
Workplace Conflict and Employees' Job Performance in Agro-Services Corporation, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study determined the effects of workplace conflict on employees' job performance in Ogun State Agro-service Corporation (OGASC). Multistage sampling technique was used to select 77 respondents. Data were collected through the administration of questionnaires and were analysed using frequency, percentage, and mean. The presence of functional staff union to minimize conflict ($\bar{x}=2.99$) ranked as the first indication of reduced conflict, followed by existence of favouritism ($\bar{x}= 2.51$) which was ranked highest as an indication of conflict escalating factor by the respondents. Job performance of the respondents was not adversely affected by the workplace conflict they experienced. Therefore, the management of OGASC should ensure improvement in the deployment of the

used resolution strategies to drastically reduce conflict for better performance of the employees.

Keywords: Workplace conflict; employees' performance; agro-services corporation;

Introduction

When people work as a group, conflict is one of the most predictable outcomes. Most managers spend a lot of their working time dealing with conflicts or fallouts from people-related problems. Mismanagement of conflicts leads to waste of energy that could have been used for productive endeavours (Utaka and Silas-Dikibo, 2020). It is difficult to calculate the losses related to organisational conflict. According to Oachesu (2016), conflict is complex, because at minimum it involves the interaction of cognitive, psychological, physiological, and contextual dynamics. Most conflict theories take only a psychological and/or an economic approach to understanding and managing conflict. Zahid, (2017) opined that conflict is an unpleasant situation that leads to unhealthy competition among employees for assignment, resources, power, recognition and security. Conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other. This results in a situation whereby they are frustrated with each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives. Employees who seek power therefore struggle with others for position or status within the group. Conflicts are endemic to society as a whole. They are directly related to the scarcity of resources, division of functions and tasks, power of relations, differentiation and organisation roles in society. According to Oachesu (2016), any organisation, regardless of its type (public institution, state-owned commercial organisation or private non-profit organisation, etc.), face daily conflicts that are based on different causes of internal and external organization which can affect their job performance on different scales.

Employees' performance is influenced by a lot of aspects such as motivation, work environment and leadership in the agency. An employee's workplace environment is a key determinant of the quality of their work and their level of productivity. Job performance is a very considerable factor influencing profitability of any organisation (Osborne and Hammoud, 2017). Performance is important for organisations as employees' performance leads to business success. Also, performance is important for individuals, as achieving tasks can be a source of satisfaction (Hee, Shi, Kowang, Fei and Ping, 2020). Researchers such as Suwati, Minarsih and Gagah (2016) have shown that the main goal of work for someone is not only to get the salary, but to reach self-satisfaction.

However, most organisations have devoted a greater part of economic time and effort to settle conflicts and conflict related issues. This scenario has continued unabated, hence posing a negative challenge to industrial and economic growth of an organisation. Although, scholars like Khan, Hussainy and Iqbal (2017) have reasoned that conflict

cannot be completely ruled out in any organization, frequent occurrence of organisational conflict could have an adverse effect on the organisation in terms of lost of production hour, reduction in profits, unemployment and of course reduction in income level of the organisation. Just like any other organisation, the Ogun State Agro-Services Corporation is being confronted with various forms of conflict both interpersonal and conflict task conflicts. This will definitely take its toll on the performance of the employees of the corporation and its attendant effect will adversely affect other stakeholders involved in agro-services in the state. This is because when conflict is not properly managed, there cannot be reasonable increase in employees' performance. This study determined the effects of workplace conflict on job performance. Specifically, the study:

- (1) examined the workplace conflict experienced by respondents;
- (2) determine the respondents' perception of management's resolution strategies on workplace conflict;
- (3) determine the job performance of the respondents

Methodology

The study was carried out in the Ogun State Agro-Service Corporation, Abeokuta, Nigeria. The Ogun State Agro-Services Corporation was established in the month of April, 1980 by law. The corporation covers four (4) geographical zones in the state; namely; Abeokuta (Egba) Zone, Ilaro (Yewa) Zone, Ijebu Ode (Ijebu) Zone and Ikenne (Remo) Zone. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 50% of the zones leading to the selection of Abeokuta (Egba Zone) and Ilaro (Yewa Zone). In Egba and Yewa zones, there were 29 and 6, 12 and 3, 75 and 9, 6 and 5 staff, respectively in the Administrative and Supplies, Finance and Account, Engineering Services Planning and Input departments. Furthermore, 50% of the members of staff in each department in the two zones were selected using proportionately to size sampling which resulted in 77 respondents.

Data were analysed using percentages and mean. Respondents' perception of management's resolution strategies on workplace conflict was measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), indifferent (I), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) assigned scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positively worded statements and reserve order for negatively worded statements. While their workplace conflict and job performance were measured using response options of very high (VH), high (H), moderate (M), low (L) and very low (VL) and were assigned scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The mean score was used to categorize the respondents into having high and low workplace conflict and job performance. A cut-off point of 2.50 was used as bench mark for the statements on the workplace conflict,

perception of management's resolution strategies of workplace conflict and job performance.

Results and Discussion

Workplace Conflict in OGASC

Table 1 shows that the most prominence indicator in determining workplace conflict experienced by the employees of ASC was the presence of functional staff union to minimize conflict ($\bar{x}= 2.99$). The indicator was also the only indicator that can ameliorate workplace conflict in the list of indicators of workplace conflict has shown in Table 1, which means that its prominence is useful in the reduction in the level of workplace conflict. Hence, it can be implied that the presence of functional staff union in ASC was the most importance indicator when considering factors that can facilitate reduction in workplace conflict.

However, the most deleterious indicator of workplace conflict in the respondents' organization was the existence of favouritism ($\bar{x}=2.51$). This implies that favouritism is a prominent indicator of occurrence workplace conflict in the ASC. Therefore, issues that relate to favouritism such as jettisoning of merits and denial of rights due to undue preference of some workers over the others by the management are serious escalators of workplace conflict in the organization. most deleterious indicator of workplace conflict in the respondents. This implies that the issue of favouritism, ease of issuing query and ambiguity of job description were the prominent indicators of workplace conflict in ASC. This is line with finding of Isa (2015) which identified favouritism as one of the aggravators of conflict. Although, the existence of favouritism is an indicator of the occurrence of workplace conflict in ASC, it is the only indicator of possible escalation of workplace conflict in the organization. The remaining eight indicators were not prominent indicators of serious workplace conflict in the organization.

Table 1: Workplace conflict in OGASC

Statement	Mean (\bar{x})	SD
Presence of functional staff union to minimize conflict	2.99*	1.325
Existence of favouritism in the corporation	2.51*	1.311
Overbearing nature of Superior officers	2.31	1.123
Unacceptable political climate in ASC	2.30	1.139
Ease of issuing query to subordinate staff	2.30	1.266
Management's inability to nip disagreements in the bud	2.30	1.020
Ambiguity of job description in ASC	2.28	1.208
Lack of adequate remuneration and incentives	2.17	1.000
Gross insubordination of lower cadre staff	2.14	1.175
General unhealthy work environment causing co-workers unfriendliness	1.99	0.978

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2016. *= conflict

Perception of Management Resolution Strategies on Workplace Conflict

Table 2 shows that the respondents perceived all the strategies for the resolution of workplace conflict by the management to be important. Though, there were different levels of the perception of each strategy among respondents. The most favourably perceived management resolution strategies on workplace conflict by the respondents was that the management did not take payment of pension and gratuity with levity ($\bar{x}=4.17$). Furthermore, the management commending the effort of its outstanding employees ($\bar{x}=4.06$) and organizing training and development programme for its staff ranked second and third respectively ($\bar{x}=4.00$). This implies that the respondents believed that the management deployment of the strategies of the avoidance of taking the payment of pension and gratuity with levity which guarantees secured future emoluments, commending effort of outstanding employees and organizing training and development programme for the employees were useful in the resolution of conflicts in the organisation.

While, the least favourably perceived management resolution strategies on workplace conflict by the respondents was that the management does not engage in favouritism among its workforce ($\bar{x}=2.82$). The implication is that the respondents are of the opinion that the management had not done enough in curtailing the issue of favouritism in the organisation. This is in concordant with the most deleterious indicator of workplace conflict expressed by the respondents.

Table 2: Perception of management resolution strategies on workplace conflict

Statement	Mean	SD
Payment of pension and gratuity not with levity	4.17*	1.253
Commends the efforts of its outstanding employees	4.06*	0.982
Organizes training and development programme	4.00*	1.005
Timely resolution of conflict within ASC	3.97*	1.072
Provides an enabling environment to achieve goals	3.92*	1.066
Encourages the flow of new ideas from the employees	3.91*	0.928
Employee are carried along in decision making process	3.88*	1.159
Providing a good physical environment for its staff	3.86*	1.064
Prompt decision on employees' welfare	3.81*	1.134
Policy on provision of soft loan to its employees is favourable	3.54*	1.088
Do not provide equal opportunities for its employees	3.16*	1.291
Does not engage in favouritism among its workforce	3.07*	1.074
Management encourages personal development of its employees	2.82*	1.387

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2016. * = Strategy

Job Performance

The results in Table 3 reveal that the highest indicator of job performance among the respondents was productive working relationship with others (\bar{x} =4.11). The second in rank among the indicators was the team spirit exhibited by the respondents (\bar{x} =4.01) and followed by sense of working to meet time frame (\bar{x} =3.99). Therefore, it could be inferred that productive working relationship with others, team spirit and sense of working to meet time frame were the foremost important aspects of the job performance of the respondents. Furthermore, the three aspects indicates that in improving the job performance of the respondents, it is necessary to reinforce respondents' productive working relationship, team spirit and sense of working to meet time frame. The finding of Pradhan and Jena (2016) alluded to the fact that completing assignment on time is an indicator of job performance.

Table 3 further shows that the lowest indicator of respondents' job performance was their timelessness in operation (\bar{x} =3.69). This indicates low interest of the respondents in devoting extra time to their job beyond the stipulated time for doing their job. Hence, it further suggests that a lot needs to be done in order to encourage the respondents to develop the sense of devoting extra time to performing their jobs when necessary.

Table 3: Job performance in OGASC

Statement	Mean (\bar{x})	SD
Productive working relationships with others	4.11*	0.865
Team work spirit in the corporation	4.01*	0.920
Sense of working to meet time frame	3.99*	0.886
Dutifulness of employees	3.94*	0.893
Sense of managing disseminating information	3.92*	0.997
Flexibility in job dictate	3.83*	1.084
Sense of consolidating on organisational achievements	3.82*	0.762
Spirit of working beyond expectation	3.75*	1.077
Sense of reasoning to inject new ideas into the corporation among employees	3.71*	0.978
Timelessness in operation of employees	3.69*	1.149

Source: Field Survey, 2016. * = job performance

Conclusion and Recommendations

Workplace conflict in the respondents' organization was not serious to the level of impairing their job performance drastically. Furthermore, the job performance of the respondents was good. Although, there is still need for the reduction of workplace conflict in the respondents' organization, the respondents experienced low workplace conflict. However, the respondents are not favourably disposed to the management's resolution strategies on workplace conflict. Therefore, the management of OGASC

should ensure improvement in the deployment of the used resolution strategies to drastically reduce conflict. In addition, the management of OGASC should ensure that indicators of conflict such as favouritism are eliminated or reduced to the barest minimum in the organisation.

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