving meaning from the data that has been collected in a study. Data analysis assumes many forms. Quantitative data analysis involves the use of statistical methods to assemble, classify, analyze and summarize the data to make it more meaningful. The data collected was changed to an appropriate form for manipulation and analysis to be possible.

At the end of the entire data collection process, data were coded and processed using computer based Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software due to its ease of use to communicate the research findings. Plausible checks were conducted and inconsistent data cleared appropriately. Descriptive statistical tools from the SPSS were employed to obtain mean, frequency tables and percentages of the variables used in the study as well as multiple regression analysis. Descriptive statistics, because it helped to describe, show and summarize the large amount of data collected in a meaningful manner. The data was then presented in the form of frequencies and percentages, using tables and figures for easier interpretation and a better understanding of the research findings. Correlation was used to describe the link between the dependent (performance) and independent (conflict resolution) variables.

Ethical Issues

Much attention was given to ethical issues when collecting the data from the field. Notable ones include informed consent, confidentiality etc. With regards to informed consent the researcher identified himself to the respondents in order to avoid any false impression that may have been created in the minds of the respondents. In addition, the purpose of the study was explained for respondents to have a better understanding of the study. Last but not least, the nature of the questionnaire was made known to them so as to have a clear picture and idea on how to answer the questions and fully participate in the study.

With issues of confidentiality, respondents were informed and assured that the information given by them will purely be used for the purpose for which the study is conducted. Also, they will be informed that information given will be available for other people for any reason.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methods of the study. The proposed research design was the descriptive research design which seeks to answer the research problem under study. The study population was drawn from staff of Gomoa Senior High/Technical School which has a total of 150 staff and a sample size 100. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Data collected was processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) through which data was converted into frequencies and percentages and presented in tables. Correlation was used to describe the link between the dependent (performance) and independent (conflict resolution) variables.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter focuses on results of the study. This research was to find out the influence of conflict resolution on staff performance in Ghana Education Service. The study was conducted through the use of descriptive design to establish factors that are associated with certain occurrences, outcome, conditions or types of behaviours. Data collection was made possible through self-administered questionnaire to secure primary data form respondents. Data collected was later coded and processed using computer based Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistical tools from the SPSS were used to obtain frequency tables, percentages, etc. of variables as used in the study.

The questionnaire which consisted of four Sections; Section “A”, Section” B”, Section “C” and Section “D” were used to collect data to answer the research questions. However, the data collected were presented in themes in line with the research objectives: causes of conflict; effects of conflicts on staff performance; tool/mechanisms for conflict resolution; and influence of conflict resolution on staff performance respectively.

The sample size estimated for this research work was 120 teaching and non-teaching staff but the actual sample used was 90. The reduction in the sample size is as a result of the double track educational policy introduced at the SHS Level of education. All teachers were not at post during the administration of the questionnaire. The characteristics of the respondents cannot be given because the

questionnaire was prepared such that it did not capture demographic features of respondents. The various themes that constitute the research work are described in the following paragraphs.

Causes of Conflict

This study sought to find out the causes of conflict in Ghana Education Service (GES). It has two items including how conflicts occur at workplaces and second item talks about the common causes of conflict.

Table 1: Frequency of occurrence of conflicts at their work places.

Frequency of occurrence	of frequency	Percentages
Very Often	3	4.0%
Often	17	22.7%
Sometimes	51	68.0%
Never	2	2.7%
Total	74	100%

Source: Field Study (2019)

Table 1 shows the occurrence of conflict in the areas of the respondents. The total respondents were 74 but the valid responses were 73 representing 98.7% and other response was 1.3%. The outcome of the respondents are as follows Very often (3,4%), Often (17,22.7%), Sometimes (51,68%), Never (2,2.7%) and non-respondent (1,1.3%). The outcome and percentage in the table above shows that conflicts “sometimes” (51,68%) do occur at work places.

Table 2: Common causes of conflict

Cause of conflict	Frequency	Percent for Yes	Percent for No
Inadequate reward system	45	60.8%	33.8%
Inadequate training/L- Materials	25	33.8%	66.2%
Lack of recognition	49	66.2%	33.8%
Absence of study leave	4	5.4%	94.6%
Lack of development opportunities	24	32.4%	67.6%
Workers struggling over common resources	26	35.1%	64.9%
Job boundaries & unclear responsibility	35	47.3%	52.7%
Communication breakdown	50	67.3%	32.7%
Lack of skills	3	4.1%	95.9%
Perception	29	39.2%	60.8%
Interdependence	16	21.6%	78.4%
Poor conflict settlement	38	54.4%	55.6%
Personal problems	15	20.3%	79.7%

Source: Field study (2019)

Table 2 shows the respondents responses on the common causes of conflict and there were about thirteen (13) causes. Yes response are for all the respondents who tick /support for a particular conflicts and “No” for causes of conflict not tick by the respondents’ “yes” Responses that favor the causes of conflict are classified as major courses (50%) and the “No” responses are the minor causes since is below 50%. The table above shows about four (4) major causes of conflict among the thirteen (13) causes including Inadequate reward system (60.8%), Lack of recognition 66.2%), Communication breakdown (67.6%), Poor conflict settlement (51.4%) and the minor causes of conflict includes Inadequate teaching and learning materials (66.2%), Absence of Study leave (94.6%), Lack of development opportunities (67.6), Workers struggling over common resources (64.9%), when job boundaries and task responsibilities are unclear (52.7%), Lack of skills and abilities (95.6%), Perception (60.8%), Interdependence (78.4%), and Personal problems (79.7%). From the table above, it is very palpable that Lack of skills (95.9%) and absence of study leave (94.6%) are considered as not common causes of conflict but all the major causes of conflict are the main causes of conflict in Ghana Education Service.

Effects of Conflict on Staff Performance

The objective two looked at the effects of conflict on staff performance. Regression analysis was done where the linearity and the relationship between the two variables were analysed with conflict as the independent variable and staff performance as the dependent variable. Table 3 gave the model summary of the output and it displayed the R, R squared, adjusted R squared, and the standard error.

R is the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient which indicates the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the dependent variable (staff performance) and the independent variable (conflict). According to Schober, Boer and Schwarte (2018), the strength of correlation coefficient ranges from no (0) relationship to perfect (1) relationship. A correlation coefficient ranging from .1 to .3 is considered very weak, between .31 to .39 as weak, .40 to .49 as moderate, .50 to .70 as strong and between .71 to .99 as strongest.

Hence from Table 3, conflict and staff performance are negatively correlated, and the strength of the relationship is moderate at (-.485). The R Square explains the amount of variation that exists in the dependent variable (staff performance) caused by the independent variable (conflict). Therefore, the result further indicates that (23.5%) variation in the staff performance (as dependent variable) is explained by the independent variable (conflict) and the remaining (77.5%) is explained by the residual factors (other factors not captured by the model). The implication is that, an increase in conflict would result in a moderate decrease in staff performance.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-.485 ^a	.235	.231	6.46052

a. Predictors: (Constant), Conflict

Source: Field survey (2019)

Table 3 is the ANOVA table which provides the test significance for R and R² using the F-statistic. The F statistic is the regression mean square (MSR) divided

by the residual mean square (MSE). If the significance value of the F statistic is small (smaller than say 0.05) then the independent variables do a good job explaining the variation in the dependent variable. In this analysis, the ρ -value is well below .05 ($\rho = .000$). Therefore, it can be concluded that, the R and R^2 between conflict and staff performance is statistically significant.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

		Sum of				
Model		Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2293.536	1	2293.536	54.950	.000 ^b
	Residual	7471.160	179	41.738		
	Total	9764.696	180			

a. Dependent Variable: Staff performance

b. predictors: (constant), conflict

Source: Field survey (2019)

The Table 4 also provides information that is useful for understanding the regression equation. Under the column marked unstandardized coefficient and sub-column B, the numerical value for the first row, labelled (constant), is the value for the intercept (a) in the regression equation. The numerical value on the second row, labelled as conflict in this case (representing the independent variable), is the value for the slope (b) for the regression equation. Based on these results, the researcher can report the following regression equation, predicting staff performance based on the conflict at the workplace.

$$Y (\text{Staff performance}) = 29.992 - 0.591X (\text{Conflict})$$

Hence, taking the values for the slope and the intercept in the resulting regression equation, the researcher can make the following assertions: According to the intercept, when there are no conflict, thus, when conflict is zero, staff performance will be at 29.992, and according to the slope, for any conflict, there will be an decrease in staff performance by (59.1%). Therefore, conflict has a moderate significant effect on staff performance.

Table 5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	29.992	2.395		12.525	.000
	FRW	-.591	.080	.485	7.413	.000

a. dependent variable: Staff performance

Source: Field survey (2019)

This finding was in line with a study by Arianto and Syihabudhin, (2018) who found out that conflict at the workplace indirectly have a significant negative effect on staff performance. This implies that conflict invariably has a negative relationship with staff performance. Also, Chaubey (2018) examined the impact of conflict and the results were that it has a negative consequence on the performance of staff. Medis (2017) result also found out that conflict among non-executives in the logistics industry were negatively and significantly correlated with employee performance and the regression result showed that conflict is a powerful predictor of reduction in employee performance.

Tool/Mechanism for Conflict Resolution

According to Petkovic (2008), conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, establishing structures of conflict models, putting strategic measures as well as approaches in place. The models of conflict management are instruments used to assess the appropriate action required in a conflict situation.

These are the techniques employers use to resolve conflict a) Negotiation b) Compromising c) Withdrawing/avoiding d) Smoothing/ obliging and e) Arbitration.

Table 6: Tools/Mechanisms for Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution	Total Respondent	Percentages	Mean
Negotiation	48	64.9%	0.69
Compromise	20	27%	0.27
Withdraw/avoiding	5	6.8%	0.07
Smoothing/obliging	3	4.1%	0.04
Arbitration	12	16.2%	0.16
Average Mean			0.246

N=74 each. Source: Field of Study (2019)

Table 6 shows the tools and mechanisms use by employers to handle conflicts in their Institution. Akanji (2005) says that constructively managed conflict induces a positive performance, while destructively managed conflict heats

up the work environment to bring about dislocation and polarization of the entire group with reduction in productivity and job performance. From the table conflicts resolution tools (% ,mean) are a) negotiation (64.9%,0.69), compromise (27%,0.27), withdrawing/ avoiding (6.8%,0.07), smoothing/obliging (4.1%,0.04) and arbitration (16.2%,0.16). The respondents yes responses shown in the table above indicate that negotiation (64.9%,0.69) is mostly used; following compromise (27%,0.27) and arbitration (16.2%,0.16) and smoothing/obliging (4.1%,0.04%) is the least conflict resolution tools used to settle conflict in their institutions. The average mean of the resolution tools is 0.246 and good conflict resolution tools are negotiation (0.69) and compromise (0.27) and they are mostly used as a conflict management tool in Ghana Education Service (GES). In all, negotiation is mostly used by employers to handle conflicts issues in their organization since it has highest percentage and mean. The statistics show that average (2.39) respondent agree that they are satisfied with the outcome but 31.9% respondents are neutral and they are able to determine whether they are not satisfied or dissatisfied. Negotiation is a good conflict resolution tool.

Conflict Resolution on Staff Performance

This section has two items. The first item is to whether the respondents are satisfied with conflict resolution on staff performance and second item is to find out well resolved conflict improves performance.

The study further sought to assess the influence of conflict resolution mechanisms on the performance of the respondents. This was done through the use

of multiple regression analysis which is mostly recommended for causal analysis. The results are presented on Table 7. It was discovered that there was no auto-correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable given the threshold of the Durbin-Watson criterion which was between the established threshold of not less than 1.5 and not greater than 2.5.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics		Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
						F Change	df1 df2		
1	.459	.210	.206	1.10693	.210	46.4	5 871	.000	1.844
	a					31			

a. Predictors: (Constant), arbitration, withdrawing, smoothing, negotiation, compromising

b. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

Source: Field study (2019)

The results further showed that there was a weak positive correlation between the predictors on one hand and employee performance on the other hand ($r=0.459$). It thus shows that when the predictors-conflict resolution as measured by arbitration, withdrawing, smoothing, negotiation and compromising are positively rated, then workers are willing to respond positively by improving their level of performance. on the contrary, it can be adduced that lower levels of conflict resolution mechanism are associated with lower levels of employee performance. The predictive capacity of the model was measured with the r-square value. The r-square is the most common effect size measure in path models (Garson, 2016).

Hock and Ringle (2006) further prescribed some tentative cut-off points for describing R-square are as follows: thus, r-square results above 0.67 (Substantial), 0.33 (Moderate) and 0.19 (Weak).

The co-efficient of determination was used to measure the effect of conflict resolution mechanism on employee performance in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School. It was discovered that the predictors (arbitration, withdrawing, smoothing, negotiation, compromising) collectively accounted for 21.0% positive variance in the performance of teachers in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School when all other factors that can cause changes in the performance of teachers in the school were statistically significant ($r\text{-square}=0.210$). Thus, it can be concluded that conflict resolution mechanism accounts for a weak positive improvement in employee performance in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School. It thus also shows that other factors that were not captured in the model accounts for 89.0 variance in employee performance. This results is not conclusive since there is the need to assess whether this variance in employee performance as accounted for by variance in alternative conflict resolution mechanisms is statistically significant or not where such a case would conclude that the variance in employee performance was due to chance and not the scientific interaction among the factors in the regression model.

Table 8: ANOVA

		Sum of	Mean			
Model		Squares	Df	Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	284.460	5	56.892	46.431	.000 ^b
	Residual	1067.237	871	1.225		
	Total	1351.697	876			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), arbitration, withdrawing, smoothing, negotiation, compromising

Source: Field study (2019)

The results also provided information relating to the how the variance in employee performance as accounted for by the variance in conflict resolution mechanism was statistically substantiated. This was found in ANOVA results as illustrated in Table. It was discovered that the weak positive variance in employee performance as accounted for by changes in conflict resolution mechanism was statistically significant ($p=0.0001$: $p<0.05$). It is therefore conclusive that conflict resolution mechanism is a significant positive predictor of performance of teachers in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School. This finding supports some previous empirical studies that also concluded that conflict resolution is a significant positive predictor of employee performance (Hossain, 2017; Olang,2017; Ndulue & Ekechukwu, 2016; Luthans, 2008; Olu & Dupe, 2008; Kazimoto, 2013; Rahim, 2002; Robbins, 2009; Yin & Zhengheng, 2010; Annan-Prah et al., 2015).

Table 9: Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.952	.152		6.260	.000
	Negotiation	.153	.039	.136	3.928	.000
	Compromising	.002	.043	.002	.043	.965
	Withdrawing	.064	.023	.090	2.819	.005
	Smoothing	.217	.040	.185	5.416	.000
	Arbitration	.259	.036	.250	7.095	.000

Source: Field study (2019)

The study further sought to assess the contributions of the predictors (arbitration, withdrawing, smoothing, negotiation, compromising) to predicting the significant positive variance in employee performance in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School. It was discovered that arbitration was the strongest significant contribution to predicting the variance in employee performance (Beta=0.250; $p < 0.0001$; $p < 0.05$) when the effect of other variables in the model were statistically controlled for. Similarly smoothing also made a statistically significant positive contribution to predicting the variance in employee performance (Beta=0.185; $p < 0.0001$; $p < 0.05$) when the effect of other variables in the model were statistically controlled for.

Again, it was found that withdrawing also made a statistically significant positive contribution to predicting the variance in employee performance (Beta=0.090; $p < 0.0001$; $p < 0.05$) when the effect of other variables in the model were statistically controlled for. In the same fashion, it was found that negotiation

also made a statistically significant positive contribution to predicting the variance in employee performance (Beta=0.002; $p < 0.0001$; $p < 0.05$) when the effect of other variables in the model were statistically controlled for. On the other hand, compromising failed to significantly contribute to the significant but weak positive variance in employee performance in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School (Beta=0.136) when the effect of other factors in the model was statistically controlled for. Mathematically, it was found that the estimated regression model was as follows:

$$\text{Employee Performance} = 0.952 + (\text{Negotiation} * 0.153) + (\text{Withdrawing} * 0.064) + (\text{Smoothing} * 0.217) + (\text{Arbitration} * 0.259)$$

From the perspective of unstandardized beta, it can thus be concluded that a unit increase in favourable score for arbitration will cause 0.259 increase in employee performance at Gomoa Senior High-Technical School and a unit fall in favourable score of arbitration will equally cause 0.259 fall in employee performance in the same school. Similar conclusions can be drawn for the remaining indicators that made statistically significant positive variance in employee performance except that their respective thresholds varied: Smoothing=0.217; withdrawing=0.064; and negotiation=0.153.

The overall implication of this finding is that among the conflict resolution mechanisms that cause improvement in employees in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School include negotiation strategy, withdrawing strategy, smoothing strategy and arbitration strategy. Compromising on the other hand fails to improve the level of employee performance at the said school. This is because its

contribution to predicting the statistically significant positive but weak could be attributed to change. It is therefore important for management of the school to rely strongly on arbitration and smoothing in resolving conflicts that may occur in the workplace. Management should encourage workers in the school to continue the adoption of negotiation and withdrawing as means to handling and resolving workplace conflict and they would eventually yield positive results regarding improvement of performance.

Reliance on compromising as a means to handling and resolving workplace conflict may not yield the expected results and would therefore translate to hampering employee performance. This may be due to the fact that conflicting parties are usually not satisfied with the issues that are to be compromised when conflicts ensue hence not producing any desirable outcome. The influence of negotiation has been underscored by some empirical studies (Olang, 2017; Foldes, Cullen, Wisecarver, Ferro, Jadallah, & Garven, 2011) that collectively held the negotiation as a means to handling workplace conflict causes industrial harmony which eventually leads to improved organizational performance. Again, it must be noted that other studies have underscored the essence of alternative dispute resolution in creating harmonious industrial relationships among employees (Ndulue & Ekechukwu, 2016; Olu & Dupe, 2008; Olang, 2017), hence recommendations for their usage in workplace settings particularly among teachers in Ghana.

Determine the relationship between conflict resolution and the staff performance

Table 10: Correlation relationship between conflict resolution and staff performance.

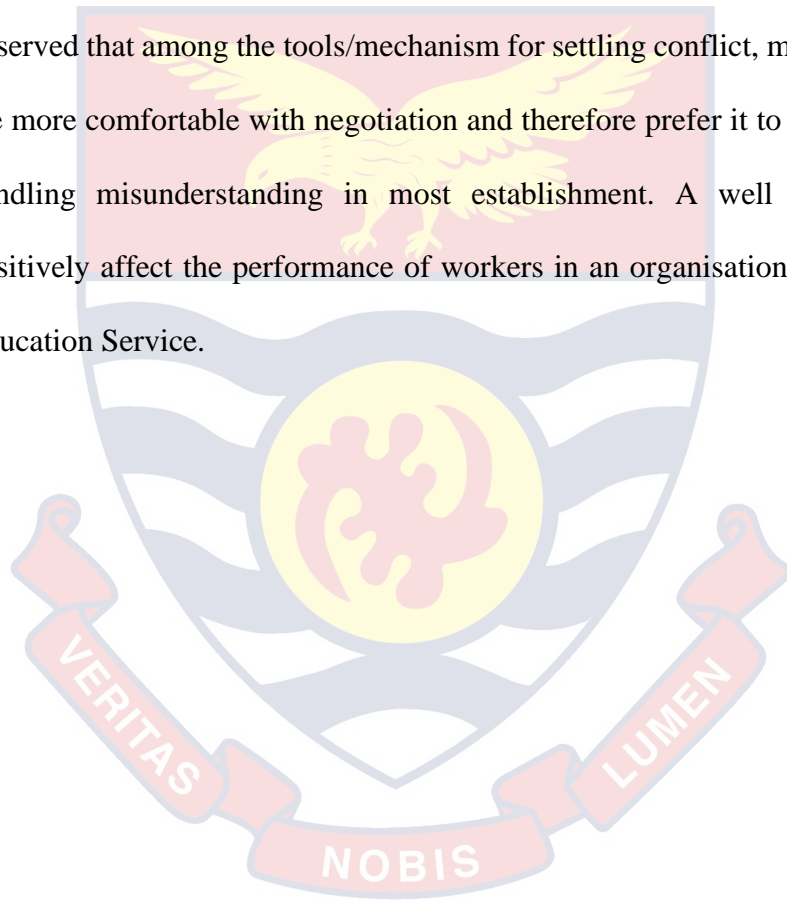
Items	Staff Performance	Relationship
Negotiation	0.031	Positive
Compromising	-0.106	Negative
Withdrawing/avoiding	0.111	Positive
Smoothing/obliging	0.039	Positive
Arbitration	0.083	Positive

Source: Field study (2019)

The understanding gathered from the above table shows that conflict and performance are positively related most of the times, if not all the times. Table 6 gives brief type of relationship between the conflict resolution and its impact on staff performance. There is a positive relationship between staff performance and these conflict resolution tools: negotiation (0.031), withdrawing/avoiding (0.111), smoothing/obliging (0.039) and arbitration (0.083). The positive relationship means that staff performance increases with the conflict resolution. But there is a negative relationship between staff performance and compromising. The negative relationship means that compromising as a conflict resolution and staff performance cannot increase or decrease at the same time.

Chapter Summary

The discussions above clearly depict that conflict really occurs in our organisational settings and therefore needs to be given a greater attention. The most common causes of conflict per the study are inadequate reward system, lack of recognition, communication break-down and poor conflict settlement and to a large extent negatively affect the performance of workers in organisations. Also, it was observed that among the tools/mechanism for settling conflict, most of the workers are more comfortable with negotiation and therefore prefer it to the other tools for handling misunderstanding in most establishment. A well resolved conflict positively affect the performance of workers in an organisation especially Ghana Education Service.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, the findings, conclusions that have been arrived at and recommendations. This research looks to achieve the objectives of the influence of conflict resolution on the staff performance in Ghana Education. It also identifies some of the conflict resolution techniques used by most employers to handle conflict issues in their institution. The chapter also presents areas for further research which were identified by the researcher during his research work.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of the study is to find out the influence of conflict resolution on the staff performance in Ghana Education Service. A lot of conflict mechanisms are employed by employers to handle conflict matters. The research study falls under quantitative research method using descriptive analysis including frequencies and mean. The study was guided by the research objectives including causes of conflict, effects of conflicts on staff performance, tool/mechanisms for conflict resolution and influence of conflict resolution on staff performance. Therefore, questionnaire was used as the major tool for data collection. However, in order to achieve all the objectives, secondary data was also used. These are the findings from the research study:

The findings indicated that conflict sometimes do occur at their workplaces. Among the common causes of conflict, the major causes of conflict are inadequate

reward system, lack of recognition, communication breakdown and poor conflict settlement. The minor causes of conflict are inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of development opportunities, workers struggling over common resources, perception, interdependence personal problems and when job boundaries and task are unclear. But the findings show that absence of study leave and lack of skills are too extreme to be factored as a cause of conflict in Ghana Education Service.

The findings revealed that conflict really affect the performance of staff and so appropriate resolutions; negotiation, compromising and arbitration must be employed to deal with its occurrence. It indicated that whenever there is conflict staff performance reduces or remain stagnant but few of the staff experience improvement. It also shows that staff are some- how affected by conflict. The findings revealed that the most common conflict resolution mechanism / tools used by many employers typically GES are negotiation following compromise and arbitration.

Finding shows that employees are satisfied with outcome of the conflict resolution process used by their employers. It also indicates that there is a positive relationship between conflict resolution tools and the staff performance except compromising which shows a negative relationship with the performance of staff.

Conclusion

Conflict is endemic to all social life; it is an inevitable part of living because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation. Due to the inevitable nature of conflict, heads and staff in Ghana Education Services should prepare to meet it and develop the conflict procedures and management to handle them as they occur. These major causes of conflict such as inadequate reward system, lack of recognition, communication breakdown and poor conflict settlement in organizational setting. This brings conflict to existence and appropriate measures must be established to mitigate conflict and its negative effects on the performance of workers. Conflicts are not absolutely bad but if care is not taken it affects the level of staff performance in our educational setting.

The information the researcher gathered reveal that conflict resolutions that best help to mitigate conflict are negotiation, compromise, and arbitration. The expectation of the study was to conclude that conflict is absolutely negative and reduces performance but I realized that conflict has some positives and can improve performance if appropriate mechanisms are put in place.

The study has created the awareness of conflict and possible resolutions to manage the conflict and its possible effects. Heads of education have understood reward system, good recognition, effective communication and good conflict settlement will help to reduce the chance of conflict in their institutions and lead to overall staff performance prone to good and quality education system.

Recommendations

Recognizing conflict is very critical and equally important to the success of an organization. Based on the findings the following recommendations have been suggested:

It was discovered that conflict resolution causes a statistically significant positive variance in employee performance but among the strongest predictors are arbitration, smoothing and negotiation hence relying on these predictors can have significantly improvement in worker performance hence their preferred recommendation. Relying on compromising would rather not cause any significant improvement in workers' performance hence it is not managerially prudent for teachers and management in Gomoa Senior High-Technical School to rely on this strategy (Compromising) if they are to improve the level of employee performance.

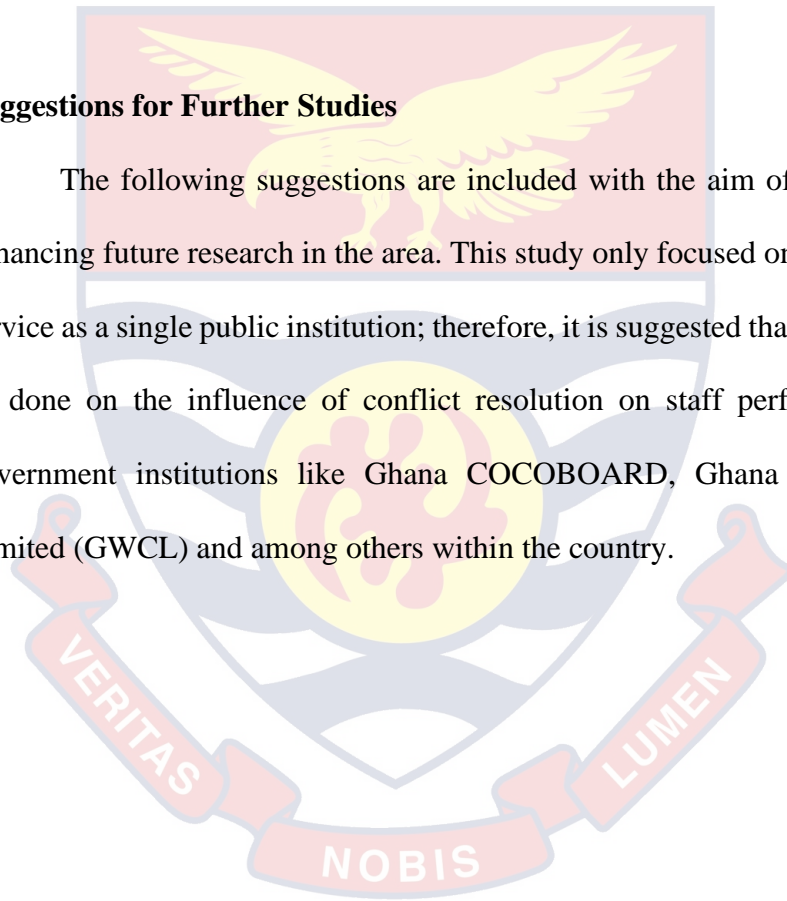
Ghana Education Service should pay attentions to the major possible causes of conflict and find alternative solutions to deal with them when they occur. This suggestion was premised on the fact that out of a total number of seventy-four respondents, (57,78.1%) agreed that conflict affect their performance.

Managers or leaders of organisations should use negotiation, compromise and arbitration as conflict management resolution mechanisms or tools. This suggestion is based on the research findings which indicated that disputing parties resort to mostly, thus 64.9%, 27% and 16.2% respectively. These tools also give best results by improving employee's performance and their satisfaction with the conflict resolution tools employed.

Appropriate reward system, good communication between employees and employers and good conflict settlement procedures must be established in the organizational setting. The finding showed that among the common causes of conflicts in organisations, inadequate reward system, communication breakdown and poor conflict settlement accounted for 60.8%, 67.3% and 54.4% respectively for yes response.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The following suggestions are included with the aim of encouraging and enhancing future research in the area. This study only focused on Ghana education service as a single public institution; therefore, it is suggested that similar study can be done on the influence of conflict resolution on staff performance in other government institutions like Ghana COCOBOARD, Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) and among others within the country.



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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

This research is to find out your opinion on influence of conflict resolution on staff performance in Ghana Education Service. I would be very appreciative if you could spare me few minutes of your time and complete this questionnaire for me. The information provided will be used for academic purpose and I assure you that the information will be kept confidential.

Thank you.

Section A: Causes of Conflict

This section contains statements assessing the causes of conflict in Ghana Education Service. Please tick as appropriate in the brackets using a tick [].

1. Do you often encounter conflict at your workplace?
 - a. Very often []
 - b. Often []
 - c. Sometimes []
 - d. Never []

2. What are the most common causes of the conflict? (You can tick more than one answer).
 - a. Inadequate reward system []
 - b. Inadequate teaching and learning materials []
 - c. Lack of recognition []
 - d. Absence of study leave []

- e. Lack of development opportunities []
- f. Workers struggling over common resources []
- g. When job boundaries and task responsibilities are unclear []
- h. Communication breakdown []
- i. Lack of skills and abilities []
- j. Perceptions (employees and management have different perceptions of situations) []
- k. Interdependence (blaming a co-worker when something goes wrong) []
- l. Poor conflict settlement procedure []
- m. Personal problems []

Section B: Tool/Mechanisms for Conflict Resolution

3. What technique does your employer use to resolve conflicts when they occur?
- a. Negotiation (decision-making process in which two parties talk with one another to resolve issues) []
 - b. Compromising (searching for solution that bring some degree of satisfaction to both) []
 - c. Withdrawing/avoiding (refusal to deal with the conflict by ignoring it) []
 - d. Smoothing/obliging (it is an appeasing approach of emphasizing areas of agreement while avoiding areas of disagreement) []

- e. Arbitration (disputing parties agree ahead of time to accept decisions of an arbiter) []

SECTION C: Performance Indicators

Respondents would be asked to indicate their level of performance with regards to each of the following statements on the level of performance as a result of conflict at your workplace. The responses would be measured numerically such that 1 = least agreement 5 = Strongly Agreement to the items.

Performance Indicators	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates effective positive client service					
Present at work always					
Demonstrates willingness to learn new skills					
Shares of information					
Develops professional working relationships with co-workers					
Maintains professional working relationships with co-workers					
Performs the full range of duties and responsibilities associated with the job					
Meets deadlines in a timely and efficient manner					
Uses resources well					
Develops and implements effective solutions					

Section D:

To what extent do you agree that these conflict resolution mechanisms are effective at resolving disputes? *1-Not at all agree; 2-Slightly agree; 3-Moderately agree; 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree*

No	Conflict resolution mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
1	Negotiation (Decision making process in which two parties talk with one another to resolve issues)					
2	Compromising (Searching for solution that bring some degree of satisfaction to both)					
3	Withdrawing/avoiding (Refusal to deal with the conflict by ignoring it)					
4	Smoothing/obliging (It is an appraising approach of emphasizing areas of agreement while avoiding areas of disagreement)					
5	Arbitration (Disputing parties agree ahead of time to accept decisions of an arbiter)					

4. Are you satisfied with the outcome of the conflict resolution process?

- a. Very satisfied []
- b. Satisfied []
- c. Neutral []
- d. Dissatisfied []

5. A well resolved conflict improves performance.

a. Strongly agree []

b. Agree []

c. Disagree []

d. Strongly disagree []

