

Examination of organizational conflict and its effects on productivity in Bongo District Hospital.

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Abstract – The study examined organizational conflict and its effect on productivity at Bongo Hospital.

Both primary and secondary sources of information were used for the reviewed of the related literature. A survey design was used for the study. A simple random sampling method was used in the selection of the respondents. The study shows that poor working conditions, lack of fringe benefits, poor human relations, non-consultations, ineffective communication and poor decentralization of decision making were some of the major causes of conflicts in organizations.

The study again indicates that improved quality of service, better human relations, less wastage in times and resource usage and better communication methods were positive effects of conflicts. Poor operations, less cooperation's, less productivity, and weak employee relationships in the organizations were the negatives effects of conflict. The study further identified, consulting with workers, putting machineries in place, effecting necessary changes, putting formal procedures for conflict prevention and enforcing strict disciplinary rules as measures to management conflict in organizations. The study again cited relationship conflict, task conflict, process conflict, interpersonal conflict and conflict of interest as forms of conflicts in organization. It was further found out that managers prefer the compromise, problem solving and dominating strategies in solving conflict. The results also shown that the conflict management strategies in place at the organization have been relatively useful in minimizing the incidence of disruptive conflicts while conflict management strategies have positive impacts on workers' productivity. The study, investigates organizational conflict and its effects on productivity in Bongo District Hospital. As the study may not be a generalization of all health organizations in Ghana, it is suggested that similar study be carried out at in other districts and regions of Ghana, in order to ascertain the authenticity of the findings to justify the implementation of the recommendations.

Keywords: conflict, organizational conflict, management.

1.1 Introduction

Conflict is a process in which one party suggests that its interests are being opposed by another party. People see only the observable aspect of conflict – angry words, actions of opposition, etc. but this is only a small part of the conflict process (Mcshanne and Glinow, 2008)

Conflict is an inseparable part of people's life. It is a perpetual gift of life, although varying views of it may be held. Some view conflict as a negative situation which must be avoided at any cost. Others also see it as a phenomenon which necessitates management. Others further consider conflict as an exciting opportunity for personal growth and use it to their best advantage. Wherever one may fall on this continuum of viewpoints concerning conflict, seldom would one expect to be in a continual state of conflict as the basis for employment (Nebgen, 1978).

According to Coser (1956), conflict is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rivals.

It is also defined from communication perspective as “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards and interference from other parties in achieving their goals (Hocker and Wilmot, 1985).

According to [Http://enWikipedia.org/wiki](http://enWikipedia.org/wiki) site (2015), organizational conflict is a state of discord or caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests between formal authority and power and those individuals and groups affected. For example there are disputes over how revenues should be divided and how long and how people should work. There are jurisdictional disagreements among individual departments and between unions and management. There are some forms of conflict involving rivalries, jealousies, personality clashes, role-definitions and struggles for power and favour. There is also conflict within individuals – between competing needs and demands – to which individuals respond in different ways.

Fleetwood(1987) says, since conflict is seemingly unavoidable, it is obviously necessary for managers to be able to recognize the source of the conflict, to view it's constructive as well as destructive potential, to learn how to manage conflict and to implement conflict resolution technique in a practical way.

Deetz and Stevenson (1986), identify three assumptions that indicate that conflict can be positive. Their belief is that management of conflict serves as a more useful conception of the process of conflict resolution. The assumptions are as follows:

- (a) Conflict is natural;
- (b) Conflict is good and necessary; and
- (c) Most conflicts are based on real differences.

That conflict is good and necessary suggested because conflict can stimulate innovative thinking when properly managed. Lacking conflicts, thought and action are performed because they are habitual. Conflicts allow an examination of necessity of these thoughts and actions. The third assumption points out that people are frequently timid in facing the reality that legitimated differences may exist and instead blame conflict on poor or non-existent communication. It may seem easier to live with unresolved misunderstanding than to face the fact that is real, fundamental differences do exist and so demand recognition and management (Deetz and Stevenson, 1986).

However, conflict in organizations is a daily occurrence because a consensus of opinion concerning rules governing the organization seldom exists among staff and line employees. They see one another as adversaries and not as partners working towards a common goal as the case should be in the organization. There are potentials for conflict in practically every decision that the manager must make. Coping efficiently and effectively with potential and bonafide conflicts is possibly one of the most important aspects of the manager's position (Nebgen, 1978).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the health care delivery situation, it is expected that the environment and the atmosphere of the place will be cordial and suitable to promote smooth administration and excellent health care delivery. Good environment and good atmosphere are expected to be set by the administration under the leadership of the hospital administrator and the staff through their leadership practices.

However, the researcher, who is also a staff at Bongo Hospital, has observed certain attitudes and actions and or inactions among the workers which border on mistrust on the part of some workers. Such negative attitudes, actions or inactions have the tendency to affect effective health care delivery in the hospital and smooth administration of the hospital.

Informal interactions the researcher had with some staff gave the impression that those negative attitudes could be traceable to mistrust among the staff.

The researcher, therefore, decided to undertake a study in organizational conflict and its effects on productivity in Bongo Hospital to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of the situation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine organizational conflict and its effects on productivity in Bongo District Hospital in the Upper East Region of Ghana.

1.3.1 The researcher attempted to:

- i. examine the forms of organizational conflict in Bongo Hospital.
- ii. determine the causes of conflict in Bongo Hospital.
- iii. determine the effects of conflict in Bongo Hospital.
- iv. examine how conflict is managed at Bongo Hospital.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study.

1. What are the types of conflict that exist in Bongo Hospital?
2. What brings about conflict in Bongo Hospital?
3. How does conflict affect the performance of workers at Bongo Hospital?
4. What ways can be used to solve conflict in Bongo Hospital?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out organizational conflict and its effects on productivity. The study was very important and would go a long way to notifying all organizations, most especially those in the health service sector on the need to ensure the effective management of conflict for their employees. The study will also add to existing store of knowledge. Thus, the findings will add to studies that have been done. It will also provide suggestions on how to reduce conflict in organization. Again, it will be a source for further research and of relevance to stakeholders and also create awareness among managers on the need to provide the needed platform to help employees deal with conflict.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

Even though, Health Service Organizations operates in some parts of the Upper East Region, this study was restricted to the Bongo District Hospital. The researcher used Bongo hospital because it was appropriate and convenient. In view of this, quite sizeable number of people troop in and out of Bongo District Hospital for health treatment. This state of affair had made the Bongo District Hospital a bit busy. The emergence of this related issue makes it imperative for the study to be delimited to Bongo District Hospital.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Financial constraints and lack of cooperation from the respondents were challenges the researcher faced. The researcher has to travel day in and day out to conduct the research which came as a cost.

Again, printing of questionnaire and the entire work itself was a problem. Materials needed for printing and its typing were costly. Bongo hospital and the entire work itself took much money which the researcher had a challenged.

Time was also a factor which the researcher faced in conducting the research work. That is the researcher could not get enough time to conduct the research because she had to combine her work with lectures and the same time carry out the research within the limited time period.

Literature review

Forms of Conflict

Different scholars have tried to classify conflict into various forms. The first classification is the relationship, task and process conflict. There is, however, considerable conceptual overlap between these different forms of conflict (Dirks and Parks, 2003).

(a) *Relationship Conflict*: This exists when there are interpersonal incompatibilities among group members, including personality clashes, tension, animosity and annoyance (Jehn, 1995). This type of conflict produces negative individual emotions, such as anxiety, mistrust, or resentment (Jehn, 1995). Frustration, tension and fear of being rejected by other team members (Murnigham and Conlon, 1991).

(b) *Task Conflicts*: These are disagreements about the content of a task and work goals, such as distribution of resources, procedures, and interpretation of facts (John, 1995). Task conflicts include differences in view points, ideas and opinions, and may coincide with animated discussions and personal excitement. Task conflict has been associated with several beneficial effects such as improving the use of debate within a team (Jehn, et al, 1999), which results in quality ideas and innovation (Amason, 1996; West & Anderson, 1996) and leads to better service delivery (Tjosvold, Dann & Wong, 1992).

Studies have shown that task conflict can also be associated with several harmful effects, such as job dissatisfaction, lack of team work (Kabanoff, 1991; Jenn, et al, 1997), and increased anxiety (Jehn, 1997)

(c) *Process Conflicts*: This refers to disagreement about how a task should be accomplished, individuals' responsibilities and delegation (Jehn & Mannix, 2001), for example when group members disagree about whose responsibility it is to complete a specific duty. Process conflict has been associated with lower morale, decreased productivity (Jehn, 1997) and poor team performance (Jehn, 1999).

2.3 Causes of Conflict

Since organizations are many and various types and size, causes of conflict are obviously many and varied. Louis Pondy, cited in Owens (1987), for example, has classified causes of conflict into three basic types:

1. *Competition for scarce resources*: when organization's resources are insufficient to meet the requirements of the subunits to do their work, there is competition for scarce resources, for example, budget allocations, assigned teaching positions, space or facilities.
2. *Autonomy*: when one party seeks to control activities "belonging" to another unit, and the second unit seeks to fend off such "interference", that is, the second unit attempts to protect its autonomy.
3. *Goal divergence*: When two parties in an organization must work together but cannot agree on how to do so, the cause of the conflict is goal divergence; for example, the headmaster of junior high school and the district director or circuit supervisor have different procedures as to how mainstreaming issues are to be settled.

Specialization. Employees tend to become specialists in a particular job or get a general knowledge of many tasks. If most employees in an organization are specialists, it can lead to conflicts because they have little knowledge of each other's job responsibilities. For instance, a receptionist at a camera repair store can say that a camera can be repaired in an hour, even though the repair will take a week. Since the receptionist does not know much about the technician's job she should not give an unrealistic deadline when the camera will be ready. This situation can lead to conflict between the receptionist and the technician (skiemman.is/en/category/view, 2015).

Common Resources. In many work situations, we have to share resources. The scarcer the resource in the organization, the greater the chance for a conflict situation. Resource scarcity leads to a conflict because each person that needs the same resources necessarily undermines others who pursue their own goals. Limited resources may include money, supplies, people or information. For example, The Redmond Washington based Software Company may dominate several markets, but its staff members still disagree over limited resources (Mcshare & Glinow, 2008).

Goal Differences. Very often, the possibility of conflict increases substantially when departments in the organization have different or incompatible goals. For instance, the goal of a computer salesperson is to sell many computers as fast as possible. The manufacturing facility may, however, be unable to meet the sales person's promises. In this case, conflict may occur as two persons have different goals (skemman.is/en/category/view, 2015).

Interdependence. The possibility of conflict usually has a tendency to increase with the level of task interdependence. When a person has to depend on someone else to complete his/her task, it becomes easier to blame a co-worker when something goes wrong. As a rule, interdependence exists when team members must interest in the process of work and receive outcomes which depend on the performance of others (skemman.is/en/category/view, 2015).

Authority Relationships. In many companies, there is an underlying tension between managers and employees because most people do not like being told what they have to do. In many organizations, managers have privileges (flexible hours, free personal long-distance calls, and longer breaks). It is observed that very strict managers often

have conflicts with their employees. Sometimes people try to engage in conflict to increase their power or status in an organization (skemman.is/em/category/view, 2015).

Roles and Expectations. A role is a behaviour that is expected from an employee. Every employee has one or more roles in the organization. These roles include such elements as job title, description of duties, and agreement between the employee and the organization. Manager– subordinate conflict can result when the subordinates role is not clearly determined and each party has a different understanding of that role (Whitlam & Cameron, 2012).

Jurisdictional Ambiguities. When the lines of responsibility in an organization are uncertain, then jurisdictional ambiguities appear. Employees have a tendency to pass unwanted responsibilities to another person when responsibilities are not clearly stated (skemman.is/en/ category/view, 2015). Ambiguous goals, jurisdictions, or performance criteria can lead to conflict. Under such ambiguity, the formal and informal rules that govern interaction break down. Ambiguous jurisdictions are often revealed when new programmes are introduced. This is a common occurrence in universities. Ambiguous performance criteria are a frequent cause of conflict between superiors and subordinates.

Bittel (1985:61) is of the view that conflict in organizations are caused by the following factors:

1. Different ideas from people. For the success of every organizational process, people bring forward different ideas about the best way to proceed. In education, politicians, policy makers and analysts, educators and consultants put forward ideas about how best to run new programs
2. Unfair allocation of resources- materials, supplies, tools, etc. since resource are not enough to go round equally hard decisions must be made about who will have what, how much and when since in such allocation, it is hard to satisfy all factions, quarrels among various organization arise.
3. Express disagreement about what is important and what is not. Disagreement over issues arise among people placed in authority of lack of information or misinformation or because individuals see things differently.
4. Changes in work flow or conditions.
5. A growing sense of mistrust among staff members.
6. Lack of stability in departmental operations.

2.4 Effects of Conflict

In everyday life, there has traditionally been emphasis on the negative, dysfunctional aspects of conflict. The definition of conflict- the existence of incompatible goals, thoughts or emotions- may portray at once that all conflicts are bad and therefore exert negative impact on organizations. However, it is not all conflicts that lead to organizational ineffectiveness. Conflicts can be positive, negative or balanced.

2.4.1 Positive Effects of Conflict

Cosier and Dalton, cited in Hellriegel et al. (1992:465), contend that conflicts in organizations can be a positive force. The creation and/or resolution of conflicts often leads to constructive problem solving. The need to resolve conflict can cause people to search for ways of changing how to do things. The conflict- resolution process is often a stimulus for positive change within an organization. The search for ways to resolve conflict may not only lead to innovation and change, but it may make changes more acceptable.

The positive effects may vary as follows:

- A. Beneficial effects on productivity- productivity can go up;
- B. Production of quality products on time – better relationship are established;
- C. Increase sensitivity to others;
- D. Development of better communication methods;
- E. Constructive organizational change;
- F. Adoption of more effective controls;
- G. Drawing up of better job descriptions and expectations;
- H. The problems of groupthink can reduce if the conflict takes the form of one or more dissenting opinions.

People in an organization may come to quite different conclusions on what is fair and ethical in specific situations. The occurrence of conflict encourages people to work out their differences, participate in developing an ethical

and fair organization and deal directly with injustices.

The argument that conflict can be functional rests mainly on the idea that it promotes necessary organizational changes (Johns, 1988). One advocate of this position puts it this way:

This means that for organizations to survive, they must adapt to their environments. This adaptation requires changes that may be stimulated through conflict. For example, think about a new program in educational technology that relies heavily upon government funding and consistent turn out of materials that are needed by schools. Under severe government underfunding, the program can only survive if it adopts new strategies to produce materials for popular exhibits. Such a change may only occur after much conflict with the director.

The question is, how does conflict promote change? First, it may bring into consideration new ideas which would not be offered without conflict. In a related way, conflict may promote change because each party begins to monitor the other's performance more carefully. This search for weaknesses means that it is more difficult to hide errors and problems from the rest of the organization. Such errors and problems may be a signal that changes are necessary. For example, the leakage of public examination questions may compel all sections of the examinations council to effect changes to prevent future leakages.

Also, conflict may promote useful change by signaling that a redistribution of power is necessary.

As Owens (1987) points out that conflict in organizations is now seen as inevitable, endemic, and often legitimate. This is because individuals and groups within the human system are interdependent and constantly engaged in the dynamic processes of defining and redefining the nature and extent of their interdependence. Important to the dynamics of this social process is the fact that the environment itself, is constantly changing. Thus, according to Chester Barnard, cited in Owens, inherent in the conception of free will in a changing environment are social patterns characterized by negotiating, stress and conflict.

Conflict, when effectively managed, can lead to outcomes that are productive and enhance the health of the organization over time. Thus conflict in itself is neither good nor bad; in value terms, it is neutral. Its impact on an organization and the behaviour of people is largely dependent upon the way in which it is treated.

Thomas (1976: 890) observes that:

Confrontation of divergent views often produces ideas of superior quality. Divergent views are apt to be based upon different frames of reference. Disagreements may thus confront an individual with factors which he had previously ignored, and help him to arrive at a more comprehensive view which synthesizes elements of his own and other people's positions.

Furthermore, according to Thomas, there is a growing reason to believe (both from research and expert opinion) that conflict causes people to seek effective ways of dealing with it, resulting in improved organizational functioning, for example, cohesiveness, clarified relationships and cleared problem-solving procedures.

Deutch (1973: 9) also contended that: A conflict with a group frequently helps to revitalize existent norms; or it contributes to the emergence of new norms. In this sense, social conflict is a mechanism for adjustment of norms adequate to new conditions. A flexible society benefits from conflict because such behavior, by helping to create and modify norms, assures its continuance under changed conditions.

Deutch cautioned that rigid systems that suppress conflict smother a useful warning signal, thereby maximizing the danger of catastrophic breakdown. Although few who really understand conflict would advocate its deliberate use in organizational life, fewer still would advocate its elimination or avoidance. Instead of seeking to eliminate all forms of conflict in an organization, it is rather beneficial to apply the concepts of conflict management to minimize its destructive potential and make it as productive, creative, and useful as possible (Owens, 1987).

Referring to frustration as an element of conflict, Costley and Todd (1987) point out that although frustration is often regarded as undesirable because of its destructive effects, it can produce positive outcomes. It can cause individuals to become more effective in attaining personal and organizational goals. The explanation is that frustration causes tension in an individual. As tension increases in the individual, the tendency is for him to focus on goal attainment and to eliminate irrelevant and distracting behaviors. One constructive effect of frustration therefore is to increase the effort required to reach a goal. The goal must, of course, be attainable, and there must be a perceived method to overcome the barrier. If the barrier cannot be overcome, then the individual will need to

redirect his behavior to another method or goal.

Other positive effects of conflict:

- Inspire creativity:- fortunately, some organizations view conflict as an opportunity for finding creative solutions to problems. Conflict can inspire members to brainstorm, while examining problems from various perspectives.
- Share and Respect Opinions:- As organization members work together to solve conflict, they are more willing to share their opinions with other members of the group. Conflict can also cause members to actively listen to each other as they work to accomplish the organizational goals.
- Improve future communication:- Conflict can bring group members together and help them learn more about each other. From learning each other's opinion on topics relevant to the organization's growth to understanding each member's preferred communication styles, conflict within an organization can give members the tools necessary to easily solve conflicts in the future (<http://Ezine Articles.com>, 2015).

2.4.2 Negative Effects of Conflicts

Owens has observed that frequent and powerful conflicts can have a devastating impact upon the behavior of people in organizations. Conflict often develops into hostility which also causes people to withdraw physically and psychologically. In the school situation, physical withdrawal takes the form of absence, tardiness and turnover which is often written off as laziness on the part of teachers. Psychological withdrawal takes the form of alienation, apathy and indifference. Conflict can lead to outright hostile or aggressive behaviour such as job actions, property damage and minor theft of property.

If conflict is not managed effectively, for example, through a hard-nosed policy of punishment for offences, get-tough practices in the name of administrations, emphasizing the adversarial relationship between teachers and administration, it can create a climate that exacerbates the situation. This climate can develop a downward spiral of mounting frustration, deteriorating organizational climate and increasing destructiveness.

Costley and Todd (1987) also emphasize that when frustration persists and an individual's tolerance level is exceeded, the individual responds through aggression and withdrawal.

Aggression involves a direct attack upon the perceived barrier to achieving the goal. In some instances, the frustrated individual will direct aggression against the person or object that is perceived as the cause of the frustration. For example, if a teacher occupies a dilapidated bungalow on campus, he would obviously feel uncomfortable and therefore request for repairs. Such requests may be put off for a long time until the bungalow deteriorates beyond tolerance level. If the teacher believes that it is the Bursar who is unwilling to release money for repairs, he may react aggressively by attacking the Bursar verbally and if possible, physically. If the headmaster is believed to be the cause of the frustration, the aggression may then be directed toward him.

Aggression can, however, take many other forms including antagonistic behavior, theft, disobedience, sabotage, absenteeism and interference with the work of others.

Aggression may be displaced toward an object or a person who is not directly involved in the situation. For example, the teacher in this case may displace an aggression response toward his or her students. In this example, the teacher may resort to inflicting various punishments to his/her students, refuse to mark the students' exercises or shout at them. As frustration increases and its sources become more difficult to identify, the aggression behaviour may increase. In extreme cases, the individual may begin to attack everyone and everything within reach.

As noted above, withdrawal is another negative response to frustration as a conflict. Withdrawal may reduce tension, but it is usually dysfunctional since the goal cannot be attained. The teacher who makes persistent requests to the school administration to repair his bungalow without success may decide to withdraw such as not attending classes or submitting his examination questions or marks very late.

2.4.3 The Dysfunctional Effects

- Conflicts affect individual and organizational performance. Resolving conflicts takes a toll on managerial time and energy which could be more productively spent.
- In a conflict situation, people may promote their self-interests or personal gains at the cost of others or the organization.
- Intense conflicts over a prolonged period affect individuals emotionally and physically, and give rise to psychosomatic disorders.
- Time spent on conflicts, if cost, could have been spent doing more productive things.
- Conflict may lead to work sabotage, employee morale problems, and decline in the market share of product/service and consequent loss of productivity (<http://Ezine Articles.com>, 2015).

2.5 Managing Conflict

Conflict can be managed in different ways, some focusing on interpersonal relationships and others on structural changes. Robinson *et al* (1974), advocates that managing conflict toward constructive action is the best approach in resolving conflict in organization. When conflict arises, we need to be able to manage them properly, so that it becomes a positive force, rather than a negative force, which would threaten the individual or group.

Parker (1974), argued that if conflicts arise and are not managed properly, it will lead to delays of work, disinterest and lack of action and in extreme cases it might lead to complete breakdown of the group. Unmanaged conflict may result in withdrawal of individuals and unwillingness on their part to participate in other groups or assist with various group action programs in the organization.

Avoidance of the situation that causes the conflict is an example of an interpersonal approach (Robert and Jane, 1967). Another way of coping with conflict is through *smoothing*, emphasizing the areas of agreement and common goals and de-emphasizing disagreements. A third way according to (Robert and Jane, 1967), is *forcing*, pushing one's own view on others; this, of course, will cause overt or covert resistance. A traditional way of coping with conflict is to compromise, agreeing in part with the other person's view or demand. The biggest problem in developing the institutions of conflict control in organization is to develop an action of plan to identify conflicts at its initial stage. Conflict situations are frequently allowed to develop to almost unmanageable proportions before anything is done about them, by this time it is often too late to resolve the conflict by peaceable and procedural means.

Knippen and Green (1999), argued that the best way to handle conflicts objectively is to follow six processes that involves describing the conflict situation to the other person, asking the other person how he sees the conflict situation, responding to the way the other person sees the situation, jointly deciding how to resolve the conflict, making commitment to resolve the conflicts, and promising to be committed in future to continue resolving conflicts, which might arise. Another way of coping with organizational conflicts is to make structural changes. This means modifying and integrating the objectives of groups with different viewpoints. Moreover, the organization structure may have to be changed and authority-responsibility relationships clarified. New ways of coordinating activities may have to be found. Tasks and work locations can also be rearranged.

Derr (1975), opined that Contingency Theory is one of the conceptual tools useful for managing organizational conflicts. He stated that there are three major conflicts management approaches from which intervener can draw to formulate an approach appropriate for resolving a dispute; Collaboration, Bargaining and Power play. The appropriate use of these methods depends on the individual and organizational state. *Collaboration* involves people surfacing their differences (get them out in the open) and then work on the problems until they have attained mutually satisfactory solutions. This approach assumes that people will be motivated to spend the time and energy for such problem-solving activity. *Bargaining* on the other hand assumes that neither party will emerge satisfied from the confrontation but that both, through negotiation, can get something they do not have at the start, or more of something they need, usually by giving up something of lesser importance. One party generally wins more than the other; by the skilful use of tactical trades, he can get the maximum possible from the other side. Third approach is *Power Play*, which differs from the other two approaches because its emphasis is on self-interest. Whereas, in *collaboration* and *bargaining* the two sides come together to try to resolve their problems, when power is the dominant mode, the actions are unilateral or in coalitions acting unilaterally.

2.6 Levels of Conflict

There are four major levels of conflict within organizations. These are 1. Intrapersonal; 2. Interpersonal; 3. Intragroup and 4. Intergroup.

Intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual and can involve some form of goal or cognitive conflict. Intrapersonal conflict occurs when a person's behavior will result in both positive and negative outcomes, for example the result has incompatible outcomes. For example, a university graduate may have to choose taking a job in a government organization that does not pay well but has future security or take a job in a private company that pays well but does not provide any future security.

There are three types of intrapersonal conflict: approach-approach, avoidance-avoidance and approach-avoidance.

- a. The approach- approach conflict is the one in which an individual must choose between two courses of action that have positive outcomes for example a choice between two jobs that appear equally attractive; a choice between buying a new car and acquiring a plot of land to start building a house. In this conflict situation, the individual must choose one course of action and reject the other. The choice is often forced because two rewarding goals become more difficult and take longer when they are seen as having equal value.
- b. Avoidance-avoidance conflict is the one in which an individual must choose among two or more alternatives that have negative outcomes. The individual would like to avoid both alternatives. For example, a student may want to avoid studying and at the same time hate the idea of failing or making low grade in his exams; a senior teacher is asked to go on transfer to head a village school or be demoted in his city school. This conflict is variously referred to as between "a rock and a hard place", "from the frying pan into fire", "between the devil and deep blue sea," "the lesser of two evils", etc. in this conflict, there is a desire to escape both situations either physically or psychologically. If the alternatives are extremely negative and the individual cannot escape, he may turn aggressive and attack.
- c. Approach – avoidance conflict is one in which an individual must decide whether to do something that has both positive and negative outcomes. The individual is attracted to an object or activity and, at the same time wants to avoid it. For example, a teacher is offered a teaching appointment in a private school that pays well but is located in a location that is deprived of good amenities; being in an undesirable location but receiving more remuneration. Most decisions involve an element of approach-avoidance conflict; there are few objects, activities or goals that do not have some negative aspects. Approach – avoidance conflict may occur when the goal is positive but the activity required to achieve it has negative characteristics.

Interpersonal conflict involves two or more individuals who perceive themselves as being in opposition to each other over preferred outcomes (goals) and/or attitudes, values or behaviours. For example, a headmaster admonishes the senior housemaster to work hard to instill discipline among students, but turns around to accuse the housemaster of being too strict on students. When the students see the headmaster as their ally, they may show disrespect to the senior housemaster. The headmaster's behavior conflicts with his role as a number one disciplinarian or role model.

Many interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts are based on some type of role conflict or role ambiguity. A role is the cluster of tasks that others expect a person to perform in doing a job. Role conflict occurs when a focal person perceives incompatible messages and pressures from the role sender. The focal person then responds with coping behaviours that serve as inputs to the role sender's experience.

In the above example, the senior housemaster is the focal person while the headmaster is the role sender. The senior housemaster might respond to the headmaster's behavior by relaxing his strictness on student discipline or might complain to the headmaster about his behavior and pronouncements on discipline.

Intragroup conflict refers to clashes among some or all of a group's members, which often affect the group's processes and effectiveness. For example, the staff of a school may be divided on measures of effecting student punishment. A few may support the use of corporal punishment while others may propose other forms. If they are unable to reach agreement on the punishment issues, they may ultimately be ineffective in instilling student discipline.

Intergroup conflict refers to opposition and clashes that arises between two or more groups. Intergroup conflict often occurs in union –management relations. Such conflicts are sometimes highly intense and costly to the groups involved. Under extreme conditions of competition and conflict, the groups develop attitudes and relationships toward each other that are characterized by distrust, rigidity, a focus only on self-interests, a failure to listen, etc. For example, in the school situation, conflict often arises between school authorities as one group, and students as another. A conflict can arise where a staff as a group may prescribe a type of punishment to a student or a number of students. If the student body views that punishment as too severe, then out of solidarity with their colleagues, the students may resort to group action to compel the authorities to review the punishment.

There are three types of intergroup conflicts within organizations: vertical, horizontal and line-staff conflicts. Vertical conflict refers to clashes between levels in an organization. Such conflict often occurs when superiors attempt to control subordinates too tightly and the subordinates resist. Subordinates may resist because they believe that those controls infringe too much on the discretion needed to do their jobs. Vertical conflicts can also arise because of inadequate communication, goal conflicts, or lack of consensus concerning perceptions of information and values (cognitive conflict).

Horizontal conflict refers to clashes between groups of employees at the same hierarchical levels in an organization. Horizontal conflict occurs when each department in a school strive only for its own goals disregarding the effects on other departments. For example, a school or college may have limited spaces for use as offices for staff. One department may desire many more offices for its staff at the expense of other departments, because it believes its subject is more important than others. Contrasting attitudes of employees in different departments may lead to conflict.

Line –staff conflict refers to clashes over authority relationships. Most organizations have staff departments to assist in line departments. In a secondary school, the line staff includes the headmaster, assistant headmaster (academic)/assistant headmaster (administration), head of department and classroom teachers.

Each sub-head is responsible for some processes that are part of the school's total function. Unfortunately, some line-staff may feel that some staff are imposing on their areas of authority. For example, the assistant headmaster (academic) may feel that one head of department is imposing on his areas of legitimate authority. A head of department may try to impose time table change on the school which the assistant headmaster may view as unworkable for the whole school.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the methods and procedures used in conducting the research. It consists of research design, profile of the area, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, validation of instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study used a survey design to analyze an assessment of organizational conflict and its effects on productivity in Bongo District Hospital. Bell (1999) states “a case study approach is particularly appropriate for individual researchers because it gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale”.

3.2 Profile of the Study Area

Bongo District is one of the 13 districts in the Upper East Region. It was created by Legislative Instrument 1446 (LI 1446) in 1988 with Bongo as its capital. The district lies between longitudes 0.45o W and latitude 10.50o N to 11.09 and has a total land area of 459.5 square kilometers. The Bongo District shares boundaries with Burkina Faso to the north, Kassena-Nankana East to the west, Bolgatanga Municipal to the south west and Nabdram District to south east. The district lies within the Oncho-cerciasis-freed zone.

The topography is generally flat or low lying with outcrops of granite and Birimian rocks. Areas occupied by granites are generally of low, gently rolling relief 90 to 300 meters above sea level. The soils are moderately well drained coarse textured soils, occupying larger parts of land on middle and upper slopes and less frequently on summits (<http://mofa.gov.gh/site>, 2015).

3.3 Population of the Study

Population is used in statistics to represent all possible measurement or outcomes that are of interest to us in a particular study. Population is the sum aggregate or totality of the phenomena of interest to the researcher. The target population comprised the employees of health organizations in the Upper East Region. However, the accessible population used was employees of Bongo District Hospital.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The researcher sampled 30 respondents out of 45 employees of Bongo District Hospital. Questionnaire was administered to employees of Bongo District Hospital. The researcher developed a number of techniques where only a small portion of the total population was sampled, in an attempt to generalize the results and conclusion for the entire population. There are some distinct advantages in using samples. Sampling involves a smaller number of subjects and is more time efficient, less costly and potentially more accurate.

A sample is a selection of the total population or universe that one desire to study. Sampling methods can be divided into two main groups namely: probability and non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling is a sampling technique where by the samples are gathered in a process that gives the entire individual in the population equal chances of being selected, example, simple random sampling,

In this research, simple random sampling method was used because each member has an equal and known chance of being selected.

3.5 Research Instrument

This research instrument is a compilation of structured questions which were given to respondents to elicit responses. The questions were close-ended multiple-choice questions giving respondents a choice from a range of answers based on the 4- point Likert-style rating scale. They had choices either to agree or disagree with the statements made within the range. This was to ensure that the choice of answers directly addressed issues at stake and make collation and analysis of the data simple. On the scale, 1 is the lowest score and 4 the highest.

The questionnaires designed for the Employees of Bongo District Hospital were divided into four (5) sections, section A-D. Section A comprised of biography, section B is made of the causes of organizational conflict, section C consist of the positive effects of conflict, section D was on the negative effects of conflict and section E consists of the adoption of conflict management strategies. The researcher read and explained the questionnaire items to the Small business operators in the local language (Guruni) for the respondents who could not read and write.

3.6 Validation of Instruments

The questionnaire was thoroughly examined by the researcher's supervisor who read and made necessary corrections to ensure that the items were in line with the research objectives. According to Wallen& Frankel (2001) an instrument is valid if it measures what it is intended to measure and accurately achieves the purpose for which it was designed.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources of information. The primary data was collected from the questionnaire administered to the respondents. The secondary data was gathered from relevant books, internet and articles.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data was processed and analysis was done using descriptive statistics and Microsoft office excels and the results were presented in tables using frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the results and discussion of the analysis of the data collected.

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the respondents.

Table one, two, three, four and five present personal data of the respondents.

Table One

1. Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	14	46.7
Female	16	53.3
Total	30	100

Table one shows that 16 or 53.3% of the respondents were females whiles fourteen or 46.7% of the respondents were males. The data suggests female dominant in Bongo Hospital

Table Two

2. Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage %
18-20 years	9	30
21-39 years	17	57
40 years and above	4	13

Table two indicates that 17 or 57% of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 39 years, nine or 30% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 20 years and four or 13% of the respondents were within the ages of 40 and above. The data suggests that majority of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 39 years.

Table Three

3. Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage %
Married	14	46.7
Single	13	43.3
Divorce	3	10
Total	30	100

Table 3 shows that 14 or 46.7% of the respondents were married, thirteen or 43.3% of the respondents were single and three or 10% of the respondents cited divorced. The data shows that majority of the respondents in Bongo Hospital were married.

Table Four

4. Academic Qualification of Respondents

Respondents Qualification	Frequency	Percentage %
Senior Secondary School	12	40
Diploma	10	26.7
Degree	5	16.7
Junior Secondary School	3	10
Total	30	100

Table four indicates that 12 or 40% of the respondents had senior secondary school certificates, ten or 26.7% of the respondents were Diploma certificates Holders, five or 16.7% of the respondents cited Degree Holders and three or 10% of the respondents indicated Junior Secondary School Certificates Holders. The data suggests that majority of the workers were holders of Senior Secondary School certificate.

Table Five

5. Religious Denomination of Respondents

Religion	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage %
Christian	24	80
Islamic	2	6.7
Traditionalist	4	13.3
Total	30	100

From table five, 24 or 80% of the respondents were Christians, four or 13.3% of the respondents said Traditionalist and two or seven percent of the respondents cited Islamic. The data suggests that majority of the respondents in Bongo District Hospital were Christians.

4.2 Causes of Organizational Conflict

Research question two was “what brings about conflict in Bongo Hospital?”

Table Six

Causes of Organizational Conflict

Item	Respondents			
	SA Freq%	A Freq%	SD Freq%	D Freq%
6.Unacceptable terms of employment such as poor hours of work, poor salary and lack of fringe benefits	10(33.3)	14(46.7)	2(6.7)	4(13.3)
7.Poor human relations between management and employees	10(33.3)	17(56.7)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)
8. Non consultations with employees before key decisions affecting them are taken.	12(40)	14(46.7)	4(13.3)	-----

9. Ineffective means of communication grievances to top manager.	11(36.7)	16(53.3)	-----	3(10)
10. Poor decentralization of decision making and workers non representation in management	12(40)	18(60)	-----	-----

Key: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

Table 6 indicates that ten or 33.3% and fourteen or 46.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with item 6 that unacceptable terms of employment such as poor hours of work, poor salary and lack of fringe benefits cause conflict in Bongo Hospital; two or seven percent and four or 13.3% of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 6.

With regards to item 7, ten or 33.3% and 17 or 56.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with item 7 that poor human relations between management and employees causes' conflict in Bongo Hospital; two or seven percent of the respondents however disagreed with item 7.

According to item 8, twelve or 40% and 14 or 46.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 8 that non consultation with employees before taking key decisions were causes of conflict in Bongo Hospital; four or 13.3% of the respondents otherwise strongly disagreed with item 8.

In response to item 9, eleven or 36.7% and 16 or 53.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 9 that ineffective means of communicating grievances to top managers lead to conflict in Bongo Hospital, three or 10% of the respondents however disagreed with the item 9.

In response to item 10, twelve or 40% and 18 or 60% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 10 that poor decentralization of decision making and workers non representation in management causes conflict in Bongo Hospital.

4.3 Positive Effects of Organizational Conflict

Research question three was “How does conflict have effects on the performance of Bongo Hospital?”

Table Seven

Positive Effects of Organizational Conflict

Item	Respondents			
	SA Freq%	A Freq%	SD Freq%	D Freq%
11. Improve quality of service.	4(13.3)	15(50)	5(16.7)	6(20)
12. Better human relations between Management and staff	4(13.3)	17(56.7)	5(16.7)	4(13.3)
13. Less wastage in time and resource usage	6(20)	14(46.7)	-----	10(33.3)
14. It ensures development of better communication methods.	6(20)	15(50)	2(6.7)	7(23.3)
15. the problems of groupthink can be reduce if the conflict takes the form of one or more dissenting opinions	4(13.3)	12(40)	3(10)	11(36.7)

Key: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

Table 7 indicates that four or 13.3% and 15 or 50% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with items 11 that conflict improves quality of service in Bongo Hospital, five or 16.7% and six or 20% of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 11.

With regards to item 12, four or 13.3% and seventeen or 56.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with item 12 that conflict ensures better human relations between management and staff in Bongo Hospital, five or 16.7% and four or 13.3% of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 12.

According to item 13, six or 20% and 14 or 46.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 13, ten or 33.3% of the respondents otherwise disagreed with item 13.

In response to item 14, six or 20% and 15 or 50% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 14 that conflict ensures development of better communication methods, two or seven and seven or 23.3% of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 14.

With regard to item 15, four or 13.3% and 12 or 40% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 15 that the problem of group think can reduce conflict if it takes the form of one or more dissenting opinions, three or 10% and 11 or 36.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with item 15.

4.4 Negative Effects of Organizational Conflict

Table Eight

Negative Effects of Organizational Conflict

Item	Respondents			
	SA Freq%	A Freq%	SD Freq%	D Freq%
16. Conflict promotes poor operations in the organization.	11(36.7)	11(36.7)	6(20)	2(6.7)
17. Conflict promotes less cooperation among employees in the organization.	14(46.7)	12(40)	2(6.7)	2(6.7)
18. It promotes wastages of organizational resources	9(30)	15(50)	4(13.3)	2(6.7)
19. Conflict promotes less productivity and poor work performance in the organization.	14(46.7)	10(33.3)	2(6.7)	4(13.3)
20. Conflict promotes weak employee relationships in the organization	13(43.3)	14(46.7)	2(6.7)	1(3.3)

Key: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

Table 8 indicates that 11 or 36.7% each of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with items 16 that conflict promotes poor operations in Bongo Hospital; six or 20% and two or seven percent of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 16.

With regards to item 17, 14 or 46.7% and 12 or 40% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with item 17 that conflict promotes less cooperation among employees in Bongo Hospital; two or seven percent each of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 17.

According to item 18, nine or 30% and 15 or 50% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 18 that conflict promotes wastage of resources in Bongo Hospital; four or 13.3% and two or seven percent of the respondents otherwise strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 18.

In response to item 19, 14 or 46.7% and ten or 33.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 19 that conflict promotes less productivity and poor work performance, two or seven percent and four or 13.3% of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 19.

With regards to item 20, thirteen or 43.3% and fourteen or 46.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 20 that conflict promotes weak employee relationships two or seven of the respondents otherwise strongly disagreed with item 20.

4.5 Conflict Management Strategies

Research question four was “What ways can be used to solve conflict in Bongo Hospital?”

Table Nine

Conflict Management Strategies

Respondents

Item	Respondents			
	SA Freq%	A Freq%	SD Freq%	D Freq%
21. Consulting with workers in order to resolve the conflict.	13(43.3)	13(43.3)	4(13.3)	-----
22. Putting machineries in place to address the sources of conflict	13(43.3)	5(16.7)	6(20)	6(20)
23. Effecting necessary changes in process and procedure management	16(53.3)	7(23.3)	2(6.7)	5(16.7)
24. Putting in place a formal procedure for conflict prevention so as to avoid future	21(70)	7(23.3)	2(6.7)	-----
25. Enforcing strict disciplinary rules on workers.	22(73.3)	6(23.3)	2(6.7)	-----

Key: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

Table 9 indicates that 13 or 43.3% each of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with item 21 that consulting with workers in order to resolve conflict is a conflict management strategy, four or 13.3% of the respondents however strongly disagreed with item 21.

With regards to item 22, thirteen or 43.3% and five or 16.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with item 22 that putting machineries in place to address the sources of conflict is a conflict management strategy, six or 20% each of the respondents otherwise strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 22.

According to item 23, 16 or 53.3% and seven or 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 23, two or seven percent and five or 16.7% of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 23.

In response to item 24, 21 or 70% and seven or 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 24, two or seven percent of the respondents otherwise strongly disagreed with item 24.

In response to item 25, 22 or 73.3% and six or 20% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 25, two or seven percent of the respondents however strongly disagreed with item 25.

4.6 Forms of Conflict in an Organization.

Table Ten

Forms of Conflict that takes Place in an Organization

Item	Respondents			
	SA Freq%	A Freq%	SD Freq%	D Freq%
26. Relationship conflict	6(20)	1(3.3)	23(76.7)	-----
27. Task conflict.	10(33.3)	6(20)	3(10)	11(36.7)
28. Process conflict.	8(26.7)	8(26.7)	5(16.7)	9(30)
29. Interpersonal conflict.	8(26.7)	3(10)	4(13.3)	15(50)
30. Conflict of interest	6(20)	8(26.7)	8(26.7)	8(26.7)

Key: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

Table 10 indicates that six or 20% of the respondents strongly agreed with items 26, 23 or 76.7% of the respondents however strongly disagreed with item 26.

With regards to item 27, ten or 33.3% and six or 20% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with item 27, three or 10% and 11 or 36.7% of the respondents otherwise strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 27.

According to item 28, eight or 26.7% each of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 28, five or 16.7% and nine or 30% of the respondents however strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 28. In response to item 29, eight or 26.7% and three or 10% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 29, four or 13.3% and fifteen or 50% of the respondents otherwise strongly disagreed and disagreed with item 29. In response to item 30, six or 20% and eight or 26.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with item 30, eight or 26.7% each of the respondents however strongly disagreed or disagreed with item 30.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study examined organizational conflict and its effect on productivity at Bongo Hospital.

Both primary and secondary sources of information were used for the reviewed of the related literature. A survey design was used for the study. A simple random sampling method was used in the selection of the respondents.

The study shows that poor working conditions, lack of fringe benefits, poor human relations, non-consultations, ineffective communication and poor decentralization of decision making were some of the major causes of conflicts in organizations.

The study again indicates that improved quality of service, better human relations, less wastage in times and resource usage and better communication methods were positive effects of conflicts. Poor operations, less cooperation's, less productivity, and weak employee relationships in the organizations were the negatives effects of conflict.

The study further identified, consulting with workers, putting machineries in place, effecting necessary changes, putting formal procedures for conflict prevention and enforcing strict disciplinary rules as measures to management conflict in organizations.

The study again cited relationship conflict, task conflict, process conflict, interpersonal conflict and conflict of interest as forms of conflicts in organization

It was further found out that managers prefer the compromise, problem solving and dominating strategies in solving conflict.

The results also shown that the conflict management strategies in place at the organization have been relatively useful in minimizing the incidence of disruptive conflicts while conflict management strategies have positive impacts on workers' productivity.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that strategies which promote organizational democracy should be chosen by management as the preferred option in dispute resolution. Such strategies must include tolerance of workers opinions, readiness to engage in open discussions and deliberations on issues in conflict, willingness to deploy agreed internal conflict management strategies and willing to implement agreements reached in the conflict resolution process.

Conflict preclusion structures should be put in place to address issues that can produce conflicts before they break open. In a similar vein, conflict situations should be promptly confronted and addressed whenever they occur rather than being avoided.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Efforts should be made by the managers to occasionally stimulate constructive task conflict by encouraging divergent views and rewarding staff and department for outstanding performance while relationship conflict should be completely prevented.
2. Outcomes of interpersonal conflict should not be overlooked by managers and accounted for as part of the normal outcomes of doing business but should be minimized by clarifying to staff at large where to go for advice in case of conflict and build peer-support structure of conflict advisors.
3. Managers should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level.
4. Proper communication procedures should be put in place to resolve conflict. For instance, when any disagreement arises among the employees, it should be reported to the management and then management should get statements from the parties involved, brainstorm the issue and make recommendations on how to resolve the

conflict.

5. Efforts should be made by the management to organize in house training/ seminars/workshops on organizational conflict management from time to time for the employees'. This will enable employees learn about conflict and how it can be effectively managed for individual and organization effectiveness.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Research

The study, investigates organizational conflict and its effects on productivity in Bongo District Hospital. As the study may not be a generalization of all health organizations in Ghana, it is suggested that similar study be carried out at in other districts and regions of Ghana, in order to ascertain the authenticity of the findings to justify the implementation of the recommendations.

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