

Organizational Conflicts and Performance Outcomes: The  
Perspective of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research  
— Savanna Agricultural Research Institute, Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

Unresolved and unhealthy conflicts affect job performance and productivity in organizations. In Ghana, the patterns of organizational conflicts, their sources and effects on performance have not received the needed attention. This study sought to assess these, using the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research-Savanna Agricultural Research Institute as a case study. Data were collected from 200 employees randomly and purposively in a qualitative research design. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guide, analyzed using Excel and presented in tables and graphs with narratives and direct quotations for emphasis. The study revealed that the types of conflicts experienced are interpersonal, intra-personal, inter-group, intra-group and task-related with interpersonal conflicts being the dominant form of conflict (81%). Poor communication, repetitive negative behaviours, ambiguity and role conflicts; perceived breach of trust and faith and incompatible goals are some of the sources of these conflicts revealed. Low employee morale and productivity, communication breakdown, lack of direction and insubordination were the notable negative effects of the conflicts. Constructively, the conflicts build cooperation among workers after resolution; develop employees; bring out skills on ways to manage further conflict; improve quality of decisions; and help increase innovativeness and productivity. At the Institute, conflicts are managed through problem solving, improving communication and dialogues, re-orientation of staff, accommodating and compromising. The study concluded that the embedded conflicts have far negative effects on the performance of the organization as the conflicts have not been

managed effectively. This demands improved open communication and problem solving strategies in managing the conflicts.

Key words: Conflict, Performance, Outcomes, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Savanna Agricultural Research Institute,

## INTRODUCTION

Lately, organizations are transacting businesses in a turbulent and competitive environment and as such looking for measures to enhance their performance so as to stay in competition. To be able to overcome the turbulence and gain competitive advantage, organizations need the required resources which serve as inputs to the organizations' output. Globally, two major resources (human and material) are notable for the promotion of any development in organizations. Material resources, however, are largely passive agents. The human resources are the active ones and therefore exploit and accumulate the other resources for the development of the organization (Todaro, 1992).

The possibility of an organization performing or failing lies on the human resource. Due to diversity of the human resources in the organization, individuals and groups may differ in terms of the goals they want to achieve, the interests they have and the values they hold, which are capable of promoting conflicts in the organization. Hence, organizational conflict arises when the objectives, beliefs or interests of individual employees or sections/units/departments are not compatible, resulting in them frustrating one another's effort at achieving the goals of the organization (Cram, 2008). Conflicts do not simply result from misunderstanding or differences within or between establishments; they have to be continuous and severe enough before the parties concerned can experience them. The reason being that, under similar conditions some people get involved in conflict faster than others (Hart, 2000).

Conflicts in organizations are inevitable as long as human beings work together and are compelled to interact with one another since one cannot work in isolation in an organization (Hart, 2000). Organizational conflict began at the era of Industrial Revolution which happened in Britain in the nineteenth century when workers rose to fight against the inhumane treatment that was meted out to them by their employers (Jim, 2016; Evans, 2011; Simms, 2016). Workers were over exploited by their employers by making them work for ten to fourteen hours a day. With this exploitation, it was resolved by the Federation of Organized Trade and Labour

Unions in the United States of America in 1884 that the legitimate number of hours for a day should be eight. This was to be constituted as the lawful day's work with effect from May 1, 1886 (Jim, 2016). To enforce this regulation and achieve their goal, there was the need for a general strike because legislative processes failed (Evans, 2011; Simms, 2016). The workers saw this as a relief and therefore supported the eight hours. In the process of making sure that eight hours came into play, hostility developed between workers and their employers and even the police (Jim, 2016; Evans, 2011). This led to loss of lives and some leaders were imprisoned because they were accused of masterminding the riot.

Literature revealed that organizational conflicts arise from different sources including communication gap, lack of job description, unfavourable organizational policies, unrealistic targets (Aswathappa & Ready, 2009; Robbins & Judge, 2013), differences in the beliefs and philosophies (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2007), incompatibility, differences in goals, values, interests (Cheong & Kim, 2017), competing for scarce resources (Bankovskaya, 2012), among others. More tellingly, Etim and Okey (2013) suggested that conflict occurs in an establishment when an individual identifies that their goals are hindered by the doings of another person. Most conflicts in organizations arise from the inability of the organization to fulfil its collective agreement with its employees resulting in employees embarking on industrial action.

People often conceive conflicts as bad and disastrous to the welfare of the organization. However, conflict itself is not always bad as have been believed by certain class of people. A poorly handled conflict however, can be catastrophic, leading to unfriendly working environment, low morale and low productivity. Such working environment becomes prone to demonstration with the least disturbance. Ultimately, poorly handled conflicts in organizations create great cost as management time and scarce resources are wasted. In some cases, important information is shelved because previous opinions that could bear great ideas are ignored. The negative perspective of conflict can further bring about stagnation of organizational growth and development (Dana, 2001; Cram, 2008; Taylor, 2008). Conversely, a well-managed conflict in an organization may lead to increased employees' morale (satisfaction) and performance, generation of new ideas that could result in increased productivity and organizational growth (Rahim, 2001). Conflict is thus seen as a symmetrical social phenomenon, in that it has the capacity to either promote or hinder organizational growth and development.

Unmanaged and poorly managed conflicts however affect organization's output. It is in this regard that the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was purposely selected to examine; (1) the pattern of conflicts embedded in the organization, (2) interrogate the causes of these conflicts (3) their effects on the performance of CSIR-SARI, and (4) the strategies employed in managing such conflicts. These issues are very critical for the growth and development of organizations. As noted by Dana (2001), an estimated 65% of performance related issues in organizations are the consequences of interpersonal conflicts among employees. This represents a heavy cost to organizations. In addition, there is clear empirical evidence that organizational conflicts have effects on the smooth operations of the organizations. These include effects on the quality of decisions that employees make (Amason, 1996), lack of job satisfaction among employees resulting in low productivity (Hope, Kathleen & Eisenhardt, 2009), increased absenteeism, high labour turnover (Tjosvold, 1991), among others. Again, Cram (2008) in a study observed a loss of productivity of 25% in average working week to fewer than 20 hours. These show that unresolved conflicts may affect employees' performance in an organization in diverse ways. Apparently, whilst so much work has been done on the effects of conflicts on organizations (Ajibade, 2013; Jude-Iwuoha, Umehali and Okoro, 2014; Fatile and Adejuwon, 2011), scholarly works on the patterns of conflicts, their sources and effects as embedded in organizations in general and CSIR-SARI in particular, is very limited in the Ghanaian situation.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: The next section outlines the conceptual framework, with Section 3 providing methodology whereas Section 4 presents the findings and discussions. Section 5 presents the concluding remarks and recommendations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirically, organizational conflicts have effects on the smooth operations of organizations. These conflicts may affect the quality of decisions that employees make, job satisfaction and productivity (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999). Increased absenteeism and high labour turnover have also been identified as consequences of organizational conflicts (Tjosvold, 1991). The Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) in a study found that 80% of conflicts have a major effect on the performance of business organizations. The study further revealed that the British Business Conflicts make businesses lose about £33 billion annually (CEDR,

2008). Existing studies further suggest that, organizational productivity reduces as a result of interpersonal conflicts among employees. A study conducted by Taylor (2008) revealed that between 30% to 70% of managers' precious time is used to handle interpersonal conflicts among employees in an organization. This shows that unresolved conflicts may affect employees' performance in an organization. Misunderstanding among staff in an organization can affect job performance and working environment, therefore, making the work environment not conducive enough for effective work. Financially, it becomes disastrous and accordingly affects the performance of the organization as a whole, regardless of the type of organization.

According to Opatha (2015), organizational conflicts occur owing to matters regarding the structure of the organization and personal conflicts result from disagreements among workers. Some organizational reasons include inadequate resources for the various sections of the organization, differences in objectives, roles, unclear job description, responsibilities, position differences, interdependence and when an employee of the group overspecialized. With role ambiguity, Whitman et al (2012) opined that, unclearly defined roles cause conflict between managers and subordinates in organizations. Instances of personal sources of organizational conflicts include opinions, dominion, greediness or reluctance to communicate, disrespect and bad manners (Opatha, 2015). On the other hand, Amason (1996) observed that conflict within an organization affects the quality of decisions that employees make in the organization and thus, making it have a negative impact on their performance.

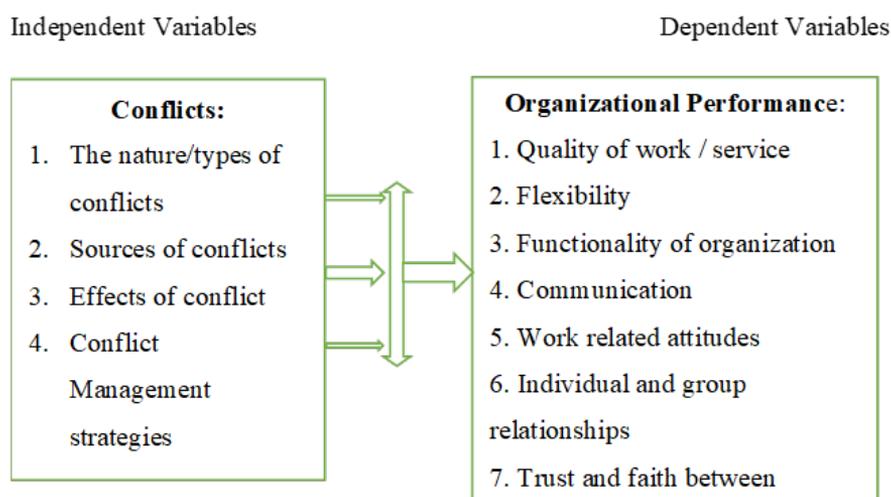
Besides, the quality and the amount of interaction between the disputants is characterized by hostilities perhaps including insults and this may continue for some time if not resolved as hinted by Bergman et al. (1989). Moreover, conflict affects the structures of organizations which may lead to the practice of autocratic leadership style (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). Conflict makes the organization to be task-oriented instead of employee-oriented. Groups develop internal cohesiveness and relations among individuals change because of conflict. Furthermore, in conflict situations, simple issues are made complex; and few become multiple and misunderstandings become very difficult to manage (Bettencourt, et al, 1992).

Empirical literature indicates that different organizations use different strategies in managing conflicts in their respective establishments. These strategies generally include avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration. The literature seems to suggest that in some instances, all these strategies are

applied in managing conflicts in organizations. Thus, the literature has not clearly indicated which strategy is the best in managing conflicts in organizations. None of them may even be applicable in CSIR-SARI. There is, therefore, the need to investigate the strategies that are used in CSIR-SARI in managing conflicts.

From Figure 1, it is evident that conflicts influence organizational performance. Thus, it can be observed that the independent variables which are nature/type of conflicts, sources of conflicts, effects of conflict and conflict management strategies influence the dependent variables which are quality of work/service, flexibility, functionality of organization, communication, work related attitudes, individual and group relationships, trust and faith between individuals and group(s).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Assessing the Role Conflicts Play in the Performance of CSIR-SARI.



The authors relied on the classical and organizational conflict theory of Henri Fayol (1916). The theory shares the view that conflicts in organizations are detrimental to organizational performance. Hence, if proper structures are put in place in organizations it will help minimize or eliminate conflicts in organizations. Fayol was of the view that if rules and procedures, hierarchy and channel of command are well put in place and are followed by members, it would minimize the effects of conflicts in organizations. Thus, the classical theorist considered organizational conflicts as dysfunction to organizations' effectiveness. Establishments were thus considered as closed systems. He recommended organizations to be mechanistic in nature with clearly defined job description, hierarchy of authority, division of labour and harmony of objectives with the aim of eliminating conflicts among employees in the organizations.

Opposite of the classicalist is the neo-classicalist; championed by Maslow (1943, 1954), Herzberg (1959) and McGregor (1960). These scholars view organizational conflicts as legitimate, inevitable and positive indicators of effective organizational management. According to these advocates, conflicts in organizations are inevitable and management should put in place conflicts' strategies to handle conflicts properly as they arise and the result will be very productive to the organization. To the neo-classicalists, organizational conflict should be encouraged to a certain limit. Thus, in their view, even though conflicts in organization should be encouraged, it should not go beyond certain limit as that would be disastrous to the organization. They contended that if conflicts are well managed in organizations, they will produce creative ideas, creative thinking and if possible new procedures of accomplishing organizational goals would be formulated. This group of people espoused that it is "healthy" for organizations to seek increase in intra-organizational conflicts. According to them, an organization with conflicts does not necessarily signify organizational weakness. Inter organizational conflicts to some extent aid an organization to change its ways of doing things. Conflicts in organizations are thus, not all the time bad or show as a sign of organizational weakness. It is in this frame of thinking that Lederach (2003) expresses conflict is normal in human relationships and it is a motor of change. It affects people both negatively and positively. Conflict is thus neither totally functional nor totally dysfunctional in nature. It simply has the potential for improving or impairing growth and development depending on how we act, react or both to conflict situations (Marfo and Halidu, 2018).

We move now to Dahrendorf's theory (1989, 2017) of power and dialectical change. Like earlier discussed by the neo-classical followers, Dahrendorf sees conflict as universally present in all human relations. But he doesn't see the inevitability of conflict as part of human nature; he sees it, rather, as a normal part of how we structure society and create social order. In this sense, the scholar is concerned with how social order is achieved. However, rather than assuming collective agreement about norms, values, and social positions, Dahrendorf argues that it is power that both defines and enforces the guiding principles of society. Dahrendorf also follows Coser in talking about the level of violence and its effects. Suggesting that, group solidarity influences political conflict. Primordial bonds give birth to primordial sentiment and loyalty. A primordial bond can form primordial sentiments and loyalties that produce strong solidarity between groups with fanaticism (loyalty) that strengthens integration. This facilitates conflict (Geertz, 1993)

## METHODOLOGY

Research design is the blue print that allows a researcher to meet the purpose of the research. Sim et al. (2018) define it as a general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research questions. Our study is qualitative. This study adopted the case study, which is regarded as a comprehensive research strategy which attempts to examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context (Yin, 2003). The case study helped the researchers in getting a richer understanding of the context of the research. Case studies look at data from the micro level. Key stakeholders were contacted for relevant data for this study. This paper is a descriptive survey through which views and opinions were randomly and purposively sampled from respondents.

Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) is one of the thirteen (13) Research Institutes that make up the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The mandate of CSIR-SARI is to “provide farmers in Northern, Upper East and Upper West, Savanna, North-East Regions with appropriate technologies to increase their food and fibre crop production based on a sustainable production system which maintains and/or increases soil fertility. The Vision is to “become the lead Research and Development (R&D) Institution by making agricultural research responsive to farmer needs and national development. CSIR-SARI’s Mission is to “conduct agricultural research in Northern Ghana with the aim of developing and introducing improved technologies that will enhance overall farm level productivity for improved livelihoods”. To achieve its mission, the Institute has adopted the Farming System Research Group method. A group is made of various disciplines such as Agronomists, Socio-Economists, Soil Scientists, Entomologists, Pathologist among others. The Institute has its main office at Nyankpala, Tamale in the Northern Region with out-stations in Wa in the Upper West Region (referred to as Upper West Farming Systems Research Group (UWFSRG) and Manga in the Upper East Region known as Upper East Farming Systems Research Group (UEFSRG). The Institute, like other organizations, works with people who by nature are prone to conflicts with some outcomes that affect the Institute. This is what the paper focuses on.

This study relied on primary data using questionnaire and interview guide to obtain information. Respondents to the study were drawn from the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The sample frame was made up of 368 employees of the CSIR-SARI. The population comprised 294 from SARI main, Nyankpala in the Northern Region, 35 from Wa Out Station in

the Upper West Region, and 39 from Manga Out Station in the Upper East Region.

Yamane' (1964) formula:

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

was used to compute the sample size for the study. Where n is the computed statistically representative sample size; N is the total staff population, while e is the margin of error which we set at 5%, essentially, the 95% confidence level. Given the population N = 368 at e = 0.05 and invoking the formulae above, a statistically representative sample of 192 was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{368}{1 + 368(0.05)^2} = 192$$

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the questionnaire administration. This method gave all employees of CSIR-SARI equal chance of being selected to participate in the study. According to Amedahe & Asamoah-Gyimah (2014), this technique provides reliable results. In all, 202 employees participated in the questionnaire administration. This sample was arrived at by adding 10 employees (5% of 192) to cater for possible attrition. In the view of (Estey, 2016), oversampling minimizes the impact of high attrition rate on the statistical analysis while at the same time improves upon the validity of the results. In the end, 200 questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. For the qualitative section, the purposive sampling method was used to select 20 employees (10% of 192) to participate in the interviews. According to Oduro (2015), to collect qualitative data, sampling should be purposeful. Purposive sampling gave the researchers the opportunity to select the appropriate sample that provided the information required. Both the simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used; guided by the proportionate sampling approach to ensure that respondents drawn proportionately represented all three stations of the Institute to avoid biasness.

Data were analyzed and discussed concurrently. Data generated from the questionnaires were analyzed using Excel and presented in tables and a graph.

Data collected with interviews were presented in narratives and direct quotations for emphasis. Results were then discussed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents to the research were profiled by age groups as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Age of respondent

Age	Frequency	Percent
25-35	117	58.5
36-45	61	30.5
46-55	20	10.0
56 and above	2	1.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Survey, May 2020

From Table 1, 58.5% of respondents fell within the age bracket of 25-35 years representing a frequency of 117. Also, 30.5% of them, representing 61 respondents were within the age bracket of 36-45 years. In addition, 10%, representing 20 respondents were in the age bracket of 46-55 years, and only 1% of them, representing 2 respondents fell within the age group of 56 years and above. Thus, majority of the respondents fell between 25 and 45 years age group and none of them being below 25 years. This indicates that respondents were matured enough to understand what conflicts are and could give useful responses for this research.

The sex composition of respondents to the study was presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	168	84.0
Female	32	16.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Survey, May 2019

In Table 2, male respondents to the study outnumber the female respondents. There were 168 male respondents and 32 female respondents, representing 84% and 16% respectively; indicating that the Institute is a male dominated organization. Despite the sex imbalance, the researchers were convinced of the representativeness of

data collected as we agree with Chusmir and Mills (1989) that there is no gender effect in the handling of conflicts, particularly, at the managerial level.

Data were gathered to ascertain which departments respondents fall under. The study also gathered data on respondents' length of service in the Institute. The researchers believed that the respondents' length of service in the Institute was very important as it would help solicit information from workers who had being with the Institute for a long time and had rich experience in conflicts in the Institute. Results on the department of the respondents and length of service in the institute are presented in Table 3.

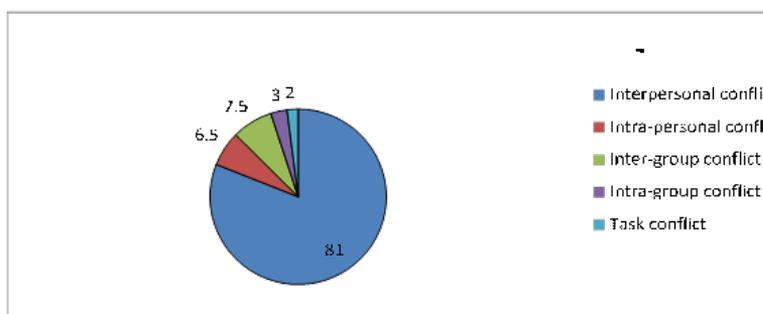
Table 3: Respondents' Department and length of service in the Institute

Department	Frequency	Percentage
Administration	130	65.0
Research	16	8.0
Accounts	9	4.5
Technicians	45	22.5
Working Period		
Below 5yrs	44	22.0
6-10	58	29.0
More than 10yrs	98	49.0

Source: Field Survey, May 2020

From Table 3, 65% of staff who participated in the study were under administration, 8% were in the research, and 4.5% in accounts division, with 22.5% being technicians. This shows that the majority of the respondents were in administrative positions. Also, from the Table 3, only 22% of the respondents, representing 44 respondents had served for less than 5 years in the Institute. The rest had served for more than 5 years each; with as many as 49% of them serving for more than 10 years. This means that majority of the respondents had being with the Institute for more than 10 years. Respondents therefore had enough experiences in terms of experiencing conflicts in the Institute and hence could give relevant responses for the study.

## Patterns of Conflicts at CSIR-SARI



Source: Field Survey, May 2020

Figure 2: Patterns of conflict in CSIR-SARI

From the analysis of data, conflicts in CSIR-SARI take the form of interpersonal conflict, intra-personal, inter-group conflict, intra-group conflict and task related conflict. The results revealed that interpersonal conflict is the most experienced in the organization with 81% ranking by respondents. Inter-group conflict is the second highest type of conflict followed by intra-personal conflict. Intra-group and task related conflicts were found to be minimal with percentages of 3 and 2 respectively.

The findings suggest that any policy intervention should primarily target the resolution of interpersonal conflicts. This however, is not to conclude that the other forms of conflicts as identified are of little concern. What this finding implies is that given the scarcity of resources, much effort should be directed towards the improvement of inter-personal relationships. The findings agree with Kumar (2009) whose study found that interpersonal, intra-personal, intergroup, intra-group and task related conflicts are the common forms of conflicts embedded in organizations. It is in this regard that Akparep, Bagah & Teng-Zeng, (2019) expressed that organizations are awashed with various forms of conflicts. This, however, disagreed with Aswathappa and Reddy (2009) who opined that conflicts in organizations are only intra-individual (personal), inter-personal, inter-group and intra-group in nature. An interviewee remarked “every conflict in the organization has the tendency of affecting productivity and must not be underrated” (Interviews, May 2020).

Another respondent said:

Interpersonal conflicts are on the rise in the Institute and it is causing a lot of fragmentation among workers. Management should pay much attention and reduce it in the Institute to reduce its effects. Some departments in the Institute are retrogressing seriously as a result of interpersonal conflicts. Honestly, most of these conflicts are as a result of negative utterances from some workers and management should strive hard to stop them. Every individual has limits that he/she can tolerate others. But will react if are pushed beyond such limits (Interviews, May 2020).

### **Sources of Conflicts in CSIR-SARI**

Rothman (1992) earlier hinted that when symptoms instead of causes are addressed, wounds are merely bandaged not healed, and they may fester. With this understanding, the researchers asked the respondents to express their views on the sources of the various conflicts in the organization given a Likert Scale of 1- strongly agreed, 2-agreed, 3-strongly disagreed, 4-disagreed, and 5- not sure. The results are captured by Table 4.

Table 4: Sources of Conflicts in CSIR-SARI

Conflicts Sources	Scores (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Non-respect for organizational structure	21.9	31	20.6	20.6	5.8
2. Poor communication/Miscommunication	31.0	54.2	5.8	9	0
3. Ambiguity and role conflict	14.8	38.7	16.8	19.4	10.3
4. Repetitive negative behavior	20.0	58.7	4.5	8.4	8.4
5. Perceived breach of trust and faith between individuals	21.3	56.1	15.5	4.5	2.6
6. Strong negative misperceptions	12.3	60	13.5	8.4	5.8
7. Goal differences/incompatible goals	9.7	47.1	13.5	18.7	9.7
8. Unresolved disagreement escalating to an emotional level	25.2	44.5	19.4	8.4	2.6
9. Issues of wages and salaries	20.6	23.9	23.9	25.8	5.8
10. Unfavorable government policies	12.3	34.2	20.6	21.9	11
11. Lack of cordial relationship between labor and management	25.2	40.0	14.2	16.1	4.5
12. Poor Performance	14.2	31.6	17.4	30.3	6.5
13. Personal clashes or problem of ego	29.7	38.1	10.3	13.5	8.4
14. Differences in values and believes	17.4	35.5	16.8	27.1	3.2
15. Deficiency in information system	18.7	43.2	18.7	16.1	3.2
16. Job stress	20.6	32.9	15.5	28.4	2.5
17. Ambiguous rules	13.5	40.6	13.5	24.5	7.7
18. Authority conflict	23.2	36.1	16.1	9.7	14.8
19. Inconsistent evaluation and reward system	21.2	33.5	20	17.4	7.7

Source: Field Survey, May 2020

The study found that, ambiguity and role conflict scored 14.8% (strongly agreed), 38.7% (agreed), 16.8% and 19.4% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively, whilst 10.3% of the respondents not being sure that ambiguity and role conflict are a source of conflicts in CSIR-SARI. Thus, in aggregate, 53.5% respondents either strongly agreed or agreed whilst an aggregate of 36.2% either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Repetitive negative behaviour to the respondents was also a major source, because 20% and 58.7% of them strongly agreed and agreed respectively

(cumulatively 78.7%) to this proposition, but 4.5% and 8.4% respectively strongly disagreed and disagreed (12.9% aggregate) with this view, with 8.4% of them not being sure. Findings further showed that perceived breach of trust and faith between individuals was causing conflict among workers. With this, 21.3% said they strongly agree, 56.1% said "agreed", 15.5% strongly disagreed, 4.5% of them disagreed whereas 2.6% were not sure of these statements been conflict sources. The rest are strong negative misperceptions scoring 12.3% (strongly agreed), 60% (agreed), 13.5% (strongly disagreed), 8.4% (disagreed), and 5.8% (not been sure).

From the findings in Table 4, the sources of conflicts include non-respect for organizational structure, miscommunication, ambiguity and role conflict, repetitive negative behaviours, perceived breach of trust and faith between individuals, goal differences incompatible goals, among others. These revelations are consistent with Obasan's (2011), who identified incompatible goals, scarce resource, and poor communication as contributing factors of conflict in an organization. This is why Mughal (2013) asserted that the cause of organisational conflict is often misunderstood and blamed on personalities and misbehaviour, but in reality, much organisation conflict is systemic and endemic to workplace environment.

Indeed, Opatha's (2015), study identified that the sources of conflict in organizations can be classified into two. That is, organizational and personal. He found that, organizational conflict sources include; organizational structure, competing for limited resources, differences in goals, differences in the roles that members perform, unclear jurisdiction, among others. He also found out that personal reasons for conflict in organization can be different among employees. In support of non-respect for organizational structures being a source of conflict in the Institute, an interviewee said this:

"Structures are not respected by workers. People deal with their favourites in

SARI but not those the structures have instructed to deal with. This builds up a lot of bitterness among workers and that is promoting interpersonal conflict in SARI' (Interviews, May 2020).

The emerging idea is that rules governing the organization are side stepped and people resort to approaches that favour them thereby creating bitterness among workers. Probing further, the researchers wanted to know the main sources of conflicts in SARI: Interviewee 1 (May 2020) indicated:

“In my view the main source of conflict in this Institute is poor communication. That is, poor dissemination of important information to workers and negative utterances from some superiors to subordinates”.

Corroborating, Courage, another respondent in an interview in May 2, 2020, expressed:

“The main cause of conflict in this Institute is repetitive negative behaviour. How do you expect a subordinate to tolerate negative behaviours such as open insults, rebuke, and direct attack from a superior all the time? Subordinates are equally humans and should be treated with a sense of respect and decorum”.

The study revealed repetitive negative behaviours, non-respect for organizational structure and poor communication/miscommunication as the major sources of conflicts in the Institute. Role ambiguity was identified as a prominent source of conflict in the Institute and this finding is in line with the position of Whitman et al. (2012) who concluded from a study that when a role is unclearly defined, it causes manager-subordinate conflicts in organizations.

## Effects of Conflicts on CSIR-SARI

Table 5: Effects of Conflicts on CSIR-SARI

conflict effect (%)	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of direction	31	46.5	3.9	17.4	1.3
Communication breakdown	29	59.4	5.8	4.5	1.3
Low productivity	23.2	49.7	9	14.2	3.9
Lack of new ideas	19.4	46.5	11.6	15.5	7.1
Low morale	25.2	43.9	15.5	7.1	8.4
poor quality of work	18.1	40	25.2	7.7	9.0
Fragmentation	29	49	7.7	9.7	4.5
Insubordination	30.3	54.2	9.7	5.8	0.0

Source: Field Survey, May 2020

Analysed on a Likert Scale rating of 1(Strongly Agree), 2(Agree), 3(Strongly Disagree) and 5(Disagree) 5(Not Sure), Table 5 shows that, majority of the respondents agreed strongly that the consequences of conflicts on CSIR-SARI as an institution were lack of direction, which scored 31% (strongly agree), and 46.5% agreeing to this statement. In aggregate, 77.5% either strongly agreed or agreed that lack of direction occurs due to conflicts. On the contrary, an aggregate of 21.3% either strongly disagreed or disagreed that conflict leads to lack of direction. Per the findings, conflicts have brought about communication breakdown in the Institute, and this was endorsed by 29% and 59.4% of the respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing respectively, with 5.8% of them strongly disagreeing, whereas 4.5% disagreed entirely.

The data further showed that, 23.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and 49.7% of them agreed that conflict causes low productivity. However, 9% (strongly disagreed) and 14.2% (disagreed) with this statement. Some 19.4% and 46.5% of the respondents respectively strongly agreed and agreed that lack of new ideas is what they have uncovered as a result of conflicts in CSIR-SARI. This statement received rejection from some respondents, who strongly disagreed (11.6%) and disagreed (15.5%) that conflicts in CSIR-SARI had led to lack of new ideas from workers. The Data revealed an aggregate of 69.1%, that is 25.2% (strongly agreed) and 43.9% (agreed) of respondents accepted that conflicts have resulted in low employee morale, whilst 15.5% (strongly disagreed) and 7.1% (disagreed) with this discovery.

The study further revealed that, an aggregate of 58.1% either strongly agreed or agreed that poor quality of work at the Institutes was as a result of conflicts. These respondent were of the opinion that conflicts had reduced the quality of work that was seen years past as compared to recent times. In an interview, a respondent said: 'Many workers are no longer committed to the work because of one offence or the other'.

However, an aggregate 32.9% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the assertion that the conflicts have brought about poor quality of work. The Findings also showed that, 29% (strongly agreed) and 49% (agreed) of the respondents believing that the conflicts in CSIR-SARI had led to fragmentation, though 7.7% (strongly disagreed) and 9.7% (disagreed) to this view. Further

30.3% (strongly agreed) and 54.2% (agreed) of the respondents asserted that, the unnecessary conflicts in the Institute are breeding insubordination. But a minority of the respondents strongly disagreed (9.7%) and disagreed (5.8%) to this assertion. In response to whether conflict can negatively affect employees besides organizational culture and outcome if not well handled, all the 200 respondents affirmed that the overall performance of the Institute is at stake if conflicts were not handled well. The respondents asserted that they do agree that conflicts can hamper effective interpersonal and group relationships in every organization and that, the dysfunctional conflicts been experienced are harmful to the organization as they do not support the achievement of the Institute's goals. As noted by Opatha (2015), conflict brings about lack of unity, underdevelopment, communication breakdown, slowdown organizational growth, increase staff absenteeism, leads to delays in accomplishing targets and all these lead to poor output.

### Effects of Conflict on Employees of CSIR-SARI

Table 6: Effects of Conflict on Employees of CSIR-SARI

Effect	Frequency	Percentage
It lowers moral	176	88
It discourages commitment	7	3.5
It denominates workers	6	3
It breeds distrust and suspiscion	11	5.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, May 2020

The study revealed that, 176 respondents representing 88% believed that conflict leads to low employee morale. Also, 3.5% representing 7 respondents said it discourages commitment; while 3% (6) of them believed "it denominates workers". For 5.5% of respondents said "it breeds distrust and suspicion" among workers which lead to continuous enmity among workers. Respondents were also asked whether the conflicts hamper workers' productivity. Majority of the respondents (196) representing 98% affirmed the question. Only 2% representing 4 respondents however, responded in the negative. They expressed that since they receive their monthly salary all the time, they do not see why they should allow differences between them and others to affect the overall output of the Institution. The findings further indicated that changes that do occur between groups as a result

of the dysfunction were: distortion of workers perceptions, negative stereotyping, decreased communication, and violence and aggression. On the kind of conflicts problems that do occur between management and staff, findings revealed insubordination, staff dissatisfaction, rudeness, absenteeism, friction and physical assault, and peer group influence as the kind of conflicts problems. This finding is in line with Ramsay et al's (2000), study that, workplace conflict as a drain on leadership time if not could result in higher absenteeism, mistakes, and worker exhaustion which at the long run long affects the general morale and productivity as results of worn down by the tension.

Respondents' views were sought in an interview on what they thought were the negative effects of conflict on CSIR-SARI's performance. Respondents stated that, when it comes to performance in CSIR-SARI, conflict plays a huge role, as it demoralizes workers' commitment to work, delay the execution of a particular work that needs to be done within stipulated period, and in some cases lead to sabotage of a system just with the intention of punishing colleagues. In the words of a respondent:

Conflict between you and a co-worker can lead to your transfer or suspension. All these negatively affect the Institute's performance. Because as people are moved from one station to the other, the morale and commitment begins to diminish. Such an employee will feel that he/she is being witch-hunted. With this, dissatisfaction will set in leading to low performance (Interviews, May 2020).

From the analysis of the data, it is evident that conflict in CSIR-SARI has affected employees in diverse ways which invariably have disastrous consequences on the overall organization outcomes. The findings corroborate the view of the classical organizational theorists (Fayol, 1916/1949; Taylor, 1992), when they asserted that conflicts in organizations are detrimental to organizational effectiveness and performance.

Probing further, the study revealed that conflicts contribute positively to organizations in that they help in building cooperation among workers after resolution as indicated by 81% of the study respondents. Also, 92.5% of the respondents believed the conflicts after resolution bring out skills on ways to manage further conflict through learning; whilst 94% had the view that the conflicts improve quality of decisions; and help to increase innovativeness and productivity. Thus, in the view of these respondents, the conflicts do not have

only negative outcomes on the Institute, but also, positive results. These findings support Wilmot (1995) work, which found that conflict could be good and not every conflict is bad. Respondents to the study believed the conflicts can promote organizational growth based on the conflict nature and how effective they are handled by management. The findings, thus, are in line with that of Angelina (2014) whose study found that 93.8% of respondents (546 employees) agreed that team building contribute positively to group cohesion and this promote the performance of organization. This was affirmed by an interviewee who expressed that conflicts when handled effectively open the Institute to new ideas that will enhance productivity. The findings of the current study further confirm the position of Robbins and Judge (2013), when they found that functional conflict promotes the achievement of group goals. That is, the outcome of the conflict brings about improvement of group performance.

### **Mechanisms of Managing Conflict at CSIR-SARI**

Table 7: Mechanisms of Managing Conflict at CSIR-SARI

Mechanism	Score (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Improving communication	77	13	4	6	0
Accommodating every individual	27.5	49.5	11.6	6.5	4.9
There being constant dialogue	40	48.5	6.5	5	0
At times compromising	14	55	15	4.5	11
Avoidance of each other	7.5	7	54.8	26.6	4
Dominating by force on other workers	5.5	4.5	43.2	30.7	16.1
Problem solving	58.3	35.7	4.5	0	1.5
Re- orientation	20.6	65.8	1.5	2.5	9.5

Source: Field Survey, May 2020

Results in Table 7 were analysed based on a Likert Scale rating of 1(Strongly Agree), 2(Agree), 3(Strongly Disagree) and 5(Disagree) 5(Not Sure). It is shown in Table 7 that the most used mechanism of managing the conflicts was the problem solving with an aggregate of 94% of respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing to its use. This was followed by improving communication between and among workers as rated by an aggregate of 90% respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing

as being a mechanism of dealing with conflicts in the Institute. Dialogue was identified as been used by 88.5% of the respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed. The study also revealed that 20.6% (strongly agree) and 65.8% (agreed) of the respondents believed there was use of the strategy of staff "re-orientation". Findings further indicated 27.5% (strongly agree) and 49.5% (agree) that the strategy of accommodation was used; with only 11.6% respondents strongly disagreeing and 6.5% disagreeing. Also, 14% (strongly agree) and 55% (agree) of the respondents viewed compromising as a strategy the Institute uses.

It is clear from Table 7 that, the Institute resorts mostly to the problem solving mechanism of managing conflicts. This is followed by improving communication. The dialogue mechanism was next in line in use. Re-orientation was also found to be largely used in the Institute in handling conflicts. Other mechanisms used in the Institute in dealing with conflicts were found to include accommodation and compromises. The study respondents believe in immediate resolution of conflicts as they arise; adopting regular re-orientation of workers; discouraging avoidance and dominating by force on other workers. These finding are in line with Thomas-Kilmann (1976)'s five style model of conflicts management. Our finding affirms that managers should engage in an open discussion on conflict management in different individual contexts (Tjosvold, 2008). Through this discussion, individuals might understand the importance of task conflict and how it can be used effectively.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conflicts in CSIR-SARI take the form of interpersonal, intra-personal, inter-group, intra-group and task related conflicts with interpersonal conflicts being the most experienced; ranked at 81% by respondents. The main source of conflicts in the Institute is poor communication. Other major sources of the conflicts in the Institute include repetitive negative behaviours, non-respect for organizational structure, ambiguity and role conflict; perceived breach of trust and faith between individuals and goal differences/incompatible goals. The study revealed that, 176 respondents, representing 88% believed that the conflicts lead to low employee morale. Other effects identified were that: the conflicts discourage commitment, breeds insubordination, staff dissatisfaction, rudeness, absenteeism, friction and physical assault, distrust and suspicion. The rest are: communication breakdown, lack of new

ideas, poor quality of work, waste of resources and interference with operations of the Institute, delay in the execution of tasks and in some cases lead to sabotage of a system just with the intention of punishing colleagues; all hampering workers' productivity, hence low productivity to the Institute as they do not support the achievement of Institute's goals. On the positive note, the conflicts were found to be able to build cooperation among workers after resolution; help employees to develop; bring out skills on ways to manage further conflict; improve quality of decisions; and help to increase innovativeness and productivity.

The study found that at CSIR-SARI, conflicts are managed through problem solving, improving communication and dialogues, re-orientation of staff, accommodating and compromising. The study recommended the adoption of very effective strategies in the management of conflicts to improve the Institute's performance and productivity. These include effectively improving communication between and among employees, relying more on problem solving than other strategies, accommodating every individual and resorting to constant dialogue to ease tension and create friendly atmosphere for work to flourish as well as on well negotiated compromises. The avoidance and dominating strategies should be discouraged. Leaders/heads of the Institute and its departments or groups should work at managing conflicts by dealing with them as quickly, unbiased and impartially as possible. Furthermore, the study respondents believed that an organization that is knowledgeable of conflict resolution strategies suffers fewer conflicts, and its customers are always pleased. For this reason, training the Institute's officials in the management of conflict would help reduce staff conflict.

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