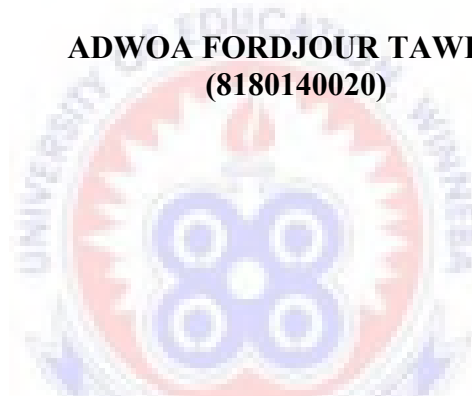


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF WORKPLACE CONFLICT IN THE ASOKWA  
MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY**

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(8180140020)**



**A thesis in the Department of Social Studies Education,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, Submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Social Studies)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**DECEMBER 2020**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Adwoa Fordjour Tawiah, hereby declare that this research, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been duly identified and acknowledged has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

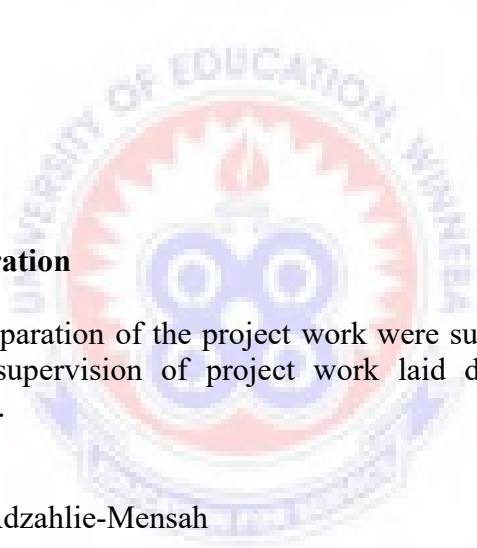
### Supervisor's declaration

I certify that the preparation of the project work were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name: Dr Vincent Adzahlie-Mensah

Signature: .....

Date: .....



## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my daughter, Delight Anima Yeboah.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to register my immeasurable thanks to the Almighty God, who is the source of all wisdom and knowledge, for seeing me through from the time of admission till the completion of my program. I am indebted to all those special people who contributed in various ways to the successful completion of this study. Finally, my special thanks go to my supervisor, Dr Vincent Adzahlie-Mensah, for his prompt feedbacks, concern and the many valuable and insightful comments and suggestions he made to improve the work.

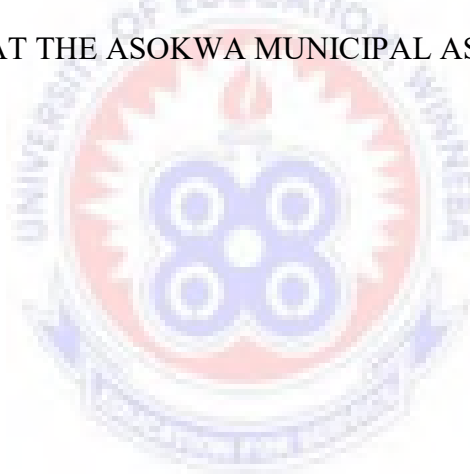


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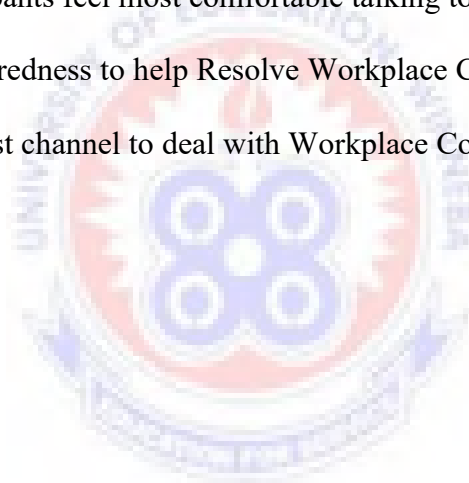
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## ABSTRACT

The work was designed to examine workplace conflicts at Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The objectives were to analyse the forms of workplace conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly, examine the sources of workplace conflict on the employees in Asokwa Municipal Assembly, explore the consequences of workplace conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly and analyse the preferred workplace conflict management strategies among the staff of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The research was mainly designed as a qualitative case study that employed multiple methods of data collection. Data was collected using questionnaire and interviews. A total of 60 participants were involved in the study. They were selected using convenience, multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques. The analysis highlights that there are different kinds of workplace conflicts at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly all of which are counter-productive. The conflicts are caused by human factors such as discrimination or preferential treatment in promotion processes and unfair workloads and disparity over work hours. Politicisation of the management of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly also emerged strongly as one of the major causes of staff-management conflict. The effects of conflict on the Asokwa Municipal Assembly are low morale and loss of quality personnel leading to low productivity and efficiency. The conflicts have created divisions, groups and cliques within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Base on the outcome of the study, it is recommended that the Asokwa Municipal Assembly should develop clear, concise and publicly available policy on conflict management. Also, the Assembly should develop workplace conflict resolution protocols to provide guidelines on how grievances should be addressed.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, the increased complexity and interdependency of contemporary issues have created a greater need for workplace cooperation and a greater possibility for workplace conflict. Today's employers experience both the benefits and challenges of an increasingly diverse workforce, and this results in a variety of beliefs, opinions, values and attitudes, which enrich the organization. However, it is these differences in beliefs, opinions, values and attitudes that will, at some point, inevitably lead to conflicts (Meluch & Walter, 2012, p.31). As conveyed by Pace (1983): „conflict-free company has never existed and never will exist. Antagonisms, tensions, aggressions, stereotypes, negative attitudes and the frustrations of perceived conflicting needs will always be present wherever men are forced to live and work together“:

Conflict is associated with the central processes of people and their association with the surroundings and is, therefore, an unavoidable part of organizational life (Jones & George, 2003). Dealing with conflicts in organisations has over the years been seen as the sole responsibility of the managers who often times took a rigid stand on how to deal with it; organisations that address conflicts in this manner failed to recognise that conflict is natural in organisational life, and has its own both benefits and costs. In social life, conflicts do occur, but they are managed by family members, friends and relatives. The same applies to workplaces, when conflicts arise, they need to be resolved by management for the sake of organizational growth, survival and enhanced performance. However, conflicts are

rarely resolved easily, to a certain extent, most conflicts are managed, as individuals work out their differences.

Conflict is seen as a natural occurrence that routinely impacts both personal and work relationships (Meluch & Walter, 2012, 31), so conflicts exist at workplaces as well. According to the Foundation Coalition, (2003) cited in Obeng (2015), conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals. Conflict is like fire or electricity, is a good servant but can be a bad master depending on how it is handled or managed.

Workplace conflict results when an individual or a group perceives that its goals, values or opinions are being spoiled by interdependent counterpart (Meluch & Walter, 2012, p.31). Conflicts have been said to occur in organisations, when normal activities are disrupted to the extent that it becomes difficult to achieve the organisational goals and objectives (More & Wegener, 1992). More precisely, organisations are confronted with many forms of inter-personal conflicts which can be disrupting to achieving organisational goals. Additionally, as a result of diversity at the workplace, conflicts are on the increase. Dumaine and Nohria (1991) posited, that as companies try out with flatter more decentralized organizational structures, their workers become more and more interdependent and responsible for more decision -making. These changes mean new types of conflict will arise among different groups of workers relative to those experienced in bureaucratically-structured organizations.

As more minorities, women, foreign nationals and employees with different experience and educational backgrounds are entering the workforce, this diversity unescapably leads to conflicts different from those experienced by a more

standardized workforce (Fiol, 1994; Williams & O'Riley, 1998). Conflicts at the workplace can become a complex matter having damaging effects on organisation's employees' physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, escalating into unmanageable heights, thus harming the goals of an organisation (Caudron, 1998). However, conflicts do not have to be a destructive element; when handled properly, they can be of immense benefit to both employees and organisations as well. In an attempt to explain the nature of conflicts, many scholars have postulated theories to guide in their understanding. Among them is the traditional theory which sees conflicts as bad, but not good for organisations and as such, should be avoided. Contemporary theories, however, recognize that conflicts between human beings are inevitable, and if well managed, can bring positive results to organisations.

Tillett and French (2006) believed that conflicts encourage dialogue, and this helps with individual and organisational growth as it provides opportunities for problems to be solved and help organisations to advance. Supporting the statement, Eunson (2007) opined that conflicts can help change complacency through productive means. This is because conflicts, sometimes encourage a self-review of one's self and develop one's critical thinking for better performance. Hotepo (2010) also viewed conflict as positive when it encourages creativity, new looks at old conditions, the clarification of points of view and the development of human capabilities to handle interpersonal differences.

Unresolved workplace conflicts can sometimes lead to litigation with its attendant problems, and the willingness of employees to sue their employer have exposed almost all employers to an increasing volume of litigation related to work-place conduct or the human resource decisions made on daily basis. Understanding

conflicts and how to manage or resolve them should be an integral part of what and how managers should learn; such understanding is essential for the personal well-being and success of individuals as well as the long-term success of organisations (Singleton, Toombs, Taneja, Larkin, & Pryor, 2011).

In Africa, the consequences of unresolved conflicts at the workplace on employees are overwhelming. Conflicts in organizations are a daily occurrence because a consensus of opinion concerning rules governing the organization seldom exists among line employees. Employees, thus see one another as adversaries, and not as partners working towards a common goal, as the case should be in the organization.

Studies have presented several organizational conflicts in developed societies, such studies highlight measures that have been applied to mitigate the associated problem. Despite these knowledge, the problem still persists. . In African, studies in Nigeria and South Africa highlighted conflicts in private and public sector organizations. This study was designed to explore workplace conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Dana (2001) estimated that 65 percent of performance problems result from interpersonal conflicts between employees represent a huge expense for organizations. In addition, he opined that unresolved organization conflicts represent the largest cost in many businesses, yet it remains largely unrecognized. The harsh economic conditions and high inflation rates being experienced in the country have greatly affected the profitability of various organizations including Assemblies, resulting in cost cutting measures.

In today's business atmosphere, conflicts at the workplace are a noteworthy issue, which has become a complex matter having damaging effects on organisation's employees' physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing escalating into unmanageable heights, thus harming the mission and goals of an organisation (Caudron, 1998). Though organizational conflicts are known, broadly, it is, however, apparent that proper attention has not been paid to the issue of workplace conflicts in a developing country such as Ghana. Sources of the phenomenon of workplace conflicts, the associated implications and the remedies or support systems required by employees, workplace conflicts still persist. As such, this research seeks to build on findings within the international literature by providing a Ghanaian situational context using the cases of workplace conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to assess the sources and implications of workplace conflicts and the interventions that may be helpful to addressing such problem.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. determine the forms of conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.
- ii. analyse the causes of conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.
- iii. explore the consequences of conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.
- iv. analyse the preferred workplace conflicts management strategies of the staff at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions.

- i. What are the forms of workplace conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly?
- ii. What are the sources of workplace conflicts on the employees in Asokwa Municipal Assembly?
- iii. What are the consequences of workplace conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly?
- iv. What are the preferred workplace conflicts management strategies of staff in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study will have great significance for the field of Social Studies, in terms of understanding the relational complexities of conflicts at the workplace. It will be useful for those involved in conflict resolution. Policy makers and those involved in development assistance will find the results useful in their programme design.

Furthermore, the study will serve as a reference for researchers to study the same or similar problem in other District Assemblies. It will also serve as a reference materials on workplace conflict. Finally, the finding and success of the research will motivate the researcher to conduct researches into other difficulty areas of studies.

### **1.7 Limitations**

Firstly, the study was limited because it did not involve a wider population of people. It was a case study and the results cannot be generalised. Also, the study was limited to the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.



## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the contextual background for the study. It is from this context that a problem statement was identified. Objectives of the study and the research questions were drawn from the problem statement identifying the significance and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review supporting the objectives and research questions of the study. This second chapter is divided into two parts, part one reviews literature that relate to the study. It considers the views of authors that have relevance to the subject of study. The literature is reviewed under the following themes: the meaning of workplace conflicts, features of workplace conflicts, levels of workplace conflicts, types of workplace conflicts, theories of workplace conflicts, sources of workplace conflicts, implications of conflict on employees and strategies of resolving workplace conflict.

Part two examines the literature underpinning the theoretical framework on the workplace conflict at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The major theory that underpinned the study was the Social Conflict Theory.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology employed for the study. It discusses the significance of the research approach and the design adopted for this study. This third chapter focuses on and describes the study area, the population and sampling techniques that were employed to explore the study objectives. This chapter describes the processes and procedures for data collection, including gaining community entry, interviews, questionnaire and data recording. The chapter explains the methods and procedures used and the data analysis tool employed in the study which was

transcription, analysis, coding and categorisation of data. Lastly, this chapter describes the study ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and discussion of workplace conflict at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Chapter 5 presents and discusses the main findings, recommendations based on the major findings and the conclusions.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature that relate to the study. It considers the views of authors that have relevance to the subject of study. The literature is reviewed under the following themes: the meaning of workplace conflicts, features of workplace conflicts, levels of workplace conflicts, types of workplace conflicts, theories of workplace conflicts, sources of workplace conflicts, implications of conflicts on employees and strategies of resolving workplace conflict.

#### **2.2 The Meaning of Conflict**

There is no universally accepted definition of conflict, because conflict experts continually find it difficult to come to a consensus concerning the definition of this term (Borisoff & Victor 1998). The easiest way to understand the term, “conflict” is to divide theories of conflict into functional, situational and interactive. The followers of the functional approach think that a conflict serves a social function and those who view a conflict as situational, suggest that conflict is an expression under certain situations, while other view conflicts as interactive. Functionalists usually ask the questions: “Why is there a conflict? What purpose does it serve?” Situationalists also ask, „“When do we have conflict? Under what circumstances does it occur?” Interactionalists also ask, “How is there conflict? What methods and mechanisms are used to express it?” (Borisoff & Victor, 1998, pp. 78-80).

One of the representatives of the functionalist school was Georg Simmel, a German sociologist (1955) cited in Omisore and Abiodun (2014), who defined conflict as a design to resolve divergent dualisms; it is a way of achieving some

kind of unity, even if it will be through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties. According to Simmel, conflict served as a social purpose and reconciliation came even with the total destruction of one party. Conflict socializes members into a group and reduces the tension between group members.

Furthermore, Simmel determined three possible ways to end a conflict. Firstly, conflict may end with a victory of one party over another; secondly, the conflict can be resolved through compromise; and thirdly, through conciliation.

Coser (1967), an American sociologist, defined conflict as a clash of values and interests, the tension between what is, and what some groups feel ought to be. According to Coser (1967), conflict serves the function of pushing society and was leading to new institutions, technology and economic systems. The most important contribution of Coser to conflict resolution was the determination of the functional and dysfunctional roles of conflict. A representative of the situationalist school, Bercovitch (2011) defined conflict as a situation which generates incorruptible goals or values among different parties. To Bercovitch, conflict depends on the situation. Conflicts arise because of different conditions, such as the influence of a person and external factors.

Concerning the interactive view, Folger (1993) and Omisore and Abiodun (2014), defined conflict as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving these goals. This approach introduces two important concepts, namely interdependence and perception. Interdependence is connected to such situations where one party's future actions depend on another party's actions. Another concept which was mentioned by Tillett (1991) cited in Omisore & Abiodun 2014, was that, conflict does not only come

about when values or needs are actually, objectively incompatibles, or when conflict is manifested in action; it exists when one of the parties perceives it to exist.

Cross, Names and Beck (1979) cited in Omisore and Abiodun (2014) defined conflict as differences between and among individuals. The differences are created by the conflict, for example, values, goals, motives, resources and ideas. Hocker and Wilmot (2007) and Omisore and Abiodun (2014) defined conflict as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards and interference from the other party in achieving their goals. Thomas (2005) and Omisore and Abiodun (2014) also defined conflict as a disagreement in opinions between people or groups, due to differences in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs. In the business world, differences in such characteristics as work experience, personality, peer group, environment and situation, all lead to difference in personal attitudes, beliefs, values or needs.

According to Thomas (1976) and Oni-Ojo, Iyiola, and Osibanjo (2014), conflicts can range from friendly competition to extreme violence, therefore, conflict is the process which begins when one party recognizes that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his or hers. Rahim (1992) and Oni-Ojo et al, (2014) stated that conflict is the interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities. Folger, Scott, Poole, and Stutman (2005) and Oni-Ojo et al, (2014) defined conflict as the interaction of independent people who perceive incompatibility and the possibility of interference from others as a result of this incompatibility. Cahn and Abigail (2007) and Oni-Ojo et al, (2014) also defined conflict as a problematic situation, differing perceptions and

desired outcomes, interdependence, potential which adversely affect the relationship between individuals. Robbins (1978) and Oni-Ojo et al, (2014), defined conflict as any kind of opposition or antagonistic interaction between two or more parties. Conflict, according to De Dreu, Harinck, and Van Vianen (1999) and Oni-Ojo et al, (2014), can also be viewed as a process that begins when an individual or group perceives differences and opposition between oneself and another individual or group about interests, beliefs or values that matter to them. Conflict is a likely result of contacts within family, friends, and colleagues, as well as between managers and their subordinates (Suppiah & Rose, 2006; Oni-Ojo et al, 2014). Thus, conflict is inevitable whenever human element is involved.

### **2.3 The Meaning of Workplace Conflict**

Ramani and Zhimin (2010) and Tsede and Adjadogo (2016), reported that organisational conflict occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with that of colleagues within their network, members of other groups or unaffiliated individuals who utilise the services or products of the organisation.

Dana (2001) and Tsede and Adjadogo (2016), explained that workplace conflict is a condition between or among workers whose jobs are interdependent, who feel angry, who perceive the other as being at fault and who act in ways that cause a problem. De Dreu and Gelfand (2007) and Tsede and Adjadogo (2016) argued that workplace conflict may arise because of scarce resources (e.g. time, status, budgets) or values (such as political preferences, beliefs, religion, moral and social values). According to Kazimoto (2013) and Longe (2015) cited in Tsede and Adjadogo (2016), workplace conflict is described as the presence of discord that occurs when goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and frustrate each other's

attempt to achieve objectives in an organization. It is a communication process and an inevitable consequence of transaction relationship manifesting in disagreement and dissonance with and between individuals and groups in the work-environment.

## **2.4 Features of Workplace Conflict**

The features of workplace conflicts are explained below:

### **2.4.1 Interdependence**

According to Wilmot and Hocker (2007) and Harris (2011), if there was no interdependence there would be no conflict. They look at interdependence as being the need of one party to have the other party change their position. Ellis and Anderson (2005) cited in Harris (2011), added that interdependence is the core variable that conflict is always based on. They claimed that the level of interdependence decides whether parties will compete or collaborate in resolving conflicts. The higher the level of interdependence, the higher the likelihood that parties will collaborate. This appears slightly simplistic as it assumes that people will only act selfishly.

Cahn and Abigail (2007) and Harris (2011) asserted that interdependence occurs when those involved in a relationship characterize it as important and worth the effort to maintain. This is also problematic as they claim that conflict has interdependence as an essential feature. This means from their perspective, conflict cannot occur between people who do not have a relationship that they think is important and worth the effort to maintain. This appears to be flawed thinking as most people have experienced conflicts with others they do not have important relationships with. Masters and Albright (2002), cited in Harris (2011) provided a definition that overcomes these flaws. In their view, interdependence cannot be resolved so that there is a mutually satisfying outcome without mutual effort.

#### **2.4 .2 Conflict as Neutral**

There is broad acceptance among social scientists that conflict is misperceived and misunderstood by the general public. Such social scientists include Tillett and French (2006), Tillett (1999), Lulofs and Cahn (2000), Ellis and Anderson (2005), Stitt (1998), Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher (2003), Eunson (2007) and Cahn and Abigail, (2007). Lulofs and Cahn (2000) and Cahn and Abigail (2007) and Harris (2011) claimed that conflict is often incorrectly perceived as a disruption of the normal function of society. Some writers suggest that people tend to incorrectly perceive conflict as negative and use the word “conflict” to label situations that are not really conflicts (Brandon & Robertson 2007; Harris, 2011).

With so many social scientists claiming that the general public misconceives conflict, it is worthwhile reflecting on why the public have made this mistake. One useful explanation comes from Masters and Albright (2002) cited in Harris (2011), who contended that conflicts can occur before any conflict behaviors become evident. Conflicts exist at the moment that one party feels disagreement, at that moment the conflict is neither constructive (positive) nor destructive (negative), it is best looked at as neutral. It is what happens subsequently, that is how the parties choose to behave once they realize that there is a conflict, which determines whether the conflict will manifest positively or negatively. The implications of this are significant as it means that what happens subsequent to that moment of conflict, where disagreement is felt psychologically by one of the parties is a result of the conflict rather than being the conflict itself. Tillett and French (2006, p.1) and Harris (2011) contended, Fighting and arguing should not be looked at as being conflict, but as responses to or manifestations of conflict.



### **2.4.3 Conflict on a Normal Part of Life**

Most researchers accept that conflict is a normal part of life (Tillett & French, 2006; Tillett, 1999; Stitt, 1998; Lulofs and Cahn, 2000; Brandon & Robertson, 2007; Ellis & Anderson, 2005; Eunson, 2007; Masters & Albright, 2002; Cahn & Abigail, 2007; Harris 2011). However some go further and claim that it is, in fact, an essential part of life. Burton (1972, pp.137-138) cited in Harris 2011), stated:

Conflict, like sex is an essential creative element in human relationships. It is the means to change, the means by which our social values of welfare, security, justice and opportunities for personal development can be achieved. The existence of a flow of conflict is the only guarantee that the aspirations of society will be attained. Indeed, conflict, like sex is to be enjoyed.

This view that conflict is an essential aspect of life that has the potential to be a positive experience is shared by a number of social scientists. Tillett and French (2006) and Harris (2011), stated that conflict can encourage dialogues, assist with personal and professional growth, provide opportunities for problems to be solved and prevent stagnation. Eunson (2007) and Harris (2011), claimed that conflict can challenge complacency in a useful manner and is often an engine of change. These views are consistent with systems theory which sees conflict as essential for development and warns that without conflict there would be stagnation and decay (Cahn & Abigail, 2007; Harris, 2011).

### **2.5 Levels of Workplace Conflict**

Obeng (2015) identified four levels of workplace conflict and they are vertical, horizontal, line- staff and role conflicts. Vertical conflict is a type of conflict which involves clashes between levels in an organization. It is commonly called superior-subordinate conflict. Such conflict often occurs when superiors attempt to control

subordinates too rigidly and the subordinates resist. Subordinates may resist because they believe that those controls infringe too much on the direction needed to do their jobs. Vertical conflict can also arise because of inadequate communication, goals conflicts or lack of consensus building over the use of resources, deadlines or performance results. Horizontal conflict refers to clashes between groups of employees at the same hierarchical level in an organization. Horizontal conflict occurs when each department in an organization strives only for its own goals disregarding the effects of the other departments. For example, an organization may have limited spaces for use as offices for staff. One department may desire many more offices for its staff at the expense of others, because it believes its duty is more important than them.

Contrasting attitudes of employees in different department may also lead to horizontal conflict. Line staff conflict refers to clashes over authority relationships. Most organizations have line and staff departments. The line department represents the highest office in an organization, while staff departments are the subordinate or lower positions or offices which exist in an organization. Staff departments are created to assist the line department to facilitate the operations of organizations. Some line authorities may feel that some staff departments are imposing on their areas of authority. For example, the manager may feel that one head of department is interfering with his or her areas of legitimate authority. Role conflict is a cluster of activities that individuals holding various positions are expected to perform. Role conflicts can be caused by several factors such as too much work or activities to perform, less activities or work, role ambiguity and scarcity of resources (Obeng 2015).

## **2.6 Types of Workplace Conflict**

There is very little consensus amongst social scientists as to how conflict should be differentiated according to types of conflict. According to Nelson and Quick (2001) and Obeng (2015), there are essentially two types of conflict at the workplace: namely functional and dysfunctional conflicts. To them, not all conflicts are bad. Some types of conflict encourage new solutions to problems and, therefore, enhance creativity in organizations. In this case, managers will want to encourage functional conflict. Thus, managers should stimulate functional conflict and prevent or resolve dysfunctional conflict. This is the key to conflict management; however, the difficulty lies in trying to tell the difference between functional and dysfunctional conflicts.

The consequences of conflicts can be positive or negative. Functional conflict is a healthy, constructive disagreement between two or more people which can produce new ideas, learning and growth among individuals. When individuals engage in constructive conflict, they develop a better awareness of themselves and others. In addition, functional conflict can improve working relationships, because when two parties work through their disagreements, they feel they have accomplished something new together. By releasing tension and solving problems in working together, moral is improved. Functional conflicts can lead to innovation and positive change for an organization. This is because it tends to encourage creativity among individuals and consequently, translate into increased productivity. A key for recognising functional conflict is that, it is often cognitive in origin, that is, it arises from someone challenging old policies or thinking of new ways to approach issues.

Dysfunctional conflict is an unhealthy, destructive disagreement between two or more people. Its danger is that it takes people's focus on the conflict itself and the parties involved. Excessive conflicts drain energy that could be used more productively. A key for recognising a dysfunctional conflict is that its origin is often emotional or behavioural. Disagreements that involve personalised anger and resentment directed at specific individuals rather than specific ideas are dysfunctional. Individuals involved in dysfunctional conflict tend to act before they think, and they often rely on threats, deception and verbal abuse to communicate. In dysfunctional conflict, the losses to both parties may exceed any potential gain from the conflict.

Lulofs and Cahn (2000), cited in Harris (2011) described four types of workplace conflicts, namely unreal, non-substantive, mere disagreements and real and substantive conflicts. Unreal conflicts refer to those that are perceived by one person but do not exist or do exist but are misperceived by those involved. Examples of unreal conflicts they describe include false conflicts, where only one side believes there is a conflict, displaced conflicts, where conflict is directed toward the wrong person and misplaced conflict, where parties debate an issue that is not at the core of the conflict. Non-substantive conflicts involve behaviors like bickering, aggression and competition, where there is no real issue involved. Finally the Harris describe substantive conflicts as those where there is a real issue involved. Ellis and Anderson (2005) cited in Harris (2011) claimed that there are three types of conflict. These are interest conflicts which stem from scarcity, value conflicts which stem from cultural differences and cognitive conflicts which stem from either misunderstanding, disagreement over facts and differing world views or ideas about how to achieve results.

Tillett and French (2005) cited in Harris (2011) identified types of conflict determined on the basis of relationship with categories radiating out from the individual. The types of conflict they described are domestic relationship, family, neighbourhood, employment, commercial, consumer, environmental, multi-party and international conflicts. While Tillett and French (2005) and Harris (2011), saw workplace conflict as a separate category of conflict they do not describe workplace conflict as having any particularly unique characteristics. Folger et al. (2005) and Harris (2011), took yet another approach as they differentiate types of conflict according to the number of people involved. This means they see conflict between individuals, between individuals and groups and between groups as three different types of conflict.

Kinicki and Kreitner (2008) and Omisore and Abiodun (2014) identified two types of workplace conflicts, namely functional or constructive conflict and dysfunctional or destructive conflict. Functional or Constructive Conflict, interactionist view does not propose that all conflicts are good. Rather, some conflicts support the goals of the group and improve its performance; these are functional, constructive forms of conflict. Omisore and Abiodun (2014) and Robbin (2005) explained functional conflict as the conflict that supports the goals of the group and improves its (group's) performance. Their argument is that if conflict leads to normal competition among groups and the groups work harder and produce more, the conflict is advantageous to the group and the institution. Workplace conflict is viewed as a confrontation between two ideas, goals and parties that improves employees and organizational performance. One of the main benefits of constructive conflict is that it gives its members a chance to identify problems and also see the opportunities. Also, it can inspire to new ideas, learning and growth among individuals. Dysfunctional or

destructive conflict are conflicts that hinder group performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive forms of conflict. Conflicts are inevitable and desirable in organizations, but when not effectively handled, they can tear relationships apart and, thus, interfere with the exchange of ideas, information and resources in groups and between departments. Dysfunctional conflicts hinder and prevent organizational goals from being achieved. Such conflicts usually hinder organizational performance, and this leads to decreased productivity. This conflict orientation is characterized by competing individual interests overriding the overall interest of the business. Managers withhold information from one another, while employees sabotage others' work, either intentionally or through subtle, conflict motivated disinterest in team work (Omisore & Abiodun 2014).

Khan and Junaid (2013) indicated two types of workplace conflict and they are affective (relationship) conflict and substantive (task) conflict. Relationship conflict occurs when two social entities (individuals, groups, organizations and nations), while trying to solve a problem together, become aware that their feelings and emotions regarding some or all the issues are incompatible. Affective or relationship conflict is also described as emotional conflict. Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin (1999) and Khan and Junaid (2013), defined emotional conflict as a condition in which group members have inter-personal clashes characterized by anger, frustration [which results in tension, anxiety] and other negative feelings. While Schermerhorn, Hung, and Obsorn (2002) and Khan and Junaid (2013) also defined emotional conflict as conflict that involve inter-personal difficulties that arise over feelings of anger, mistrust, dislike, fear and resentment, among others. Relationship conflict is negatively associated with affective reactions and has a positive influence on the desire to leave the current job. Relationship conflict decreases employee's

satisfaction and psychological well-being (Medina, Munduate, Dorado, Martinez, & Guerra, 2005; Khan & Junaid, 2013).

Task conflict results when two or more organizational members [employees] disagree on their tasks or content issues” (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954). Khan and Junaid (2013) defined task conflict as a condition in which group members disagree about task issues, including goals, key decision areas, procedures and the appropriate choice for action. Amason (1996) and Khan and Junaid (2013) called this type of conflict, cognitive conflict, and argued that conflict is inevitable in top management team because different positions see different environments. Khan and Junaid described task conflict as disagreement among group members ideas and opinions about the task being performed, such as disagreement regarding an organization’s current strategic position or determining the correct data to include in a report.

The difference between affective (relationship) and substantive(task) conflict is that affective conflict arises due to incompatibilities in feelings or emotions while substantive conflict is connected with incompatibilities in job duties and responsibilities of the conflicting parties. Aside these two main types of conflict there are many other types of workplace conflict. One such of workplace conflict is conflict of interest in which each of the parties, sharing same understanding of the circumstances prefers a different rather incompatible solution to a problem (Rahim, 2002).

According to Zechmeister and Druckman (1973), the conflict in which parties perceive themselves as representatives of their groups (in-groups); fighting for group not for the self; is likely to be more harmful and pitiless than those who are fighting for personal gains. Another type is conflict of values which refers to two

social entities that differ in their values or ideologies on certain issues. This results in conflict of values (Druckman, Broome & Korper, 1998). Also, role conflict is when a role occupant is required to perform two or more roles that are incongruent, opposing or even mutually exclusive activities (Rahim, 2001). According to Pandey and Kurmar (1997) role conflict is a state of mind or experience or perception of the role incumbent arising out of the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with other(s) more difficult or even impossible.

Ogunbameru (2006) and Olukayode (2015) classified workplace conflict into two broad types, namely informal and formal. According to them, conflict in work-relations is informal when it is not based on any systematic organizational problem, but results directly from a source of grievance and supposedly is wholly expressive in nature. In this connection, the underlying sources cannot be openly seen, but can be inferred from unconscious form of protest, sabotage, unruly behavior and poor work-attitudes by employees in organizations. If the situation is sufficiently widespread, it can significantly affect employee job description focus, turnover and impact on the prosperity of an organization (Kazimoto, 2013, Olukayode, 2015). On the other hand, formal workplace conflict is referred to as an organized expression of conflict articulated through a trade union or other workers representatives (Ogunbameru, (2006). This type of conflict is highly visible, since it is often a conscious strategy or calculated attempt to obtain alteration in employment relationship.

Albert (2001) cited in Olukayode (2015) averred that there are two sides to workplace conflict, whether formal or informal. One is destructive and unhealthy and the other is productive and healthy, having a problem -solving base. However, the two conflict



situations are neither bad nor good, since disagreement and dissatisfaction must occur in work-relations for adjustment to be made to improve total workplace performance.

Dirks and Parks (2003) classified workplace conflicts into three types, namely relationship conflict, task conflict and process conflict. Relationship conflict exists when there are inter-personal incompatibilities among group members, including personality clashes, tension, animosity and annoyance. This type of conflict produces negative individual emotions, such as anxiety, mistrust or resentment, frustration, tension and fear of being rejected by other team members. Task conflicts are disagreements about the content of a task and work goals, such as distribution of resources, procedures, and interpretation of facts. Task conflicts include differences in viewpoints, ideas and opinions, and may coincide with animated discussions and personal excitement.

In contrast to relationship conflict, findings concerning task conflict are not conclusive. Task conflicts have been associated with several beneficial effects such as improving the use of debate within a team which results in quality ideas and innovation and leads to better service delivery. In addition, studies have shown that task conflict can also be associated with several harmful effects, such as job dissatisfaction, lack of team work and increased anxiety. Process Conflicts refers to disagreement about how a task should be accomplished, individuals' responsibilities and delegation, 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 and poor team performance.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that at the workplace, employees are prone to various types of conflict which are rooted in their personality, cultural values, beliefs, perception, world views and role ambiguities, among others.

## **2.7 The Nature and Forms of Workplace Conflicts**

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 & Parks, 2003) which have been explained below:

- (i) Relationship Conflict: This exists when there are inter-personal 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.
- (ii) 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; 1997). Task conflicts include differences in view points, ideas and opinions, and may coincide with animated discussions and personal excitement. In contrast to relationship conflict, findings concerning task conflict are not as conclusive. Task conflicts have 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). In addition, 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).

- (iii) **Process Conflicts:** This conflict 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).

Another form of classification or levels of conflict is as follows:

- i. Inter-personal conflict;
- ii. Inter-personal conflict /intra group conflict;
- iii. Inter- group/Inter departmental conflict and
- iv. Inter -organizational conflict.

### **Intra-individual/Intra-personal Conflict**

Conflict can be intra-personal, where an individual's objective and vision differs from his/her company's overall vision (Jehn & Mannix, 2001).

### **Inter-personal conflicts**

The most basic type of conflict is inter-personal. It is between two colleagues – arising from a host of reasons ranging from differences in personality, work-style, and personal background (Jehn & Mannix, 2001)

### **Intra-group Conflicts**

When an individual is pitted against a group and is either unwilling or unable to conform to group dynamics, he or she invariably leaves the team due to intra-group conflict (Jehn, 1999).

### **Inter-group Conflicts**

Inter-group conflicts are conflicts in which two teams are involved in a deadlock, endangering the successful completion of a project due to differences in group dynamics. Organizational conflict is the discord that arises when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those individuals or groups block or thwart one another's attempts to achieving their objective (Jehn, 1999).

### **2.8 Fundamental concerns about Conflicts at the Workplace**

There are several effects of conflicts at the work place and if urgent attention is not paid to it, it will affect the progress of the organization concerned. Hautala (2006) was of the view that when conflicts are well resolved, they have numerous effects on the workers. For example, co-workers who are able to successfully use conflict management strategies to solve problems in the workplace tend to become a more cohesive and unified work group. When a group of people works together through the process of resolving a disagreement in a constructive manner, the group is likely to be more committed to the decision that is reached as well as to the group itself (Hautala, 2006).

Besides, Miller (2003) stated that working through conflict can create fresh insights that result in unique solutions. Often, the solutions that arise from conflicts are better and more creative solutions than would have developed if everyone had been in agreement from the beginning. Effective conflict management can result in both enhanced overall productivity, in addition to the accomplishment of goals.

However, Gatlin, Wysocki and Kepner (2008) contended that, when conflicts are not resolved, they have far reaching effects on, workers. For instance, when all the parties involved in a struggle are not willing to work toward a solution that will resolve the struggle in a positive manner, it is very likely that negative outcomes associated with the conflict will occur. Not only is it difficult or impossible to resolve a struggle when conflict is not managed well, poor conflict management also can permanently damage co-worker relationships and group dynamics. When conflict is managed poorly in the workplace, there is little chance of reaching effective resolutions to the problem situations that are sure to arise. When conflict is poorly managed, people tend to dig in their heels and refuse to listen to any suggestions that differ from what they see as the best solution. There is a general climate of negativity characterized by a lack of give and take. The parties involved tend to choose sides and divide into sub groups based on which side they choose.

Also, Coynea, Seignea and Randall (2000) asserted that the consequences of poorly managed conflict are directly opposite the likely outcomes of conflict that is managed well. When conflict is managed poorly in a work environment, members of the team are likely to be less committed to the group and its decisions. People who work in environments where conflicts are not managed effectively tend to exhibit both low job satisfaction and reduced productivity. The overall culture of the group or organization tends to be very negative. Therefore, swift attention and lasting solution should be given to conflict when it occurs at the workplace to enable the workers to go about their duties with zeal.

## **2.9 Sources of Workplace Conflict**

According to Obeng (2015), there are eleven sources of conflicts at the workplace, and they include the following; task interdependence, two types of task independence are, particularly, prone to conflict. One is sequential interdependence in which one individual or work unit is heavily dependent on another. For example, line and staff conflicts often arise because staff members frequently are dependent upon the line to implement their ideas. The second form of task interdependence is reciprocal interdependence in which individuals or units are mutually interdependency. For instance, the school bursar depends on the school matron and her purchasing staff to provide specifications of food items to be purchased for a term which includes their prices so that the actual amount of cash is released for that purpose.

Also, the use of scarce resources, possibilities or conflicts expand when there are limited resources such as office, space, equipment, operating funds and pay salaries distortions. Indeed, anytime various parties are to share resources, there is potential for conflict. Goal incompatibility or differences, out of necessity, members in an organisation frequently pursue goals that are somewhat different from one another, thereby setting the stage for potential conflicts. For example, a manager who practises strong autocratic leadership style may see himself in conflict with his employees who believe in democratic principles Obeng (2015).

Furthermore, authority relationship, the nature of traditional boss-employee relationship brings to mind a vision of a hierarchy or of a boss who is superior to the employee. For many employees, this relationship is not a comfortable one, because another individual has the right to tell them what to do. Some people resent authority more than others, and obviously, this create conflicts. As organisations move toward

the team approach and empowerment, there should be less potential for conflict from authority relationships.

Moreover, communication failures, breakdown of communication due to distortions or lack of communication often leads to conflict in the workplace. Communication barriers such as physical separation and language can create distortions in messages, and these can lead to conflicts Obeng (2015).

Another communication barrier is value judgement, in which a listener assigns a worth to a message before it is received. In addition, personality trait, individuals do not leave personality characteristics at the doorstep when they enter the workplace. Personality conflicts are realities in organizations. To expect that you will be liked by all your co-workers may be a naïve expectation, as would be the expectation that they will all dislike you. The personality trait that many people find it difficult to deal with is abrasiveness. An abrasive person is one who ignores the inter-personal aspects of work and the feelings of colleagues in the workplace. Abrasive individuals are often achievement-oriented and hardworking, but their perfectionist, critical style often leaves others feelings unimportant. This style creates stress and strain for those around the abrasive person Obeng (2015). Again, differences in personality, experience, temperament, and values make frequent conflicts likely. For example, a hardworking manager may find it difficult to cope with or tolerate a sluggish and absentee employee in the administration department. In addition, the workforce in the workplace is composed of individuals with varying levels of skills and abilities. Diversity in skills and abilities may be positive for the workplace, but it also holds potential for conflicts, especially when jobs are interdependent. Values and ethics differences in values and ethics can be sources of disagreements in the workplace, for

example, older employees value work loyalty and probably would not take sick leave until they are ill. However, younger employees value mobility, and therefore, cherish the concept of „mental health days“ or calling in sick to get away from work (Nelson & Quick, 2001).

Perceptions, differences in perception can also lead to conflict. One area in which perception can differ is the perception of what motivates employees. If authorities and workers do not have a shared perception of what motivates people in the workplace, the reward system can create conflicts. Authorities usually provide what they think workers want rather than what worker really wants. Emotions, the moods of others can be sources of conflict in the workplace, problems at home often spill over into the work arena, and the related moods can be hard for others to deal. Conditions that influence behavior, according to Mankoe (2002), when rules and procedures (written and unwritten), become dysfunctional such that they lead to rigid, repetitious behaviour that do not allow for exception (i.e. highly bureaucratic), they can cause or exacerbate conflicts. Lastly, the culture of an organisation consists of shared beliefs, values, and assumptions within the workplace. When two or more cultures develop in a workplace, the clash in beliefs, values and assumptions may develop.

Fajana (2000) identified two sources of conflict, and they are internal and external. Internal source of conflicts refers to factors which are inherent within the framework of an organization. Some key features when it comes to internal sources of conflict were identified which include opposing interests, divergent interest, poor relationship and among others. Fajana stated that the major prime factor of internal sources of conflict is „opposing interests“ of industrial actors. These divergent interests will bring about conflict in an attempt by the two parties in organization to try to



share what is called an industrial cake Ajibade (2004) cited in Omisore & Abiodun (2014). Apart from the above, it is another statement of fact that there is usually “power relationship “between the two actors in an industry which no doubt produce conflict and make such inevitable. External sources of conflict are outside the four walls of an organization. They may occur when the third party intervention to industrial dispute becomes one sided or biased. A good example is where government as the third and regulatory party tries to formulate policy or enact laws that favour one party at the detriment of the other. Such may generate conflict.

Omisore and Abiodun (2014) suggested that, conflict can occur as a result of structural or personal factors. In the process of 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 work 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 a conflict between the receptionist and the technician.

There are conflicts that emerge from the struggle over resources (Macassi, 2019). The scarcer the resource in the organization, the greater the chance for a conflict situation. Resource scarcity leads to conflicts 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 (Mitchell, 2014; Mitra, 2016; Macassi, 2019). For example, the Redmond Washington based

Software Company may dominate several markets, but its staff will still disagree over limited resources (Mcshane & Glinow, 2008). Sartorial support computer time can also contribute to conflict. Considering the company that installs a new computer for administrative and research purposes, where, there is plenty of computer time and space for both uses (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). However, as both factions make more and more use of the computer, access becomes a problem, and conflict may erupt at this point.

Incompatible goals are a major source of conflict (Willer, 2010). Very often, the possibility of conflict increases substantially when departments in an 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.

Interdependence, although positive, has been identified by some authors as a source of conflict (Silva, Akchurin & Bebbington, 2020). 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 or her task, it becomes easier to blame a co-worker when something goes wrong (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). As a rule, interdependence exists when team members must show interest in the process of work and receive outcomes which depend on the performance of others.

Authority relationships have been noted as a major source of conflict (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). 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 conflicts to increase their power or status in an organization (Pace, 2005; Parlevliet, 2011). Roles and expectations can also create conflicts. A role is a behavior 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 have been sources of workplace conflicts (Singleton et al., 2011). 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 (Parlevliet, 2009). Ambiguous goals, jurisdictions or performance criteria can lead to conflict. Under such ambiguity, the formal and informal rules that govern interaction break down (Pruitt, 2009; Raleigh, Hegre, Karlsen & Linke, 2010). Ambiguous jurisdictions are often revealed when new programs are introduced. This is a common occurrence in universities. Ambiguous performance criteria are a frequent cause of conflict between superiors.

Grace (2012) opined that conflict can arise as a result of either operational or personal factors, namely goal differences, personality conflicts, roles and expectations, poor communication, interdependence and personal problems. Goal differences occurred when there is possibility of conflict to increase substantially due to incompatible goals of different departments within an organization. Personality conflicts in the workplace

are unavoidable because no two people can act or behave exactly alike. Therefore, one employee can be introvert and the other an extrovert in nature. There will be a conflict when the duo refuses to understand each other's inner nature. Furthermore, roles and expectations are job descriptions that are expected to be carried out by individuals in the organization. However, subordinate conflict can occur whereby each party, especially that in an employee role is not clear and has a diverse meaning of that role (Whitlam & Cameron, 2012). Poor communication, whenever there is a gap in communication, it can bring about strife and misunderstanding among employees and management in the organization. When wrong information is passed across to members of staffs, this can lead to projects poorly executed and loss of revenue. Interdependence, it is often said that an organization cannot work in isolation, hence, the need for cooperation among members of staff to achieve organizational stated goals and objectives. Therefore, as a regulation, interdependence exists when members in a team must show concern in the procedure of work and obtain results which hang on the performance of others. Lastly, personal problems, a situation where if an employee is embattled with either marital or parental issues, outside the workplace, such an individual may take them to work. Consequently he or she may pass the aggression on co-workers, and if they are ignorant about the cause, it may lead to conflict, whereby, affecting the performance and productivity level of the organization (Grace 2012).

Katz (1990) categorized sources of conflict into two groups, namely structural and role conflict. Structural conflict is a conflict which has to do with conflict arising when a department depends on another department in order to function effectively. Role conflict is a conflict which emanated as a result of special sets of agreed

conduct, while resource conflict is a conflict between different groups which contend or fight for administrative resources (David 2012).

Robbins (2005) identified another set of organizational conflicts sources and indicated that when the root source of conflict is acknowledged or known, it will bring about proper conflict management within the system. Some of the sources are communication, structural and individual conflict. Communicational conflict is a conflict which comes up as a result of misunderstanding. Structural conflicts emerge due to business roles and individual conflicts are all about individual differences.

Sulaiman and Abdulla (2005) identified sources of workplace conflict, namely politics and priority characterization, personality and allocation of resources, unresolved prior conflicts, procedures in administration, communication and leadership problem. Duke (1999) further identified other major sources of workplace conflicts, namely inter-personal disagreements which occur when an individual is stressed up, the problems of role conflict, and power struggles that make people join forces together to achieve personal selfish interest.

De Dreu and Gelfand (2008), on the other hand, identified three broad sources of workplace conflicts which according to them, are scarce resources and conflicts of interest which give rise to these resource conflicts; Secondly the desire to maintain and promote a positive aspect of oneself which invariably gives rise to identity and value conflicts. And lastly, the need to hold the same shared and socially accepted views and beliefs which also can give rise to conflicts of understanding. It is also discovered that from time immemorial, most conflicts end up in courthouse. Jaffee (2008) attributed this to two main sources, that is, individual tension, which according to him, arises because individuals with different aims and objectives

have to work together in same organisation with a single goal and objective, and this is bound to create tension among individuals. Secondly, another source of conflict in the organisation is division of labour, because according to Jaffee, employees in an organisation are assigned specific tasks in specific departments and this too can generate conflicts within the organisation.

Khan and Junaid (2011) identified four sources of workplace conflicts, namely intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-group and inter-group. Intra-personal conflicts are mainly hierarchical and structural (Rahim, 2010). Two main sources are mal-assignment or goal in-congruence, and inappropriate demand on capacity. Mal-assignment means when an employee is assigned a task for which he does not have the appropriate expertise, aptitude and commitment, the person may experience qualitative role overload which results in role conflict. While inappropriate demand on capacity means that an employee cannot properly satisfy all the demands of his position even by working at the maximum capacity, this leads to quantitative role overload (Rahim, 2010; Argyris, 1973) or his or her capacity (skills, aptitude, and commitment) exceeds position demands, he or she finds the position non-challenging. Inadequate role demand and under load role is a common problem of young graduates. They often find their jobs not as challenging as they were told. Personality is studied in relation to conflict in several ways.

McAdams (1996) argued that individual differences in personality can be described at three levels, namely what a person has (traits of a person labelled as level –I); what a person does (contextually influenced strategies, goals, and concerns–level II); and how the person makes his or her experiences (life narratives–level III). In these three levels of differences, certain traits (level I) are related to conflict specific

motives while certain behaviors (level II) are related with conflict. Like agreeableness is associated with motives to maintain harmonious social relationship, which influence conflict-related behaviours (Jansen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). The structure of an organization has a major influence on role conflict. Organization generates a high degree of role conflicts by creating conflicting goals, policies and decisions (Rahim, 2010). Analysis of structural variables such as formalization, supervisory span, work group size, span of subordination, functional interdependence and participation represents significant basis of influence on both role conflict and role ambiguity. Management style may also generate role conflicts. According to Rizzo et al. (1970), cited in Khan and Junaid (2011), role conflicts and vagueness tend to be lower under conditions in which superiors are more frequently engaging in emphasizing production under conditions of uncertainty, providing structure and standards, facilitating teamwork, tolerating freedom, and exerting upward influence". Realization, supervisory supportiveness, and team orientation are negatively related to role conflict.

Inter-personal conflict is a conflict that threatens one's self esteem and impacts negatively on all physiological systems in ways like accelerated heart beat and increased muscle tensions (McEwen 1998). According to De Deru, Dierendonck and Dijkstra (2004), stress at workplace is seen as an antecedent to inter-personal conflicts, affecting well-being negatively and employees with low well-being may trigger conflicts with colleagues who are more prone for such conflict due to poor performance. According to Khan and Haque (2009), inter-personal conflicts with colleagues is significantly related to personal outcomes (self-esteem, general well-being, emotional exhaustion), while inter-personal conflicts with superiors is significantly related to organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, turnover intentions and real turnover. According to the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), Self-categorization Theory (Tajfel, 1981), and the Similarity–Attractiveness Prospective Theory (Byrne 1971), inter-personal conflicts arise from social identity issues such as prejudice towards out group, feeling of superiority, hidden inclination of serving in-group at the expense of out group(s). According to Spector's (1998), emotion centred model of job stress, actual conflicts which may be caused by many factors, which may result in perceived inter-personal conflict or vice versa. Job stressors bring out emotional reactions and subsequent strains which lead to perceived inter-personal conflict or actual conflict.

Intra-group conflicts are different types of conflict that emerge at different stages of group work (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Leadership style can virtually influence all conflict generating variables in a group (Rahim, 2010) and Khan & Junaid (2011). There are three situations regarding leaders and subordinates in a group or organization. First, when a leader treats group members differently, the aggrieved members may be in conflict with favoured members. Second, when group members unite against its leader, may be because he changes jobs descriptions, schedules, rules and regulation, remove some incentives; and /or impose some sanctions. Members may perceive these actions unfair and/ or biased; and may resist to these changes which may generate conflicts. The third situation is where members form sub-groups. Differences in postings, in group-out group bias, differences in opinions of the sub groups may lead to intra -group conflicts.



According to a study by Rahim (2002) cited in Khan and Junaid (2011), intra-group conflict is significantly less in homogenous than heterogeneous groups. The increasing trend of having female; followers of different religions; people of different ethnic backgrounds, different educational backgrounds, age groups (generations); and the move from formal hierarchal organization to self-managing team-based organizations, prompt the researchers and management to consider diversity of the workforce because it may results in generation of conflicts. A classical, functional organization cannot cope with changing corporate world complex problems; which lead organizations towards project teams, matrix structure and cross functional teams and these ways of organizing involved hiring of people with different ethnic, social and information backgrounds (Janssens & Steyaert, 2003; and Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, (1999) . However, these teams have their own internal problems (Jehn, 1995). Because of these problems, there are chances of intra-group conflicts.

Inter-group conflicts are structural in nature, mostly such as organizational hierarchy, span of control, and centralization of power (Bornstein, 2003), cited in Khan & Junaid, (2011). Complex organization used to develop differentiated systems to accomplish overall organizational objectives. Differentiated sub systems develop distinct functions, objectives, and norms. These sub systems compete with one another for resources, power, and status (Bornstein, 2003; & Lawrence & Lorsch, (1967a ). According to Lawrence and Lorsch (1967b) argued that sub-systems develop different types of internal structures (the formality of structures and time, goal, and interpersonal orientation) to respond to their relevant sub environment. This heterogeneity leads to inter departmental conflicts.

Wall and Callister (1995) indicated that because conflict involves, at least, two parties, some of the sources come from each party's characteristics. Individual characteristics are defined as one's personality, values, goals, commitment to position, stress, anger, and desire for autonomy. Perceptual factors include: misunderstanding, distrust of others, other's perceived high goals, and other's behavior seen as harmful, etc. Communications factors are distortions and misunderstandings, hostility, intended distributive behavior, dislikes, high goals, and insults. Behavior factors contain: power struggles, low interaction, blocking party's goals, and reduction of other's outcomes. Structure factors include closeness, power imbalances, status differences, distributive relationship, and creation of interdependence, and, previous interaction factors are past history of conflicts, past failures to reach agreement, and locked-in conflict behaviors.

### **2.10 Consequences of Workplace Conflicts**

The general assumption is that conflicts tend to have negative consequences for both the individual and the organization. Psychologically, individuals become inattentiveness to other things, lack of interest in work, job dissatisfaction, frustration etc. Behaviorally, aggression towards others or work sabotage, decreased communication, resisting influence attempts. Physiologically, it can be ignored or unnoticed, more adrenalin is shot into the blood which increases the heart beat and blood pressure while more hydrochloric acid is secreted into the stomach, leading to respiratory problems such as asthma, hypertension, headaches and others (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014).

Buss (2009) divided implications of conflicts at workplace into three categories: implications for organization, implications for employees, and implications for

clients. Implications of conflict for the organization, mismanaged conflict affects productivity (Cram & McWilliams, (2009); (Khan & Junaid 2011). Different studies mentioned different proportions of time wasted in managing conflicts, for example, up to 20 percent (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976); 42 percent (Watson & Hoffman, 1996) cited in Khan & Junaid 2011). While according to a large study of 5000 employees in European and North American countries, carried out by OPP ( an international psychology consultants in collaboration with UK based The Charter Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD), work time wasted in dealing poorly managed conflicts ranges from 0.9 hours to 3.3 hours per week (CIPD, 2008 cited in Riaz, 2010). Mishandled conflict affects employees' health and well-being, which in turn results in absenteeism. It is a habitual pattern of absence from duty or obligation (Johns, 2007), cited in Khan & Junaid (2011). A high correlation exists among absenteeism, job stress and needing a break from fighting with colleagues (CFLSRI, (1998) cited in Khan & Junaid (2011). Workplace conflicts may also create a tendency of presenteeism. It means showing up at work while ill or otherwise not completely fit for work. Due to presenteeism, productivity declines (Dana, (2001) and Khan & Junaid 2011). Cost of absenteeism to organization is well researched, occupational medicine begun to suggest that work lost due to presenteeism is only the visible tip of an iceberg and that the hidden cost of presenteeism may be much greater" (Buss, 2009).

Implications of conflict for the employees, mismanaged and unresolved conflicts cause stress, reduce confidence levels, make employees anxious and frustrated. All these lead to lesser job satisfaction, humiliation, embarrassment, and stressed; these induce psychological and physical diseases. The consequences of such happenings disturb employee's family and friends as well (McClure, 2000). The

consequences of such happenings disturb employee's family and friend as well. Employees involved in conflict, experience a break in their relations, and often feel alienated from each other, become self centered. They adopt avoiding behaviors, and may harm each other in many ways. Escalated conflicts lead parties to shun contact, end communication, withheld information or provide wrong information (Cram & McWilliams, 2009; Buss, 2009; Hart, 2009, McDonald, & Rock, 2004 & CFLSRI, (1998). Presenteeism is also affecting employee negatively as this may harm employee's health, damage the quality of working life, and give impression of uselessness at work (Buss, 2009; Khan & Junaid, 2011).

Implications of conflicts for the customers, cost due to mishandled conflicts to customer is not researched in depth. One among few studies is of Buss (2009) which discussed it. According to him, workplace conflicts affect the quality of product or service. In hyper competitive industries, negative consequences of conflicts are considerable, and they may tarnish the organization brand image and value positioning in the mind of customers. Most of these costs are hidden and are very difficult to quantify. However, there may be observable consequences such as reduced motivation of staff leading to lower quality products or service, or mistakes that can even threaten customer's health, and hence results in legal suits and compensatory claims from customer (Buss, 2009; & Riaz, 2010).

Rahim (2002) stated that a conflict should not be perceived in a negative form; its outcome, be it constructive or destructive, largely depends on how it is being addressed by those in position of authority. Conflicts can come in a different form within an organization. It can be between superior versus subordinate and heads of department among others. Groups can also be involved when it comes to issues of

conflict based on performance as well as unknown management rivalries. It is a general assumption that there is always a negative consequence of conflict for the organization and individual. The effects can be in the form of physiological responses, namely headache, hypertension and heartburn, behavioral responses such as alcoholism, aggressiveness, work sabotage and decreased communication and psychological responses such as work anxiety, frustration and job dissatisfaction. However, one can conclude that conflict does not only hinder the performance of individuals, but can also lead to emotional disorders, which invariably affects the individuals' health in the long run.

## **2.11 Strategies of Resolving Workplace Conflicts**

### **2.11.1 The Classical View of Resolving Workplace Conflicts**

The classical organization theorists (Fayol, 1916/1949; Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Taylor, 1911; Weber, (1929/1947) cited in Afzalure, (2001) did not seem to appreciate different impacts that conflicts can have on organizations. They implicitly assumed that conflicts were detrimental to organizational efficiency and, therefore, should be minimized in organizations. They prescribed organization structures rules and procedures, hierarchy, channel of command, and so on, so that organization members would be unlikely to engage in conflict. This approach to managing organizations was based on the assumption that harmony, cooperation and the absence of conflicts were appropriate for achieving organizational effectiveness.

According to Frederick Taylor (1911), cited in Afzalure (2001), the functioning of an organization would improve if the principles of scientific management were implemented. Some of these principles involve the development of a true science of work that involves determining a fair day's work; scientific selection and progressive

development of workers; fitting of workers to their respective tasks; constant and intimate cooperation of managers and workers; provision of means to encourage each person to the utmost utilization of his or her capacity; and the development of organization structures to control the various phases of production. Taylor particularly insisted that conflicts between labor and management would disappear if these principles were applied. Although scientific management led to significant advancement in industrial efficiency, it was not without opposition. During the latter part of his life, Taylor was subjected to too much criticism by labor. The opposition from organized labor was due to their belief that scientific management resulted in speedup of the workers. The unions also objected to the scientific determination of wages without resorting to collective bargaining. Scientific management also did not make any provision for the effective management of conflict between individuals and groups in an organization.

Another classical organization theorist was Henry Fayol, a French executive. Today's organization theory is greatly indebted to Fayol (1916/1949) cited in Afzalure, (2001). In some respects, his work was superior to that of Taylor. Fayol advocated that the managerial functions, such as planning, organizing, command, coordination, and control are applicable to all sorts of organized human endeavor. In addition to this, some of his organization principles, such as unity of command, span of control and division of work, among others, are widely used today. Although Fayol's approaches to management were broader and more systematic than those of Taylor, both of them, as well as other classicists such as Gulick and Urwick (1937) and Mooney and Reiley (1939) as cited in Afzalure (2001), saw organizations from a closed-system perspective. They implicitly assumed that conflicts were detrimental to organizational effectiveness. They prescribed mechanistic organizational structures with clear lines

of authority, hierarchical structures and division of labor, among others, which would encourage harmony and cooperation and suppress or eliminate conflicts among members.

Weber (1929/1947), cited in Afzalure, (2001), a distinguished German sociologist, proposed a structure of organization that he called bureaucracy and believed it to be the most efficient form of organization. Bureaucratic organizations must follow several fundamental principles: a well-defined hierarchy of authority, division of work based on functional specialization, a system of rules covering the rights and duties of employees, a system of procedures for dealing with work situations, impersonality in inter-personal relationships, and selection of employees and their promotion based on technical competence. Weber left no room for conflicts or deviance in his model of bureaucracy. Although he was aware of some of the dysfunctions of bureaucracy, he maintained that bureaucratic structures were appropriate for organizational effectiveness.

Among the classical organization theorists, Follet (1926/1940), cited in Afzalure (2001) was a significant exception. Her strong behavioral orientation to management and organization in the 1920s placed her several decades ahead of her time. She noted the value of constructive conflicts in an organization: “We can often measure our progress by watching the nature of our conflicts. Social progress is in this respect like individual progress; we become spiritually more and more developed as our conflicts rise to higher levels”(Follett, (1926/1940, p.35), cited in Afzalure (2001). She strongly advocated the need for an integrative (problem-solving) method for managing organizational conflicts. She believed that other methods of handling conflict, such as suppression, avoidance, dominance, and compromise, were ineffective.

### **2.11.2 The Neo-Classical View of Resolving Workplace Conflicts**

According to Mayo (1933) and Afzalure (2001), during the 1920s and 1930s, which led to the human relations movement, also emphasized the need for minimization or elimination of conflicts for increasing organizational effectiveness. Conflict to Mayo was neither inevitable nor economic. It was a result of the maladjustment of a few men on the labor side of the picture. Even after Hawthorne forced Mayo to grow, he remained firm in his conviction that conflict was an evil, a symptom of the lack of social skills. Cooperation, for him, was symptomatic of health. (Baritz, (1960), cited in Afzalure, 2001).

### **2.11.3 The Modern View of Resolving Workplace Conflict**

Litterer (1966), cited in Afzalure (2001) argued that the preceding view of classical organization theorists is similar to the view of others on the handling of tension among people. A fundamental position of many who analysed individual behavior was that, individuals were motivated by a desire for tension reduction. The prescription in both therapy and organization design, therefore, was to take steps or make arrangements which would reduce tension between individuals. More recently, it has become accepted that tension is normal, even desirable, with the thought growing that “healthy” personalities actually seek to increase tension.

Whyte (1967), cited in Afzalure (2001) stated the functions of organizational conflict that harmony is an undesirable goal for the functioning of an organization. The objective should not be to build a harmonious organization, but to build an organization capable of recognizing the problems it faces, and developing ways of solving these problems. Since conflicts are an inevitable part of organizational life, it



is important that conflict resolution procedures be built into the design of organizations.

According to Rahim (2001) and Salonen (2017) differentiated the styles of handling workplace conflict on two conceptual dimensions: concern for self and concern for others. The first dimension describes the degree, high or low, to which a person satisfies one's own concern, and the second dimension describes the degree, high or low, to which person satisfies the concern of others. Rahim also pointed out that these dimensions portray the motivational orientation of a given individual during a conflict. These two dimensions combine five different styles of handling workplace conflict: integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, and avoiding. Integrating style indicates high concern for self and others. Integrating means collaborating and solving problems with other parties. Openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach a solution that satisfies both parties are indicators of integrating style. Compromising style indicates intermediate concern for self and others. Compromising means sharing, or give-or-take, so that both parties give up something to achieve mutual decision that all accept. Compromising can also be splitting the difference or seeking quick, middle ground position. Dominating style indicates high concern for self and low for others. Dominating means most of the time same as competing, and the style has been identified with a win-lose orientation or forced need to win one's position. When dominating one goes all the way to achieve one's objective, which often results in ignored needs and expectations of the other party, and the win can come at any cost. Dominating can also mean standing up for one's rights or defending one's position when believed to be right. A dominating supervisor is likely to use one's position and power to get one's will without taking subordinates into account. Without formal position power, one might try to wield

power by bringing in superiors or deceit. Obliging style indicates low concern for self and high on others and is also known as accommodating. In this style, one tries to play down the differences and emphasize commonalities so that the other party would feel satisfied. At the same time, one sacrifices oneself and it may come in the form of selfless generosity, charity or one's obedience to another person's order. Obliging person puts one's own concerns aside to satisfy concerns of others. (Rahim, 2001) "Such an individual is like a „conflict absorber“, that is, a person whose reaction to a perceived hostile act on the part of another has low hostility or even positive friendliness". Lastly, avoiding style indicates low concern for self and others and is also known as suppression. In this style, one might withdraw, step aside, or „buck-pass“ in situations. Avoiding can also mean postponing issues to wait better times or just withdrawing from an unpleasant, threatening situation. By avoiding, a person does not satisfy anyone's needs and has some unconcerned attitude toward the issues or parties of the conflict, and a person might not even acknowledge conflict exists, and it should be dealt with. Also, studies have shown that conflict avoidance in general is seen to be harmful to relationships and, especially when some specific topics are being avoided (Sargent, (2002) cited in Salonen 2017).

To differentiate these styles from each other, one could reason that when compromising one gives up more than a dominating party but less than an obliging party. Compromising also addresses issues more directly than a person who is avoiding but does not explore issues as much as an integrating person. All of these five styles can be used to handle inter-personal conflicts in an appropriate manner based on the situation. It can be generalized, to some extent, that integrating and compromising styles are effective in dealing with conflict with strategic or complex issues. Avoiding, obliging and dominating styles are effective in conflicts involving

tactical, daily, or routine problems. On the other hand, some western conflict management literature sees avoiding and obliging as being negatively disengaged (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel & Yee-Jung 2001).

Ting-Toomey et al. (2001), cited in Salonen (2017) expanded the model of conflict styles to cover altogether eight styles to account for ethnic differences that may occur in conflict. The model includes Rahim's original five styles (integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, and avoiding) along with their own three styles: emotional expression, third-party help, and neglect/passive-aggression. In emotional expression (high concern for self and moderate to others), a person's own emotions guide communication behaviors during a conflict. In a third party help (moderate concern for self and moderate concern to others), an outsider is used to mediate the conflict. In neglect (high concern for self and moderate concern for others), a person is using passive-aggressive, indirect responses to threaten the image of someone else. A person's conflict styles provide an overall picture of a communication orientation that person has toward conflict as conflict style is a combination of traits, such as background, culture, personality and states, that is, situation. (Ting-Toomey et al. 2001, 88–89).

According to Ting-Toomey et al. (2001) their three styles, emotional expression, third-party help, and neglect, are qualitatively different from Rahim's original five styles, but they see them fit within the framework of other- and self-concern. Together, these two ways of categorizing conflict management styles possess a wide range of styles to point out different ways of conflict management.

According to Harris (2011), one of the rare areas of broad consensus within conflict resolution studies is that there are five conflict strategies that can be used to manage

conflicts. The original source identifying these five conflict strategies were Thomas and Kilmann (1974) and Harris (2011), who provided a useful basis for reviewing the strategies as they developed them out of a belief that conflict should be looked at two dimensionally. These dimensions are assertiveness and cooperativeness. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) believe that everyone demonstrates aspects of both of these dimensions. However, Lulofs and Cahn (2000) cited in Harris (2011) took a different perspective, claiming that people generally only fit one strategy. Five conflict strategies were mentioned by researchers (Wertheim et al. 1998); Cahn and Abigail (2007); Lulofs and Cahn (2000); Scott (1990); Masters and Albright (2002), Wilmot and Hocker (2007) and Harris (2011). The following chart by (Cahn & Abigail, (2007, p.81) and Harris (2011) shows these strategies, what they mean, what their objectives are and the behaviors they demonstrate.

<b>Conflict Strategy</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Behavior</b>
Avoidance	Withdrawal	Lose-lose	Physically absent or silent
Accommodation	Acquiescence	Lose-win	Give in; don't make waves
Competition	Aggression	Win-lose	Selfish, argumentative
Compromise	Trade-offs	Win-lose	Wheeler-dealer
Collaboration	Mutual satisfaction	Win-win	Supportive of self and other

Avoidance: Avoidance is a strategy usually adopted by people with a poor history of dealing with conflict [(Cahn & Abigail, (2007) and Harris (2011)]. Wertheim et al. (1998) contended that avoidance is a destructive conflict strategy and that using it means conflicts never get resolved. Furthermore, often the other party turns to fighting in order to get a response. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) said that avoiders score low on both assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Accommodation: Accommodators are people who give in to maintain the illusion of harmony (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). Thomas and Kilmann (1974) maintained that accommodation scores low on assertiveness and high on cooperativeness. Wertheim et al. (1998) viewed accommodation as a destructive strategy because it often leads to a build-up of negative emotions. Resentment can develop for the accommodator and guilt or contempt for the victor.

Competition: Competitive individuals are high on assertiveness and low on cooperativeness (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Wertheim et al. (1998) saw competition as a destructive conflict strategy. This is because it is a classic win-lose outcome that leaves the loser unhappy with the outcome and reinforces the competitive behaviour of the winner. This is also the conflict strategy that most reflects dualistic thinking.

Compromise: Compromise means neither party get what they want from a conflict. While Wertheim et al. (1998) viewed compromise as a constructive conflict strategy other researchers disagree on. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) said that the dangers with compromise are that it leads those that do it to sometimes lose sight of key issues and that there is an overemphasis on bargaining and trade-offs, that tends to take attention away from the merits of the parties positions. Cahn and Abigail (2007) maintained that compromise delivers half win- half win outcomes. For these reasons while compromise is better than the destructive strategies, it is not comparable to collaboration.

Collaboration: Collaboration is the best conflict strategy according to Lulofs and Cahn (2000). This is because it delivers win-win outcomes. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) contended that, collaborators are high on assertiveness and high on accommodation. Collaboration uses “integrative behaviors and developing mutually

satisfying agreements to solve the problem” (Cahn & Abigail, 2007, p. 82). Cahn and Abigail (2007) view integrative behaviors as being aspects of teamwork such as mutual assistance, cooperation and collective action. Collaboration is non-dualistic behavior as it requires the parties to think of the best interests of both sides rather than just their own interests.

There is broad consensus among researchers that collaboration is the best conflict strategy as it offers an approach that can achieve the win-win outcomes required for conflict to be resolved (Lulofs & Cahn, 2000; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007; Cahn & Abigail, 2007; Wertheim et al. 1998) cited in Harris (2011). However, there are a range of different names and approaches used by researchers to describe collaboration. Wilmot and Hocker (2007) approached this issue from the perspective of avoiding destructive conflict and Wertheim et al. (1998) called collaboration, cooperative problem-solving.

#### **2.11.4 Practitioners View of Resolving Workplace Conflict**

Some practitioners and trainers have guided to resolve conflicts in general and workplace conflicts in particular. Bass and Sea (2009) suggested six tips for resolving workplace conflicts, namely let the people tell their stories, be aware of your own cultural lens, identify the true impediment, learn to read minds, use non-judgemental language and focus on the problem. When people open up, they share their heart –out about problems; looking their concerns from their point of view is critical than your own lens; explore the buy-in factor as motivator; read the body language and underlying emotions; avoid assumptions; and always focus on the problem and not really on the conflicting parties. These tips go a long way in handling skills effectively.

Dee (2014), opined “Big Cs” as: Be caring, be candid and curious and be a problem-solving collaborator. Bringing people together and with the intent to resolve workplace conflicts, it’s important to care which drives candid discussions creating respect for each other. Coupled with a win-win strategy, collaboration can work wonder for seeing people shaking hands at the end of the day. Resolving workplace conflict is an indispensable skill that managers and individuals must possess and practice at organizations. If one is aware with his or her conflict resolution style, underlying emotions, alternative solutions, workplace conflict can be resolved at ease (Gill 1995). Hansen (2008), argued that resolving conflict successfully depends on analyzing and balancing power of all afflicted parties.

Fajana and Shadre (2012) suggested eight ways of resolving conflict, namely collective bargaining, avoidance, compromise, accommodation, smoothing, containment, confrontation and positive perspective. First of all, collective bargaining is used as a legal instrument where issues relating to contracts of employment between workers and management are being settled. It is a process of providing platform for all aggrieved members that are involved in a dispute matter, equal opportunity to express their mind irrespective of cadre or position in the system without fear or favour. Therefore, it is not only for managers to permit everyone to speak; it is also required that their agreements should be given an equal weight when mediating a conflict. Also, avoidance is another strategy adopted by some organization in resolving conflict within the system. It is often said that, any organization that adopts this method will be sitting on a keg of gun-powder and also postponing the evil day. With compromises, in this strategy, the parties involved are willing to settle the conflict matter amicably without seeing anyone as a winner or vanquished. Accommodation, involves the tactics adopted to neutralize the root cause

of the conflict and to ensure that all distressed members are pacified as to be on the same page. Also, the strategy is appropriate when there is need for a stop-gap to be put in place or when the members have a mutually significant goal. Smoothing, in this approach, much emphasis is laid on human relationships. It has to do with individuals ignoring their personal interest and work towards ensuring the majority have their way in order to enjoy industrial harmony. Furthermore, confrontation as a strategy, has to do with survival of the fittest. There are different opposing views to issues and is more of win-lose approach. Lastly, positive perspective can be an asset to any corporation provided it is well managed. It most assists the firms to learn from its shortcomings, errors, lacuna and identify areas of needed improvement. Equally, the coming together of people can lead to solution for resolving both internal and external issues (Fajana & Shadre 2012).

## **2.12 Theoretical Framework**

The main theory that underpinned the study was the Social Conflict Theory by Marx and Engels (1848). It is a Marxist-based social theory which argues that individuals and groups (social classes) within society interact on the basis of conflict rather than consensus. Through various forms of conflict, groups will tend to attain differing amounts of material and non-material resources (e.g. the wealthy vs. the poor). More powerful groups will tend to use their power in order to retain power and exploit groups with less power (Marx & Engels, 1848).

Conflict theorists view conflict as an engine of change, since conflict produces contradictions which are sometimes resolved, creating new conflicts and contradictions in an ongoing dialectic. In the classic example of historical materialism, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels argued that all of human history is the



result of conflict between classes, which evolved over time in accordance with changes in society's means of meeting its material needs, that is changes in society's mode of production (Marx & Engels, 1848).

A consensus theorist might suggest that the relationship between the owner and the tenant is founded on mutual benefit. In contrast, a conflict theorist might argue the relationship is based on a conflict in which the owner and tenant are struggling against each other. Their relationship is defined by the balance in their abilities to extract resources from each other, for example, rent payments or a place to live. The bounds of the relationship are set where each is extracting the maximum possible amount of resources out of the other (Marx & Engels, 1848).

Conflict can take many forms and involve struggle over many different types of resources, including status. However, formal conflict theory had its foundations in the analysis of class conflict, and the example of the owner and the tenant can be understood in terms of class conflict. In class conflict, owners are likely to have relative advantages over non-owners. For example, the legal system underlying the relationship between the owner and tenant can be biased in favor of the owner. Suppose the owner wishes to keep the tenant's security deposit after that the tenant has moved out of the owner's residence. In legal systems based on English common law, the owner is only required to notify the tenant that the security deposit is being withheld. To regain the security deposit, the tenant must file a lawsuit, and tenant bears the burden of proof and is therefore required to prove that the residence was adequately cleaned before move-out. This can be a very difficult or even impossible task (Marx & Engels, 1848).

To summarize the example, conflict theorists view the relationship between the owner and tenant as being built primarily on conflict rather than harmony. Even though the owner-tenant relationship may often appear harmonious, any visible harmony is only a product of the law and other elements of the superstructure which constrain the relationship, and which are themselves a product of an even deeper conflict, class conflict. A conflict theorist would say that conflict theory holds more explanatory power than consensus theory in this situation since consensus theory cannot explain lawsuits between owners and tenants nor the legal foundations of the asymmetrical power relationship between the two (Marx & Engels, 1848).

From a Social Conflict Theorist or marxist point of view, social class and inequality emerge because the social structure is based on conflict and contradictions. Contradictions in interests and conflict over scarce resources between groups are the foundation of social society, according to the Social Conflict Theory (Engels & Marx, 1848). The higher class will try to maintain their privileges, power, status and social position and, therefore, try to influence politics, education, and other institutions to protect and limit access to their forms of capital and resources. Whereas the lower class in contradiction to the higher class has very different interests. They do not have specific forms of capital that they need to protect. Within the understandings of Social Learning Theory, the lower class are interested in is in gaining access to the resources and capital of the higher class. For example with education, the lower class will do everything to gain access to the higher-class resources based on democratizing and liberalizing education systems because these forms of capital are thought to be of value for future success.

The various institutions of society such as the legal and political system are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests. Marx believed that western society developed through four main epochs, namely primitive, ancient society, feudal society and the capitalist society. Primitive communism is represented by the societies of pre-history and provides the only example of the classless society. From then all societies are divided into two major classes and they are master and slaves in an ancient society; lords and serfs in a feudal society; and capitalist and wage laborers in a capitalist society (Marx & Engels, 1848).

Weber sees class in economic terms. He argues that classes develop in market economies in which individuals compete for economic gain. He defined a class as a group of individuals who share a similar position in market economy and by virtue of that fact receive similar economic rewards. Thus, a person's class situation is basically his market situation. Those who share a similar class situation also share similar life chances. Their economic position will directly affect their chances of obtaining the things defined as desirable in their society (Haralambos, 1995).

In applying this theoretical framework to the study of conflict in the civil service, the assumption was that conflict is viewed as an engine of change. It, thus produces contradictions which are sometimes resolved, creating new conflicts and contradictions in an ongoing dialectic. Resolving such conflicts should be aimed at creating a harmonious work environment that is vital to getting the most out of the Civil Service employees. Resolving such conflicts ensures that lines of communication remain open and transparent, and the foundations will be laid for a more successful and productive team environment.

Plato (427–347B.C.), cited in Afzalure 2001) was of the opinion that tension within society is natural and, therefore, some conflict are inevitable. “However, Plato felt that if a proper balance of the parts could be obtained, social conflict would be at a minimum. Each segment of society must know the part it must play and be guided in such a fashion that all segments work together in harmony” (Schellenberg, (1996, p. 89). Plato suggested that such a balance of the parts could be obtained only with appropriate leadership. In *The Republic*, Plato suggested that the needs of the society could be satisfied if private property was eliminated. To satisfy the needs of society, he particularly felt the necessity for eliminating private property for those who would provide political leadership. Plato believed that the leaders could not do their job properly if they were motivated by private interests. Aristotle, however, believed that Plato’s philosophy called for “extreme unification” or communism and that this was neither practical nor possible. This is not to say that Aristotle saw much usefulness of social conflict. On the contrary, although he disagreed with Plato on the form of the government, he shared Plato’s sympathy for the need of order in the state. Plato and Aristotle stressed that an absence of conflict is a *sine qua non* for the attainment of the just form of life in the city-state. To Plato and Afzalure, “strife is a sign of imperfection and unhappiness. Order marks the good life and disorders the opposite. Conflict is a threat to the success of the state and should be kept at an absolute minimum, and removed altogether if possible” (Sipka, 1969, p. 7).

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and John Locke (1632–1704), cited in Afzalure (2001) suggested that the purpose of the government is to establish order in social relations, without which there would be constant violence between human beings. Hobbes considered “human beings as egotistical, the dupes of error, the slaves of sin, of passion, and of fear. Persons are their own enemies or the enemies of others, or both”

(Lourenco & Glidewell, (1975, p. 489), cited in Afzalure (2001). He took the position that the sovereign (i.e., a monarch who is granted absolute and permanent power to control social conflict) should control human beings. Whatever the Sovereign decides becomes the law, and all the citizens must abide by it. Since they have given him the right and power to make them, they cannot object to his laws. This is the only way to control social conflicts effectively. Locke was critical of Hobbes's disposition for the political order, the Leviathan, which is empowered with absolute control. According to Locke, government is to be organized by the people through their common consent and its duty was the preservation of lives, liberties, and estates. Although Locke disagreed with Hobbes on the type of government he considered appropriate, he concluded that government should control conflicts. While there are some differences in their approaches to social theory, those differences are at times not so great. Both Hobbes and Locke had an extraordinary sensitivity to the dangers of social conflict and sought, through government, to control it as much as possible not only did these men not see a growth or re-constructive potential in social conflict, but they considered it a flaw in the body politic. Though neither man insists that all conflict is to be removed, it is clear that this is their intention. (Sipka, (1969, pp. 15–16).

According to Hegel (1770–1831), cited in Afzalure (2001) dominated by the notion of the dialectic, which has, over the years, developed four different meanings: (i) arriving at the truth, (ii) dialogue or debate, (iii) process of ascertaining the unrestricted truth, and (iv) process of change through the conflict of opposing forces (Reese, 1982). Hegel's dialectic asserted that every finite concept (thesis, or the first doctrine) bears within itself its own opposite (antithesis, or the second doctrine). To overcome the opposition, one must reconcile the opposing concepts by coming to a third position (synthesis, or the third doctrine). The dialectical method thus effects a

synthesis of opposites. The synthesis in turn becomes a new thesis, and the dialectical process continues until a fully developed synthesis (the Absolute Idea) is reached. Each stage in this process relates back to the previous idea, but results in broadened knowledge.

Marx (1818–1883), cited in Afzalure (2001) saw human history as full of conflicts between classes-bourgeoisie (business class) and proletariat (working class)-which is the mechanism of change and development. Marx was a revolutionary who wanted the capitalists to relinquish their power. He and his associate Engel were quite candid about their opinion on revolution. They closed *The Communist Manifesto* with the following words: “The Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletariats have nothing to lose but their chains. Workingmen of all countries, unite!” The key to Marx’s dialectic, therefore, is associated with class conflicts rooted in economic disparities. Marx believed that this class struggle (between haves and have-nots) would ultimately lead to a classless society devoid of repression, where human beings are, for the first time, truly free. This new society would be free from conflict, and the individuals would be perfectly reconciled to themselves and their fellows.

Dewey (1922/1957) and Afzalure (2001) were profoundly influenced by Darwin’s Theory of Evolution and Hegel’s Dialectic Process. For Dewey, “Conflict is the gadfly to thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates us to invention, it shocks us out to sheep-like passivity, and sets us at noting and contriving” (p. 300). He observed that when the relationship between human beings and environment is interrupted by obstacles or conflict, individuals must use their intelligence to readapt

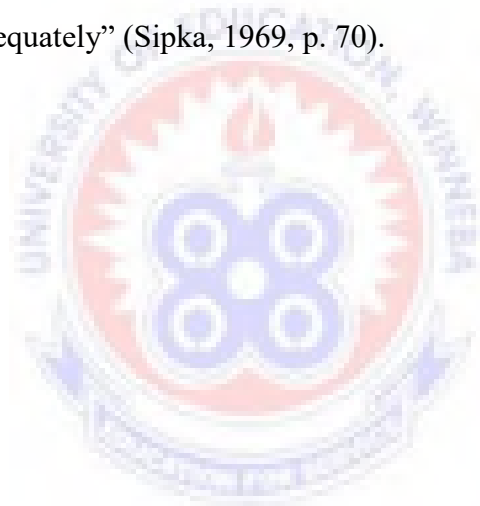
through a change in their accustomed modes of conduct and belief. In other words, an individual should examine a conflict situation to discover the various actions possible and choose the one that is most effective.

Among the classical sociologists who made a significant contribution to the study of the various forms of conflict was Georg Simmel (Afzalure, 2001). Simmel's general hypothesis was that a certain amount of conflict is as essential to the proper functioning of groups, as are stability and order. The argument was that in small groups such as a couple, a certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy, is organically tied up with very elements that ultimately hold the group together; it cannot be separated from the unity of the sociological structure" (Simmel, 1908/1955). At the beginning of this century, there was considerable interest among the American sociologists in the study of social conflict. They generally agreed with Park and Burgess (1921/1929) as cited in Afzalure (2001) that only where there is conflict is behavior conscious and self-conscious; only here are the conditions for rational conduct" (p. 578).

Beginning from the late 1930s, the study of social conflicts began to be neglected with the publication of Elton Mayo's (1933) and Talcott Parsons's (1949) works. Mayo's studies, which led to the human relations movement, emphasized the need for cooperation for enhancing organizational effectiveness. To him, conflict was an evil and should be minimized or, if possible, eliminated from organizations altogether. Child (1995) cited in Afzalure (2001) concluded that Mayo had a deep abhorrence of conflict in any form. Mayo and his colleagues...assumed that ordinary employees were largely governed by a "logic of sentiment, "which was of a different order from managers" rational appraisal of the situation in terms of costs and efficiency. Conflict

with management was thus an aberration that threatened the effectiveness of organizations (pp. 88-89).

Parsons's (1949) formulation of the structural-functional theory considerably influenced social science thought following World War II. His theory is based on the assumption that society is inherently stable, integrated, and functional, and, as a result, conflict is viewed to be abnormal and dysfunctional. "His model is through and through equilibrium model and the dynamics of conflict are relegated to the level of „deviation.“ All this stems, perhaps, from Parsons's extraordinary, Hobbesian preoccupation with the natural tendency of men to hostility, and the difficulty of controlling them adequately" (Sipka, 1969, p. 70).





## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

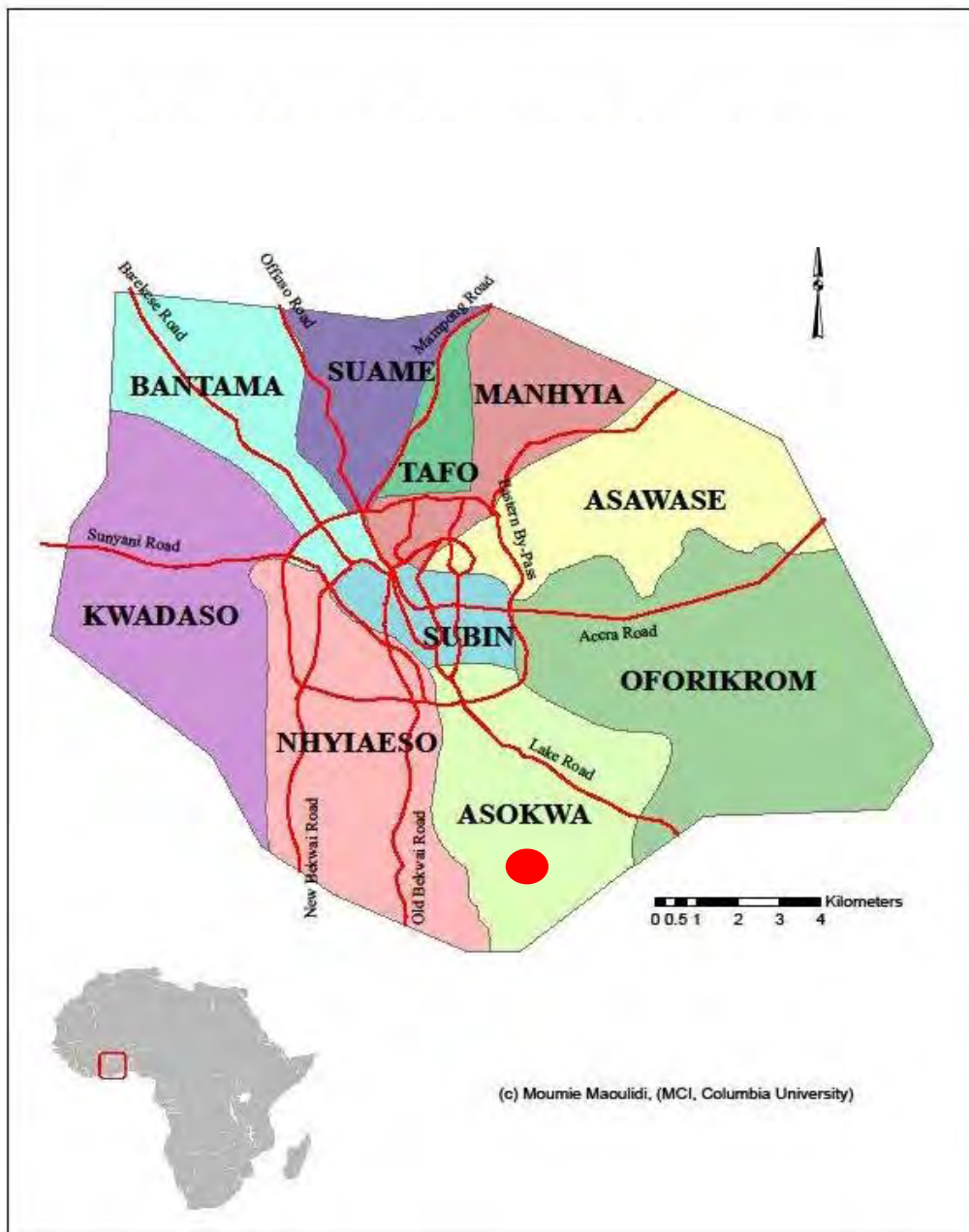
#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology that was used for the study. It covers the research philosophy, research approach, research design, population, study area sample and sampling techniques, data collection instrument, data collection procedures, method of data collection, trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Study Area**

The Asokwa Municipal Assembly was the study area. It is one of the 260 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in Ghana, and forms part of the 43 MMDAs in the Ashanti Region. The Asokwa Municipal Assembly was carved out of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly as one of the 38 newly -created and upgraded District Assemblies in 2020. Created with LI 2294, the Asokwa Municipal Assembly has its capital as Asokwa. It was inaugurated on March 15, 2020 alongside other 37 newly- created districts.

### Map of Kumasi Showing Asokwa Municipal Assembly



Source: [www.ghanaweb.com](http://www.ghanaweb.com)

**Figure1: Study Area of Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

Figure 1 is the map of Kumasi showing the location of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly (red spotted) where the study was conducted.

### **3.3 Research Philosophy**

One of the philosophical positions which guided the research is the interpretive paradigm. The basis of interpretive paradigm is the constructivist epistemology. According to Adzahlie-Mensah, Agordah and Gyamfuaa-Abrefa (2017), interpretive paradigm focused on understanding phenomena in a comprehensive, holistic way. Interpretive methods focus on analytically disclosing the meaning-making practices of human subjects (the why, how, or by what means people do what they do). Interpretive paradigm argues that social reality is created jointly through meaningful interactions between the researcher and the researched on agreement (Grbich, 2007, Rugg & Petre, 2007) cited in Kusi 2012) in the latter's socio-cultural context.

The reasons for choosing interpretive paradigm are varied. First of all, interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to access the feelings, experiences and viewpoints of his or her research participants, Secondly, the paradigm recognises the role of the researcher and the research participants in knowledge construction, acknowledging interpretations as socially-constructed realities. Lastly, the interpretive paradigm is useful in an attempt to understand a phenomena in all its complexity in a particular socio-cultural context (Kusi, 2012).

### **3.4 Research Approach**

A research approach presents the plan and procedures and also describes the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, the analysis, and the interpretation of the study (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). This study adopted the qualitative research approach to address the study objectives. The choice of a qualitative research approach is not only based on the worldview of the researcher, but it is inextricably linked to the objective(s) and question(s) of the research

(Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A qualitative research approach is underpinned by the view that knowledge is socially constructed by individual actors who interact with their world (Merriam, 2002). Also, a qualitative research approach seeks to widen and enhance the understanding of the emerging phenomena of society. In this study, the phenomenon was workplace conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

### **3.5 Research Design**

Research design refers to the overall strategy that the researcher choose to integrate the different component of the in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that the researcher will effectively address the research problem. Research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). The design adopted was a descriptive case study design. A case study is an in-depth study of a particular research problem rather than a sweeping statistical survey or comprehensive comparative inquiry (Adzahlie-Mensah et al., 2017). According to Kusi (2012), a case study aims to understand the case in-depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. This study adopted the instrumental case study to provide an insight into or understand a phenomenon by studying a particular case.

### **3.6 Population**

The target population in which the research was interested included about 60 staff at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. These included about 40 junior staff and 20 senior staff. The gender stratification could not be secured because human resource staffs were unwilling to release such information on the grounds that it was sensitive human

resource data. The participants were employees who were selected using the purposive and convenient sampling techniques.

### **3.7 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Sampling is an important aspect of data collection (Rao, 2008). It is that part of statistical practice concerned with the selection of an unbiased or random subset of individual observations within a population of individuals intended to yield some knowledge about the population of concern, especially for the purposes of making predictions based on statistical inference (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). A sample is a small subset of a larger population whose selection is based on the knowledge of the elements of a population and the research purpose (Babbie, 2004). The adoption of a sampling strategy is influenced strongly by a research problem and the types of research objectives and questions. The sample for the study was 20 senior and 40 junior staff. In all, samples of 60 participants were used for the study. However, only 10 out of the total number of the participants were involved in the interviews. These people were chosen because they are civil servants and have been experiencing conflict at the work place which was of great interest to the researcher. The rest participated in answering the limited questionnaires that were distributed.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Purposive sampling represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques. Also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, purposive sampling relies on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g., people, cases or organizations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied. Usually, the sample being investigated is quite small, especially when compared with probability sampling techniques (Trochim, 2006).

Multi-stage sampling was employed. The first stage used a sample frame to select a random sample (Cohen et al., 2011). The sample frame was the staff data which was constituted into various strata. The strata included senior and junior staff. In each stratum, gender groups were established based on sex (male and female) categories. This was done to ensure some proportional representation of the various categories of staff in the administration of questionnaire. Based on the approach, 40 males, and 20 females were selected. In the same way 20 senior and 40 junior staff was sampled for the study.

The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that is of interest, which will best enable the researcher to answer his or her research questions. The sample being studied is not representative of the population, but for researchers pursuing qualitative or mixed methods research designs, this is not considered to be a weakness. Rather, it is a choice, the purpose of which varies depending on the type of purposive sampling technique that is used. For example, in homogeneous sampling, units are selected based on their having similar characteristics because such characteristics are of particular interest to the researcher. By contrast, critical case sampling is frequently used in exploratory, qualitative research in order to assess whether the phenomenon of interest even exists (amongst other reasons).

### **3.8 Data Collection and Instruments**

Data was collected using questionnaire and interview guide. The interviews were mainly constructed as in-depth interviews with guideline questions (Flick, 2009). The interview questions were open-ended, and the interview was one-on-one that is

between the researcher and the participants, out of which data or information about a specific phenomenon was elicited for the study (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

An analysis is a challenging and exciting stage of the qualitative research process. It requires a mix of creativity and systematic searching, a blend of inspiration and diligent detection (Lewis, 2003).

The decision as to which specific approach to use in analysing qualitative data can be a difficult task as there are varied approaches; also these varied approaches share a lot of features in common (Parkinson, Eatough, Holmes, Stapley & Midgley, 2016). In this study, the data analysis was to identify common themes in participants' descriptions of their experiences so that the analysis reflected the shared meanings and consciousness of the participants. The data was analysed qualitatively based on recurrent themes from transcribing and tables for the questionnaire.

### **3.10 Trustworthiness of the study**

Rossmann and Ralis (2012) suggested that trustworthiness is a set of standards that honors participants ethically through researcher sensitivity to the topic and setting. To ensure that the data of the study was trustworthy, the researcher relied on a tape recording of the interview as well as respondents' validation. To ensure validation, the recorded interviews were played to respondents for them to authenticate the responses. Robson (2002) further stated that the aim of any research is to have a measure that is reliable and valid. Examples of ways of dealing with these problems are to clarify the questions for the interviewees, and for the researcher to train himself or herself to be acquainted with possible problems. Verbatim tape transcriptions were

availed to participants as soon as possible after the interviews. Greef (2002) pointed out that, this allows the information to be clarified and elaborated.

According to Veal (2011), Bryman (2012) and Loh (2013), trustworthiness consists of four different indicators and they are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. First of all, credibility is the validity of the findings, transferability, is the applicability of the findings in other contexts, dependability, is the reliability of the findings at another time and confirmability, is the objectivity of the researcher while carrying out his or her research. The combinations of these four indicators constitute the trustworthiness criteria, thus, forming conventional pillars for qualitative methodology. The researcher achieved trustworthiness in credibility (confidence in the „truth“ of findings) through triangulation (Cohen et al., 1994; Gall et al., 2007; Scaife, 2004; Silverman, 2005) cited in Kusi (2012). Bradley (1993) explained credibility as the “adequate representation of the construction of the social world under study” (p. 436). In this study the researcher involves the use of two or more methods of data collection for the study thus questionnaire and interviews.

### **3.11 Ethical consideration**

At the beginning of the data collection process, participants were given informed consent letters which explained the nature and purpose of the study. They were asked to give verbal consent to show their willingness to freely participate in the study. The participants were also informed that the one-on-one interview would be audio recorded and that the participants were told about the right to withdraw their participation from the study. For the purposes of confidentiality and anonymity, the participants were not asked to mention their names. For the purposes of respect to the participants. They were also given feedback from the data collected so that they could



have opportunity to withdraw data and to ensure that the data discussed represented their views. As such, it would be difficult to link any information or attribute a voice to any particular person.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and the discussion of the findings. It is organized under four main headings and they are as follows:

- i. The forms of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly
- ii. The causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly
- iii. The consequences of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly
- iv. Conflicts resolution within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly

#### Forms of Conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly

This section presents the data on the forms of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The data were collected from questionnaire and interview data from the field.

**Table 1: Forms of Conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

Rank	Type	Frequency	%
1	Conflict between workers and their direct manager	55	92
2	Conflict between management and the rest of the staff	53	88
3	Conflict between colleagues	47	78
4	Conflict between departments/teams	33	55
5	Conflict between members of management	12	20

Table 1 shows five forms of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. From the participants' own rankings, conflicts between workers and their direct managers were the most common forms of conflict at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. This was selected by 55 (92%) of participants. As the results showed, the next most frequently selected response among participants was conflict between management and the rest

of the staff. This was selected by 53 (88%) of participants. This would suggest that agitations by workers are a common conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

Conflict between colleagues was selected by 47 (78%) of the participants. The implication is that there are lots of interpersonal conflicts among people in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Conflict between departments/teams ranked 33 (55%) while conflict between members of management was selected by only 12 (20%). However, the fact that conflict between members of management and departments and teams were selected by the number of participants is significant for several reasons. It shows that workplace conflict does not only exist as interpersonal conflict. It shows that conflict exists between teams and departments. This may be due to role conflicts such as illustrated a interview comment below:

*There are conflicts between and among teams. Sometimes, there are events or activities that fall under several departments or teams. When that happens, there is the need for inter-departmental collaborations and working together. This is not always smooth. It has created enmity among some individuals and teams that have since found it difficult to work collaboratively. (A male participant)*

Also, it shows that there are tensions at the management level. Thus, conflicts do not exist only among junior staff. It is not between junior staff and senior staff. It exists among senior and management staff. As De Dreu et al (2007) noted, workplace conflicts are pervasive and exists accross teams and individuals at all levels of the organisation. Thus, it can be argued that conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly takes five main forms and they are conflict between workers and their direct manager, conflict between management and the rest of the staff, conflict between colleagues, conflict between department or teams and conflict between members of management. This result however, raises an important issue that deviates from the popular stories of

conflict between management and the workforce as a regular story within newspaper headlines.

When I asked whether individuals have experiences conflict with a colleague, the responses gathered are presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Conflicts among Staff**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	45	75
No	1	2
Not sure if it was a conflict	3	5
Prefer not to say	11	18

In table 2, only one participant indicated that he/she had had no conflict with a colleague. However, 7 out of every 10 staff in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly had experienced a conflict with one colleague or the other. It is, however, significant to note that it is not just conflicts between individuals that are causing issues for the Asokwa Municipal Assembly, with disputes between departments being noted as a regular cause of internal problems. From this result, it seems that different forms of conflict in the Asokwa Municipality are more of relationship and inter-group conflict than any other form of conflict. (Dirks and Parks, 2003). As can be observed, the conflicts are more about resentment (Jehn, 1995), frustration, tension and fear of being rejected by other team members than task-related, for example.

#### **4.2 The Causes of Conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

This section discusses the causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The quantitative results are presented in tables while the qualitative results are presented in narratives and discussed.

**Table 3: Ranking of Causes of Conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

Rank	Causes	Frequency	%
1	Preferential treatment for some staff	49	82
2	Salary and wage disputes	46	77
3	Unfair workloads and disparity over work hours	42	71
4	Gossip and rumours	32	53
5	Negative attitudes towards the company	31	52
7	Friendship groups and cliques	25	41
6	Promotions and progression	22	36
8	Staff arrivals and departures	17	29
9	Unfair distribution of training and development opportunities	11	18

In table 3, it can be observed that there are different sources (causes of conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Preferential treatment for some staff was the most frequently selected response. This was selected by 49 out of 60 participants, representing 82%. This is followed by salary and wage disputes was selected by 46 (77%) and unfair workloads and disparity over work hours was selected by 42 (71%). Thus it can be argued that there are three main causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

The next set most frequently selected responses included Gossip and office rumours (53%), negative attitudes towards the Asokwa Municipal Assembly (52%) and Friendship groups and cliques (41%). The least frequently selected responses included Promotions and progression (36%), new Transfers (29%) and unfair distribution of training and development opportunities, which was selected by 11 (18%).

There are several points that can be made. First, it seems that the causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly are directly related to conditions of work. It can be argued that while a good office social scene and Christmas parties are generally considered good for morale, salary disparities, preferential treatment for some staff

and unfair workloads and disparity over work hours, (can lead to fundamental tensions among workers.

However, these causes are not identified in the literature by Sapiro (2002) and Macassi (2019), who rather highlighted that whenever workers compete for scarce resources, recognition, and power in the company's pecking order, conflict can occur. Hart (2009) also highlighted competition for scarce resources such as office space, supplies, the boss's time, or funding while Bell (2002) noted employee satisfaction. From the current data analysis and the results, feeling that some of the staff work for more hours or take on bigger workloads than their colleagues are the most common causes of conflicts among the Asokwa Municipal Assembly workers are the issues that are most likely to cause conflict in the workplace. Unsurprisingly, the majority of top issues cited to cause tension are those involving staff who feel they are being slighted in favor of other people, particularly when it comes to perceived preferential treatment and disparity over salaries.

Failure to be progressed through a business has been known to cause issues for one in five workers, who say they have noticed a colleague's attitude change if they have been overlooked for a promotion. On a more positive note, generating a harmonious work environment goes a long way to keep the workforce happy, with factors such as desk location, office music and the general atmosphere of the workplace all noted as significant factors in negating office tension. The inevitable development of friendship groups and cliques are also major concerns for bosses looking to avoid disharmony.

**Table 4: Management and Policy Issues as the Causes of Conflicts at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

Rank	Causes	Frequency	%
1	Management have given us an idea of what is acceptable in the workplace	52	86
2	The place where I work doesn't have a clear policy on what is acceptable	49	82
3	Workplace behaviour has never been defined but most people know how to act	43	72
4	Our workplace has no defined acceptable behaviour and people take advantage of it	37	62

In table 4, the majority 52 (86%) of the participants said that management had given them an idea of what is acceptable in the workplace. Another 49(82%) said that the Asokwa Municipal Assembly has no clear policy on what is acceptable. Forty-three participants representing 72% stated that the causes of conflicts is that workplace behavior has never been defined while 37(62%) stated that the Assembly has no defined acceptable behavior and people take advantage of it. As scholars identified, the lack of policy positions, procedures and practices on conflict resolution makes conflict to flourish (Owens, 2001; Sapiro, 2002).

As Montana (2008) noted, just having a definition for what constitutes acceptable behavior is a positive step in avoiding conflict. Creating a framework for decision, using a published delegation of authority statement, encouraging sound business practices in collaboration, team building, leadership development, and talent management will all help avoid conflicts. Clearly and publicly make it known what will and won't be tolerated. It seems that the lack of a clear, concise, accurate, and timely communication of information is a major factor contributing to conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Also, the lack of support to understanding roles leads to confrontation and role conflicts between departments (Lynem, 2003; De Angelis, 2008). Thus, having clearly defined job descriptions so that people know what is

expected of them, and a well-articulated chain of command to allow for effective communication will also help avoid conflicts.

#### 4.3 The Consequences of Conflicts on the Asokwa Municipal Assembly

This section discusses the consequences of conflict on the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The quantitative results are presented in tables while the qualitative results are presented in narratives.

**Table 5: Consequences of Conflicts on the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

Rank	Consequence	Frequency	%
1	Conflict is de-motivating	57	95
2	Workplace conflict has had a negative effect on my general happiness	53	88
3	Conflict negatively influences how I interact with co-workers	52	87
4	Workplace conflict has had a negative effect on my productivity at work	51	85
5	Conflict makes me more stressed at work	51	85

Table 5 shows that the effects of conflicts on the Asokwa Municipal Assembly are grave. The effects range from de-motivation to stress. Top of the list was demotivation which was selected by 57 (95%) out of 60 participants. This is followed by well-being issues where 88%, representing 53 out of 60 participants explained that workplace conflict has had a negative effect on their general happiness. Generally, the conflict seemed to have affected social interactions and the distances between people as 52 (87%) noted the negative influences on how they interacted with co-workers. The knock-on effects of workplace conflict are, therefore, very disturbing.

The concerning aspects are that 51 (85%) of participants indicated that workplace conflict has had a negative effect on productivity at the Assembly. Another 51 (85%) of participants noted workplace conflict makes them more stressed at work. This further confirms the well-being concerns around workplace conflicts as well as



changing how they interact with people outside of work; conflict also alters how half of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly's workforce engages with their co-workers – even those who had no role in the conflict.

The concerns around well-being were further highlighted in interview comments. The responses given when the participants were asked the effects of workplace conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly include the following:

*I feel less motivated to work after being involved in conflict*  
(A female participant).

*I would likely consider leaving if I was directly involved in conflict at work* (A male participant).

*Workplace conflict has had a negative effect on how I interact with customers, clients and suppliers* (A male participant).

*I generally avoid getting close to the people I work with in order to avoid conflict* (A male participant).

*I would consider leaving my job if a conflict involved a close friend or colleague I have left my job in the past because of a conflict at work* (A female participant)

*I feel less motivated to work after being involved in a conflict with a colleague staff* ( A male participant).

Unsurprisingly, being exposed to workplace conflict has a negative effect on the general health and well-being of workforces across the Asokwa Municipal Assembly too, with employees feeling more stressed as a result of these problems. In the interviews, some stated that they would leave their jobs as a direct result of workplace conflict in extreme circumstances, while almost the same proportion have considered quitting – even if a conflict did not personally involve them or a close colleague. Others made the point that the simple fear of being involved in a conflict at work is so great that they have intentionally avoided getting close to their co-workers as a means

of reducing potential problems. These results showed that people do not need to be directly involved in conflict for it to affect their attitude to work.

#### 4.4 Conflict Management Strategies in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly

This section discusses the results concerning the analysis of how conflicts can be managed in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The quantitative results are presented in tables while the qualitative results are presented in narratives and discussed.

**Table 6: Preferred Conflict Management Strategies**

Rank	Management	Frequency	%
1	Regular pay reviews	52	87
2	Conflict management education for staff	48	80
3	Fair HR processes to support employees in situations when workplace conflict has occurred	36	60
4	Mediation	21	35
5	Employee recognition	21	35
7	Flexible working hours	19	32
6	Regular social events/team building activities	16	27

In table 6, there are several ways participants think workplace conflicts can be managed. Top of the list was regular pay reviews which was selected by 52 (87%) out of 60 participants. Interestingly, this is followed by conflict management education for staff, which was selected by 48 (80%) out of 60 participants. Fair HR processes to support employees in situations when workplace conflict has occurred was selected by 36(60%) of the participants as a conflict management strategy.

This reveals one of the key difficulties the Asokwa Municipal Assembly faces when it comes to resolving conflict, with workers having such differing opinions on how these issues should be dealt with. Another cause for concern is how employees feel

when dealing with conflict involving themselves and a direct superior, or a member of senior staff.

The results suggest that clear, concise, accurate, and timely communication of information will help to ease both the number and severity of conflicts (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Gatlin, Wysocki & Kepner, 2008). Also, individual people need to become aware of how they dealt with conflicts (Liu, Spector & Shi, 2007; De Angelis, 2008).

The interview responses showed the participants preferred approaches to conflict management in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. When they were asked to indicate the procedures they preferred to be used to resolve conflicts, they stated the following.

*I would be more comfortable raising issues with individuals directly. I don't want third party mediation. All we need is conflict education for staff ( A male participant)*

*I would feel more comfortable raising issues at work but with another member of senior staff. I think all staff need to be educated on conflict management strategies so that we can be solving our own problems. (A female participant)*

*I would raise an issue but with another colleague rather than management (A male participant).*

*I feel unable to raise problems of conflict at work. It can lead to further enmity between you and colleagues. I choose to tolerate (A female participant)*

*I would raise a problem with the HR department only when it is procedural (A male participant).*

These comments were not encouraging that Human Resource departments should be actively involved in the process of resolving workplace disputes. They expressed scepticism about involving management. This would suggest that the participants do not have much trust in Management and Human Resource departments to handle workplace conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. On the contrary, they were

prepaid to use informal friendship patterns to share information and to resolve conflicts.

During the data collection, I observed that, a section of the staff who noticed conflict developing, said that they were more likely to step in and try to resolve it themselves than to refer it to management. For example, a common comment was that:

*I am not sure the management can handle conflicts in our offices. They themselves are the major sources of conflict. ... I will rather help solve the conflict or get a group of colleagues to work on it. (A male participant)*

*Drawing the attention of the HR department to a conflict is a waste of time. I don't think the management has a system to address conflicts in house. (A female participant)*

*I don't trust third parties. For example, I will not refer any conflict to management or HR.... No. I won't. (A male participant)*

These comments are concerning as they indicated a lack of faith in the systems of conflict management or resolution in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. As such, it is crucial to take a look at the conflict management practices within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly and to develop protocols for conflict management and resolution within the Service. It seems, from the data, that involving management at all is a step too far. Despite that, there are some among the staff who noted that the Human Resource Department should be actively involved in the process of resolving workplace disputes, because they are viewed as impartial and better able to facilitate a resolution. One typical comment was that:

*I will say...the Human Resource Departments should be actively involved in the process of resolving conflicts. I am sure that they are trained in employee relations. They know the protocols and they have some good relations with staff too. (A female participant)*

*I will not say that management should be involved... I will rather say that the Human Resource Department should be involved. They are impartial, not political.*

*The HR should be involved only when things are getting out of hand ... They should not always be called for everything.*  
(A male participant)

While agreeing that HR should be involved when conflict arise at the Assembly, the participants felt they should only be brought in to resolve escalating conflicts. What is surprising is the political undertones in the comments indicating that the top management of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly are perceived as being political. The HR Department is considered as being professional and apolitical.

Again, the result speaks to the need to have clear, concise, accurate policies on workplace conflict resolution (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). This should include a definition for what constitutes acceptable behavior; creating a framework for decision, using a published delegation of authority statement, encouraging sound business practices in collaboration, team building, leadership development, and talent management (Montana, 2008). Engendering trust is vital to promoting willingness to compromise (Lynem, 2003). Also, individual people need to become aware of how they deal with conflicts (Liu, Spector and Shi, 2007; De Angelis, 2008). Without proper procedures, conflicts are likely to flourish and become more difficult, intractable and severe.

**Table 7: Who participants feel most comfortable talking to about conflict**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
1	I would feel most comfortable raising issues with my line manager	52	87
2	I would most likely raise any problems with a close friend or colleague	48	80
3	I would raise any issues with another member of my team	36	60
4	I would rather avoid talking about workplace conflict	21	35
5	I wouldn't bring an issue up at work but would talk to my family at home	21	35
6	I would raise any issue with my HR department	19	32

The Table sought to examine who the participants would feel comfortable talking to if they experienced conflict at the work place. From their rankings, the significant majority 52 (87%), indicated that they would talk to their immediate managers. This meant that, the management that is distrusted is not the immediate heads of department. It is the top hierarchy of the District Assembly that is distrusted. What is more serious is that a significant percentage 21(35%) participants said that they would avoid talking about conflict altogether. Another 48 (80%) would rather most likely raise any problems with a close friend or colleague while 36 (60%) would raise any issues with another member of my team

This avoidance strategy is known to have serious consequences for the individual and the organisation (Shani and Lau, 2000). Thus, it is important to draw attention to the urgent need to ensure that conflict management in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly should be a matter of priority.

**Table 8: Staffs' Preparedness to help Resolve Workplace Conflicts**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
1	I would step in if it involved a close friend or colleague	48	80
2	I would step in if I was specifically asked to	26	43
3	I would not try and resolve conflict myself because I don't like confrontation	23	38

In table 8, the results showed that friendship patterns are the primary predictors of whether individuals will engage in conflict management or otherwise. As it shows, most staff 48 (80%) of the participant said they would step in if it involved a close friend or colleague. This also shows that a significant proportion of the members of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly would do nothing about a conflict situation they might be aware of. As such, it is important that strong systems are developed to support conflict management within the service.

**Table 9: Preferred best channel to deal with Workplace Conflicts**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Face-to-face meetings between the affected parties	52	87
2	HR workplace procedures	33	55
3	Face-to-face meeting with management	5	8

In table 9, majority 52 (87%) out of 60 participants in the research would prefer that conflict parties resolve their differences among themselves using face-to-face approaches. This may account for why the suggested conflict management education for all staff. Whereas 33(53%) were interested in involving organisational Human Resource procedures to resolve conflict. Only 5 (8%) were willing to have a face-to-face engagement with management in resolving any conflict. Thus, it can be argued that there is need to give support to HR Departments to provide training to people experiencing conflict within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. The distrust for the

management is not identified much within the literature and needs to be further explored. However, it calls to question, the management practices within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly and how that urgently needs to be addressed. As indicated earlier, this is situated within thinking that the management is politicised and biased in dealing with the staff of the Assembly as a result of preferential treatments offered to some employees over others.

#### **4.5 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed the results from the data analysed. There are many points that have been highlighted which should inform policy and practice. As the results showed, the conflicts at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly take different forms. Also, the causes of conflict at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly have been highlighted and discussed. The discussions showed that the causes are wide and varied.

The consequences of the conflicts have also been discussed. Importantly, it was highlighted that, conflicts at the Asokwa Municipal Assembly affect productivity of individuals and the Assembly in general. It also demotivates individual's performance aside from creating an unfavorable environment for work.

Finally, conflict management practices and preferences were discussed. The data showed much distrust for the management. It highlights that Civil Servants would prefer to resolve their own conflicts than defer to management for resolution. However, the HR Departments seems to be trusted by some significant proportion of participants. In the next chapter, the summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This last chapter summarises the research. The main findings are presented, and recommendations are made based on the major findings and the conclusions

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the causes and implications of workplace conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly and how it is managed. Four main objectives were formulated to guide the study, and they were to:

- i. examine the forms of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.
- ii. analyse the causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.
- iii. explore the consequences of conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.
- iv. examine the preferred workplace conflict management strategies of staff in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

Data was collected from a sample of 20 senior and 40 junior staff of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Thus, in all, a sample of 60 participants were selected for the study. The data were analysed and discussed using simple percentage tables and verbatim quotes that helped describe the causes, effects and ways of managing conflicts within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Following the discussions in Chapter Four, the following main findings are drawn together based on the research questions.

### 5.3 Key findings

The key findings are as follows:

- (i) Conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly take five main forms. There are lots of interpersonal conflicts among colleagues in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. These include conflicts between co-workers, which have been most frequently experienced by participants, Conflict between departments/teams and conflicts between workers and their direct manager. The other two are conflicts between management and the rest of the staff, and conflict between members of management. The results showed that an agitation by workers is a common conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. However, the fact that conflicts between members of management and departments and teams were selected by the number of participants is significant for several reasons. This shows that workplace conflicts do not only exist in the form of inter-personal conflicts. They also exist between teams and departments.
- (ii) There are different causes of workplace conflicts at the Asokwa Municipality. However, there were three main causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. Preferential treatment for some staff was the most frequently selected response. This is followed by Salary and wage disputes and unfair workloads and disparity over work hours. Also, friendship groups and cliques and workplace gossips and office rumours ranked second as the other main sources of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly. From the discussions, lack of transparency in salary and wages, promotions and progression are major issues. The ways in which Staff arrivals and departures were managed, as well as the politicisation of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly creates a major concern. Unfair distribution of training and development opportunities

creates tensions. The qualitative data showed resentment towards managers was a major source of conflict. Some staff felt that managers are not effective in granting them opportunities for simple events such as Christmas parties. A significant number of conflicts at work are started by colleagues feeling slighted in favour of other people.

- (iii) The consequence of workplace conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly was demotivation. This is followed by wellbeing issues including that workplace conflict has had a negative effect on general happiness. From the discussions, workplace conflict negatively affected social interactions and the distances among co-workers. Subsequently, workplace conflict affects productivity. Staff reported stressed as a result of workplace conflicts, sometimes related to the departure of excellent colleagues. They suggests part of the stress is related to having to work in a hostile environment with unfriendly colleagues. Those who were directly involved and those who were not involved at all were affected negatively. Conflicts have created distrust for managers within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.
- (iv) The participants distrust their management. They would prefer to face-to-face meetings with colleagues to address their conflicts than involve management. Aside from pay reviews, the participants preferred conflict management education for staff to support person to person conflict resolution and management. They also talked about Fair HR processes to support employees develop conflict management strategies. The most preferred ways of addressing conflicts would be through friendship patterns. However, regular pay reviews, flexible working hours and regular social events/team building

activities were the main ways the participants thought conflicts can be better reduced within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

Based on the findings the following conclusions are made:

- (i) There are different forms of conflicts in the Assembly that could be avoided, namely conflict between workers and their direct manager, conflict between management and the rest of the staff, conflict between colleagues, conflict between department or teams and conflict between management.
- (ii) The conflicts are caused by human factors such as discrimination (preferential treatment), preferential treatment in promotion processes and unfair workloads and disparity over work hours. Politicisation of the management of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly emerged strongly as one of the major causes of staff-management conflict.
- (iii) The effects of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly are low morale and loss of quality personnel leading to low productivity and efficiency of the Service.
- (iv) As a result of deep distrust for the management due to politicisation, conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly are addressed through personal and informal friendship patterns. These approaches have created divisions, groups and cliques within the Asokwa Municipal Assembly that are counter-productive. As such, urgent measures are needed to reform the Assembly and to ensure that conflicts are reduced.

## 5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Promotion policies, processes and procedures should be made public and guidelines provided to all staff of the Asokwa Municipal Assembly to avoid giving preferential treatment to some staff over others.
- (ii) Political authority should be separated from the Asokwa Municipal Assembly activities. The Asokwa Municipal Assembly should be treated as an autonomous entity that is not influenced.
- (iii) The Asokwa Municipal Assembly should develop codes of acceptable behavior for the Staff to avoid conflict.
- (iv) The Asokwa Municipal Assembly should develop clear, concise and publicly available policy on conflict management in order to prevent conflict.
- (v) The Asokwa Municipal Assembly should develop workplace conflict resolution protocols to provide guidelines on how grievances should be addressed.
- (vi) The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should develop systems to address the politicization of the Asokwa District Assembly.

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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### **Forms of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

1. What are the examples of conflicts that usually occur at the workplace?

**Prompts:**

- a. How often do you experience conflict at workplace?
- b. How would you describe the relation that exists among the workers in your department?

#### **Causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

1. In your view what are some things which can lead to disagreement at the workplace?
2. What other personal issues that can lead to conflict?
3. In what ways do organizational structures lead to conflict at work place?
  - a. What other factors contribute to workplace conflict in your view?
  - b. Can you tell me more of the causes?

#### **Consequences of conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

1. What are your views about conflict at the work place?
2. What is the nature of conflicts experienced in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly?
3. In what ways do conflicts affect individual workers at work place?

Any other effects?
4. How does conflict affect the work out in at your place?
  - In what other way does conflict affect efficient of work?
  - In what way does conflict affect relation at work place?

#### **Workplace conflict resolution mechanisms in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

1. What are the managerial strategies you adopt when you experience disagreement between your colleagues?
2. How do you resolve misunderstanding between workers?

**Prompt:**

- a. Can you tell me other methods you adopt?
- b. Any other strategy you adopt in resolving hostility among the workers?
- c. How to you manage conflict in your in your work place?

## APPENIDX B

### UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SENIOR STAFF MEMBERS AT THE ASOKWA MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

The following items have been designed to gather data on how conflict occurs at the work place and how it can be resolved to enhance cooperation and productivity in Asokwa Municipal Assembly. This is purely an academic exercise and the response you would provide will be treated as confidential.

**Instruction:** Please tick [] boldly against your responses.

#### SECTION A

##### Background Information of the Parents

1. Sex: Male [] Female []  
 2. Age .....years      20-30 []      31-40 []      41-50 []      51-60 []

#### SECTION B: How Conflict occurs at the work place and how it can be resolved to enhance cooperation and productivity in Asokwa Municipal Assembly.

In the table below are some statements concerning causes of workplace conflict. Please tick whether you agree (A) not sure (NS) or disagree (D) based on your experiences with workplace conflicts

##### Forms of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly

S/N	Statement	Responses		
		A	NS	D
1	Process Conflicts			
2	Group Conflict			
3	Task Conflicts			
4	Personal conflict			
5	Relationship Conflict			

**Causes of conflict in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

S/N	Statement	Responses		
		A	NS	D
1	Pressure from unclear responsibilities lead to conflict at work place			
2	Irregularities in work settings leads to conflict at work place			
3	Adequate reward system leads to conflict at work place			
4	Employee confrontation leads to conflict at work place			
5	Recurrent complaint lead to conflict at work place			

**Consequences of conflicts in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

S/N	Statement	Responses		
		A	NS	D
1	Conflict leads to withdrawal of individuals and unwillingness on their part to participate in activities			
2	Conflict result in work stoppage and loss of productivity			
3	Conflict does not provide a conducive environment in which work can be effectively accomplished			
4	People do not get work done when there is conflict			
5	Conflict leads to frustration and loss of efficiency			

**Workplace conflict resolution mechanisms in the Asokwa Municipal Assembly**

S/N	Statement	Responses		
		A	NS	D
1	Improving organizational practices could help resolve conflicts			
2	Introduction of the Ombudsman figure at the organizational level can resolve conflict at work place			
3	Counseling may prove to be a helpful antidote to resolve conflict			
4	Encouragement diversity by managers can resolve conflict at workplace			
5	Effective communication can help avoid conflicts			

