Resolving Conflicts Using Appropriate Communication Channel In Project Execution:

An Assessment Of The Tema Motorway Expansion Project

By

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KNUST

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.

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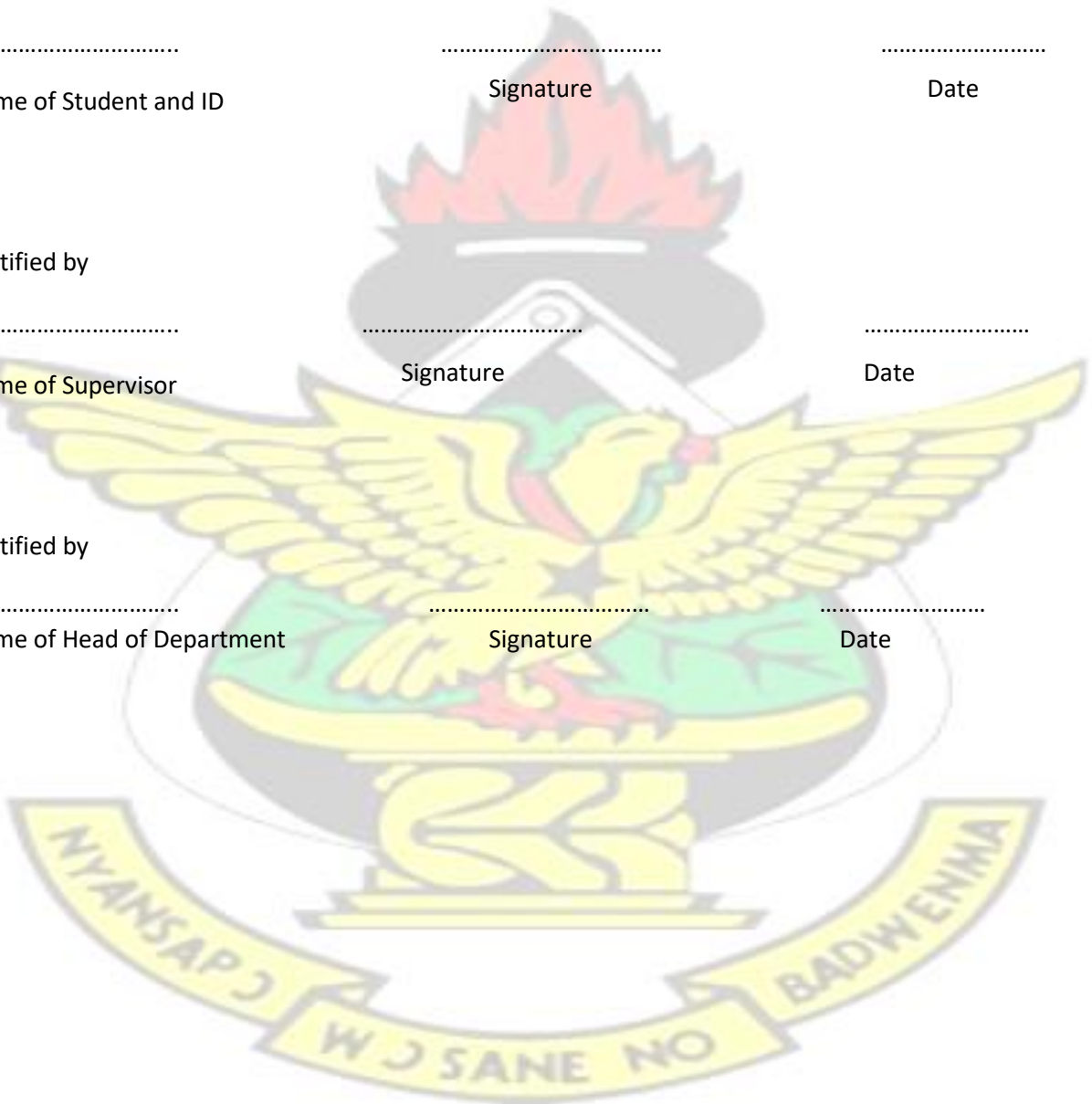
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ABSTRUCT

Studies have shown an increase in workplace conflicts among employees worldwide. Although many organizations have made the effort to balance the demands of work as against job performance, the occurrence of conflict sometimes thwart the effort. Since conflict among team members cannot be avoided, what is important is how it is managed. Based on the above background, a survey was conducted on appropriate communications channel in conflict resolution in project execution among workers implementing the Tema Motorway Interchange project using quantitative research method. Out of the targeted sample size of 95 workers, the study had 80% response rate. The findings revealed that, incompatibility of goals and poor communication management as the major cause of conflict. Further, poor communication on project expectations, issues of need to know basis, inability to take responsibility and figure pointing of blame were ranked as major factors that affected communication management. It was also revealed that, verbal interactions was the common communication channel used in resolving conflict. The study also revealed that, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfied both parties was one of the management strategy to resolve conflict (Compromise Strategy) as compared to the individual strategy of Assertiveness and Cooperativeness (Collaborative Strategy). However, inability to recognize and respect individual views was a major challenge in handling conflict. Again, poor teamwork and self-doubt was observed as associated with conflict resolution. The study recommends that, project managers should make time to explain the tasks, expectations and timeframes around project completion whiles personality clashes can be addressed through extensive training and education programs develop tolerance among workers.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated first to the Almighty God and to my mother Madam Mabel Kuagbedzi Agbogedenu, and the entire Agbogedenu Family of Tacks Corners, Aflao, Tema and Accra. And to my three beautiful girls namely; Fafali Agbogedenu, Elinam Agbogedenu and Sedinam Agbogedenu.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Research shows that, there is an increased concern over workplace conflicts among employees worldwide (Thakore, 2013). According to Thakore, although organizations try in their effort to balance the demands of work as against job performance, the emergence of conflict sometimes thwart that effort. Though very few people go looking for conflict, learning to manage conflict can be an integral part in promoting high-performance work team. It is also the case that, conflict management require the acquisition of skills related to conflict resolution to be able to better manage conflicts. Self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and the establishment of structures for the management of conflict in an organization is key in addressing conflict. When conflict emerges, it obviously obstructs the achievement of some person's goals due to incompatibility of goal arising from opposing behavior (Longe, 2015).

In the past few decades, the global work environment has been characterized by unpredictable fluctuations in workers attitude (Othman and Suleimanb, 2013). According to Othman et al, the erratic provision of services by the work force has been an organizational problem worldwide. Although, these unresolved questions continue to remain as concerns to owners of companies, customers and members of the work community. Literature show that, poor attitude at work negatively impact on productivity and organizational performance. Moreover, an organization cannot prosper or survive without adequately addressing the issue of poor attitude (Othman and Suleimanb, 2013).

In a study conducted by Husain (2013), he indicated that, poorly managed communication results in rumors and conflicts which end up affecting programs or projects being executed.

Further, conflict is a persistent fact of an organizational life and that, not all conflict situations are the dramatic type of confrontations that receives huge attention and publicity such as strikes, walkouts and firings (Moemeka, 2008). Also, not all organizational conflict is usually characterized by the usual public fora's where negotiation and designated third parties participate to resolve the differences. Rather, disputes are embedded in the interactions between members, as they go about their daily activities (Hossain, 2017). Accordingly, communication is fundamental to the sustainability of every organization and so is conflict. Some schools of taught are of the view that conflict cannot occur without communication, since it helps to broaden the context of communication (Moemeka, 2008). Based on the above underlining facts, this project is been undertaken to examine into detailed issues in relation to conflicts and how to address them using the appropriate communication channel.

1.2 Background to the Study

It is said that, "individual differences define individual uniqueness" (McConnon and McConnon, 2008). According to McConnon et al, the different individual differences such as; needs, tastes, opinions, beliefs, preferences, culture, behaviors, gender and values define individual uniqueness. Therefore, individuals should be celebrating these differences and view them creatively. Studies also show that, disagreement between two persons with opposing needs, values and ideas can lead to conflict. Conflict among team members is

unavoidable. However, the results of conflict cannot be determined. Moreover, workplace conflict can sometimes result in nonproductive outcomes. But if properly managed and resolved can be beneficial and lead to desirable outcomes. Thus, learning how to handle conflict is an important step for building and effective work team (Darrington and Brower, 2012).

According to Omisore and Abiodum (2014), conflict is about understanding the views of people and their relationship with their surroundings. Besides, conflict is something that cannot be ignored in a human and organizational life (Kaimenyi, 2014). Research show that, when conflict occur in an organization, it create a state of disagreement, which is caused by the real or supposed opposition of needs and interests between officials, individuals and groups who feel affected (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). In their view, organizational conflicts can come in a nice and unnoticeable way which may be as a result of personality clashes, undefined roles and the struggle for power or favour. They also pointed out that, individuals in an organization are also confronted with individual conflicts.

Studies show that, conflicts occur when there is competition between needs, demands and situations where individuals respond in different ways (Kazimoto, 2013). Another research also indicated that, conflict occur, when there is disagreement among individuals or departments about undefined jobs or roles (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). According to organizational literature, there are several theories and studies on conflict. Unfortunately, most studies have focused on conflict management strategies related to individual and work-team effectiveness and productivity (De Dreu and Beersma, 2005). Furthermore, most of these studies paid little attention to outcomes that are related to job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, staff turnover as well as individual health and well-being. This has isolated conflict theory and research from the broader organizational and behavioral research. Although clarification on conflict theory and research can be linked to organizational psychology.

Kaimenyi (2014) observed that, theories of conflicts such as the conservative approach that follows the belief that, all conflicts are negative and destructive, and as such should be avoided. Unfortunately, avoiding conflict thus shifts the focus from managing it to trying to prevent it from occurring. Meanwhile, conflict cannot be prevented since it is a natural phenomenon (Kaimenyi, 2014). De Dreu and Beersma (2005) further asserted that, the importance of workplace conflict, cannot be underestimated. Thus, the level of knowledge about its effects is limited and narrow. Besides, considerable effort goes into the elucidation of ways employees and supervisors manage conflict at work (De Dreu and Beersma, 2005).

Omisore and Abiodun (2014) were of the view that, conflict should not always be seen as disadvantageous to organizational survival. Further, conflict is good and necessary and can stimulate innovative thinking when properly managed. Conflicts also allow an examination of necessity of thoughts and actions. The difficulty however is that, people are frequently timid in facing the reality. Moreover, in every organization, legitimate differences may exist and this may be as a result of poor or non-existent communication. Though it may seem easier to live with unresolved misunderstanding, the real fact is that, fundamental differences do exist and need to be recognized and managed (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

According to Thakore (2013), conflict cannot be avoided since it continues to be part of a work team. However, the outcome of a conflict shall remain a difficulty as long as organizations continue to use work teams involving individuals with different backgrounds and behaviours who will interact. Moreover, conflict is an outcome of behaviors as well as an integral part of human life (Adu et al, 2015). So long as there is interaction, conflict will continue to exist. Literature defined conflict as an expression of hostility, negative attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding (Hossain, 2017). Conflict is also associated with situations that involve contradictory interest between two opposing groups (Thakore, 2013). If organizational conflict is not well addressed, it escalates and lead to nonproductive results (Longe, 2015).

Adu et al (2015) asserted that, conflict arises through the communication of a variety of issues including differences of opinion, procedural problems, and disagreements over approaches to work oriented tasks. When interests and activities of individuals or groups within an organization confront each other and prevent attainment of one party's objectives, workers may be aggrieved and this can also lead to conflict (Hossain, 2017). Aggrieved workers may behave in a way that does not promote good relationships during periods of disagreement (Adu et al, 2015). Lunenburg (2010), observed that, administrative functions and activities involves some form of direct or indirect communication. And so is the interaction that goes on among workers. All these are forms of communication. Whether planning, organizing, leading or monitoring, administrators and workers communicate with and through people. This implies that every person's communication

skills affect both personal and organizational effectiveness.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that one of the most inhibiting forces to organizational effectiveness is effective communication (Lunenburg, 2010). Studies have also shown that, interaction among individuals in an environment is very important but has to be done through appropriate communication channels. Appropriate communication channel is vital for an individual's success and should be a two-way process. Moreover, communication is very important especially when leading people as well as developing and achieving entrepreneurial success. Studies show that, good leaders exhibit effective communication as one of their key competence (Abbasi, Siddiqi, and Azim, 2011).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Othman and Suleimanb (2013) opined that, if a worker begins to complain, his discontent might spread to other workers. Hence poor attitude to work and use of inappropriate means of communication can have a detriment effect on work, causing workers to become apathetic and despondent which can lead to occurrence of mistakes more often, and affect quality of work and output (Othman and Suleimanb, 2013). Several other studies have also show that, conflict sometimes occur to either weaken or strengthen relationship. Thus, conflict is a critical event in the course of a relationship (Ramsay, 2008). Studies also show that, the consequences of conflict are resentment, hostility and perhaps the end of a relationship (Okafor and Osakinle, 2014). Whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy, depends on how conflicts are resolved. Sometimes people shy away from conflict, and the reasons for this are numerous. They may, for example, feel that their underlying anger may

go out of control if they open the door to conflict, or they may find it difficult to face conflict because they have difficulty in positively communicating their views and feelings.

According to organizational literature, organizational conflicts are as a result of competition for supremacy, leadership style, scarcity of common resources, and so on (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). Further, the emergence of conflict in an establishment or organization lead to low productivity or poor service delivery (Thakore, 2013). Moreover, early recognition of conflict is the first and foremost step in its resolution. Besides, any attempt to use force or intimidation to resolve conflict could easily escalate the situation and affect the mediation process. Force and intimidation can only be counterproductive (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

It is the view of organization researchers and communication experts, that, the success of an organization or a project depends largely on the efficiency of its communication system (Luthra and Dahiya, 2015). This because, it provides an opportunity for regular updates and notification of project status (Keller, 2009). It is argued that, communication starts right from day one of any venture/project and continues throughout the business/project life cycle (Butt, Naaranoja, and Savolainen, 2016). Interestingly, it has been established that, most projects experience breakdown in communications (Taleb, et al., 2017). Taleb et al indicated that, about 90% of a project manager's time is spent communicating what is going to be done. Moreover, every project manager is required to ensure that workers are clear about what they have to do to achieve what needs to be achieved. However, all these cannot become a reality if an effective communication is not established and maintained (Rajkumar, 2010).

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The study by Abugre (2011) revealed that, literature on organizational communications in Ghanaian work organizations is scanty and therefore do not give better insight into organizational communication challenges pertaining in the Country. He hinted that, this has affected organizational output as a country for years and therefore require further research in the area of organizational/project communication (Abugre, 2011). According to Abugre, poor communication from leadership impacts negatively on employee work behaviour and performance. This confirms the situation of the organization/project understudy where senior officials working on the Tema Motorway Interchange project revealed that, poor or inappropriate communication among project implementers and staff has been a major setback for the smooth implementation of the project. According to the officials, the inability to adopt appropriate communication channel creates tension among work teams and affects work delivery and project performance. Based on the above revelation, this study was undertaken.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions underpin the research:

1. What are the common causes of conflicts during project execution?

2. What are some of the appropriate communication channels necessary for resolving conflicts during project execution?

3. What are some of the conflict resolution strategies adopted during project execution?

4. What are the challenges and effects associated with conflict resolution during project execution?

1.5 Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to assess appropriate means of communication by which project managers can resolve conflicts among artisans so that they are able to meet their goals.

The following are objectives for the study:

1. To examine the common causes of conflicts during project execution.
2. To assess appropriate communication channels necessary for resolving conflicts during project execution.
3. To examine the various conflict resolution strategies adopted in project execution.
4. To identify challenges and effects associated with conflict resolution during project execution.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The study is being conducted to provide scientific evidence on how appropriate communication can help address issues of conflicts during the execution of projects. This means that, the findings will help identify appropriate measures that will help project managers and technocrats who execute projects and rely on professionals in executing them. This will help project managers to examine operational difficulties they face as well as identify communication gaps that results in conflicts when executing projects with other professionals. It will also offer information to other individuals and organizations who will be interested in conducting research on grey areas that may be identified.

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1.7 Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive analysis of findings so, a quantitative research process was employed. The study also relied on relevant literature and publications on appropriate communication channels in resolving conflicts. A survey was conducted through questionnaires where data was gathered from target audience who are part of the project implementation. The sampling technique was multi-stage, where both the non-probability and probability methods were used during the research. The probability methods included stratified and simple random sampling. The non-probability sampling methods also included snowball and purposive sampling techniques. The information obtained from target audience was processed and analysed using SPSS software. The information produced were presented in graphical, diagrammatic and tabular form for better appreciation of the analysis and the findings.

1.8 The Scope of the Study

The study was conducted based on limited literature and information resolving conflict using appropriate communication channel. The bases for the study was because, literature has identified that, very little information is available to guide organizational communication that leads to conflict within the Ghanaian context. The study was focused the Tema Motorway Roundabout Interchange project. The target group for the study was the staff of the project. The study employed primary research and data collection process and also considered time of completion and presentation of the final work. Inputs from other selected target group/companies working on the project were also examined. The

study collected information from professionals and key experts who are also involved in the project. The research however, adopted the Organizational Conflict Resolution framework developed by Knippen and Green (1999).

1.9 Report Organization

The research work was organized into five chapters. Chapter one was made up of the introduction and background of the topic, the problem statement, and justification for the study. It will also include the research questions and objectives, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations. Chapter two focused on reviews relevant literature to the study and an understanding to the problem under study. Chapter three covered the methodology and how the research work was carried out, the study area, research design and data collection, the sample size and selection and methods used for the analysis of the data collected. Chapter four was used to discuss the findings and analysis of results of the study. And chapter five contained the summary, recommendation and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents related literature and studies on the topic under study. The chapter also looked at is the theoretical and conceptual framework to fully understand the research being undertaken. It also gives explanations to the various concepts and defined terms for better comprehension of the study.

2.2 definition of Conflict

According to organizational literature, conflict is a fact of life, and not necessarily a bad thing (De Dreu and Beersma, 2005). It is argued that, the relationship with conflict may be healthier than one with no observable conflict (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). Conflicts occur at all levels of interaction such as; at work, among friends, within families and

between relationship partners (Honeycutt, 2003). According to literature, conflict is a critical event in the course of a relationship and therefore can either weaken or strengthen relationships (Howell, 2014). Besides, a well-handled conflict can be very productive and lead to deeper understanding, mutual respect and closeness (Thakore, 2013). Meanwhile, whether a relationship is healthy or not, may sometimes depend on how the conflicts were resolved (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

Studies show that, the clash of values and interests are issues that may be beyond commitment and beliefs which sometimes play a role in professional decision-making, personal and moral beliefs when people claim to conform (McKay and Whitehouse, 2015). According to Lewis, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be, sometimes results in vested interests as groups demand their share of power, wealth and status which then lead to conflict (Lewis, 1957).

2.3 The Meaning of Organizational Conflict

Organizational conflict according to research is the discord that occurs when the goals, interest or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with those of individuals or groups block or frustrate each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives (Ongori, 2008). According to Obi (2012) as cited in Olukayode, organizational was also defined as an act of discontentment and contention which either the workers or employers of labour utilize to put excessive pressure against each other so as to get their demands (Olukayode, 2015).

2.4 Types of Organizational Conflict

Researchers have in contemporary times identified various types of conflicts in organizations (Ongori, 2008). The type of conflict that may occur in an organization may either be at the interpersonal level or inter-group influences (Kazimoto, 2013). According to Kazimoto (2013), conflict that occurs between people involved in the project at the same level of the organizational hierarchy is interpersonal conflict. The circumstances of contention stern from the argument that, the parties are conscious of the incongruous desire of the other, about things perceived to be relevant by a party involved. Some conflict types that can be identified with such conditions includes; task and relationship/interpersonal as well as procedural conflicts (Ongori, 2008).

Task conflict is about how to resolve problems caused by differences in viewpoints, ideas and opinions (Ongori, 2008). This type of conflict according researchers leads to creativity and better decision-making. According to them, it is a way to acknowledge conflict as a positive thing for progress within an organization. The relationship/interpersonal conflict are disagreements about personal values, tastes and family norms (Giebels et al., 2016). Organizational literature often see this type of conflict is seen as a negative one. This is because, it lowers productivity and motivation amongst work teams. Again, when communication is lacked amongst work teams, it leads to less choices and poor decisions. In addition, work team members may agree to a decision without thinking of the impacts and quality of implementation (Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012). Finally, procedural conflict is another form of conflict that arises when there is disagreement on the kind of procedure

to use to achieve a goal among work teams. Procedural conflicts may result in the formulation of new ideas and procedures as well as the modification of the group goal. Just like the task conflict, the procedural conflict can lead to positive outcomes if managed well (Ongori, 2008).

2.5 Classification of Organizational Conflicts

According to Omisore and Abiodum (2014), different scholars have identified various forms/ classes of organizational conflicts. They cited Dirks et al (2003) who were of the view that these concepts overlap between the various classifications/forms of conflicts and identified these three classes; the relationship conflicts, task and process conflict (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). First, the Relationship Conflicts can occur when two people are in disagreement over an issue. This conflict comes in the form of personality clashes, attitudinal differences and misunderstanding over an issue (Giebels, de Reuver, Rispens, and Ufke, 2016). Further, relationship conflicts also leads to negative individual emotions, mistrust, resentment, frustration, tension and possibly being rejected by other team members (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

Second, the Task Conflicts results in disagreements about the content of a task and work goals, distribution of resources, procedures, and interpretation of facts (Anwar, Maitlo, Muhammd, and Shaikh, 2012). They observed that, task conflicts can come about when there are differences in viewpoints, ideas and opinions, and may coincide with animated discussions and personal excitement. According to research, in contrast to relationship conflict, findings concerning task conflict are not as conclusive (Giebels, de Reuver, Rispens, and Ufke, 2016). Studies indicate that, task conflict is associated with several benefit (Ongori, 2008). This benefits includes the improvement of debate among work

team, discovery of quality ideas and innovation and as well as better service delivery. Studies also show that, task conflicts can sometimes lead to harmful effects, such as anxiety, poor team work and job dissatisfaction (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

Third, the Process Conflicts come about when there is disagreement about how a task should be accomplished, individuals' responsibilities and delegation (Maruping and Agarwal, 2004). Disagreement among group members or work teams over completion of a specific duty. Researchers have observed that, these forms of conflicts can lower morale among workers, decrease work team performance and productivity (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

2.6 Causes of Organizational Conflict

Research indicate that, several factors lead to organizational conflicts (Oni-Ojo, Yiola, and Osibanjo, 2014). The studies by Longe (2015), however outlined the following as factors that contribute to organizational conflicts. This includes; lack of resources, differences in expectations, unproductive competition, interdependence, poor communication and lack of cooperation. This information was also put forward by Omisore and Abiodun, when they identified factors such as; poor employee engagement, poor human relations, lack of consultation in decision making, anti-union posture by management and ineffective mechanisms for conflict prevention (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

In a related research, communication failure was rated high aside perception, values and culture problems (Uwom-Ajaegbu et al, 2016). Other studies indicated that, most conflicts are incompatibility with organizational goals (Longe, 2015). Another study, identified

mistrust among groups, communication breakdown, lack of clarity in team members' responsibility, the interpersonal relationship that is shared by the members of the organization and scarcity of the needed resources may also lead to conflict between the members of the organization (Mohamed, 2016).

However, organizational conflicts have over the years been seen as the sole responsibility of managers who often resort to stiffer approach in handling them (Habeeb and Kazeem, 2018). According to them, organizations that handles conflicts this way, fail to recognize that, conflict is a natural organizational life that has its own associated benefit and cost. Moreover, conflicts may occur in an organization, such that, normal activities get disrupted, making organizational goals and objectives difficult to achieve (Oni-Ojo, Yiola, and Osibanjo, 2014).

In a conducted to investigate the effect of organizational conflict on performance by (Hotepo et al, 2010), they observed that, conflict management is one way of improving performance and productivity. The study employed a descriptive research design and collected data from 96 managers in some selected institutions. The research revealed that limited resources are some of the major cause of conflict. They also indicated that, conflict have both negative and positive effects in every organization. However, if managed well, the positive side can enhance innovation and build cooperation among the employees (Hotepo et al, 2010).

2.7 Importance of Organizational Conflict Management

Research have established that, conflict is inevitable; however, the results of conflict are not predetermined (Thakore, 2013). According to Thakore, when conflicts escalate, it leads

to nonproductive results. However, conflicts when properly managed and resolved, can lead to quality outcomes (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014). In their view, learning to manage conflict is necessary for every organization if they want high work team performance. Conflict management requires skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and laid down structure for management of conflict within an organization (Thakore, 2013).

Khaiyat (2016) opined that, the traditional view about organizational conflict has always remain that, any type of conflict is negative, harmful, and should be avoided. However, when it comes to human relations, their view is that, organizational conflict should be accepted since it is unavoidable and may even improve group performance. Whereas the interactionist, holds the view that, some minimum level of organizational conflict is beneficial and can make individuals and groups productive, resilient and flexible to change (Khaiyat, 2016). Turkalj et al (2008) observed that, every organization encounters some form of conflict on a daily basis and that organizational conflict cannot be avoided.

However, early recognition and promptly responding to resolve conflict is what is necessary. According to them, continuously tracking the organizational signals will point to their existence. Besides, the inability to observe the conflict signals, can lead to a situation where conflict overwhelms the organization. In their view, determinants of conflicts includes; productivity, efficiency, job contentment and performance (Turkalj et al, 2008).

The study by Adu et al (2015) used a cross-sectional survey to sample 132 employees in a survey they conducted in Ghana. The results indicated that, there exist a positive relationship between conflict management and communication. According to them, their findings supports the assertion that communication moderates the relationship between conflict management and relationships at work. Therefore, it is the responsibility of managers to use appropriate communication channels to handle conflicts. This enhances the level of trust among employees and further reduces misunderstanding at work (Adu et al, 2015). This also validate the initial study by Hotepo et al (2010), when they observed that, conflicts can be managed through interpersonal relationships as well as structural changes.

According to research, conflict management toward constructive action is the best responsive approach in resolving conflict in organization (Ongori, 2008). When conflict arises, it requires proper management, so that it becomes a positive force, rather than a negative force that could threaten the individual or group (Thakore, 2013). The consequences of conflicts as a result of poor management is; work delays, disinterest and lack of action and in extreme cases complete breakdown of the group (Ongori, 2008). It sometimes leads to withdrawal of individual and unwillingness to participate in other groups (Hotepo et al, 2010).

According to Hotepo et al, managers should develop appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise. First, efforts should be made by the managers to occasionally stimulate conflict by encouraging divergent views and rewarding staff and teams for outstanding performance. Second, proper communication procedures should be put in place to resolve conflict. When disagreements arise among workers, it should be

reported to management so that they get statements from the parties involved. This will help inform management about how to resolve the conflict. Third, seminars/workshops on organizational conflict management for the workers can also help in addressing workplace conflict as well as how to effectively manage it. Finally, group interaction and activities are important to ensure some degree of functionality and compatibility (Hotepo et al, 2010).

A study by Rahim (2002) observed that, organizational conflict management involves, diagnosis of conflicts at the interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup levels and the styles/strategies to handle conflicts. The diagnosis indicates whether there is the need for an intervention and the type of intervention needed. According to him an intervention is designed to: maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict in no routine tasks at various levels; reduce affective conflict at all levels; enable the organizational member select and use the appropriate styles of handling conflict so that various situations can be effectively dealt with. Again, organizational learning and effectiveness can be enhanced through an appropriate diagnosis of and the process and structural interventions in conflicts (Rahim M. A., 2002).

The study by Omisore et al (2014) found that, conflict generates contradictory ideas. Although conflict is inevitable in human and organizational life. Conflict occur in organizations due to competition for supremacy, leadership style, scarcity of common resources, etc. Thus, not all conflict situations are bad, however, early recognition and promptly resolving it ensures group cohesion. Force or intimidation should never be used to resolve conflict parties since it is counterproductive (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014).

Moreover, positive pattern of conflict handling is associated with positive emotions and experience among the group, which in turn is positively related to an individual's confidence in their ability to complete a task or achieve a goal. However, destructive patterns are associated with negative emotions and negative self believe (Desivilya Syna and Yagil, 2004).

2.8 Effective Conflict Management Strategies

In organizational literature, effective conflict resolution is what every manager hopes for to achieve project objectives (Rahim, 2003). When people are involved in conflict situations, their behavior can be described along two independent dimensions; assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas and Kilmann, 1976). According to them, assertiveness is the degree to which you try to satisfy your own concern, while cooperativeness is the degree to which you try to satisfy the other person's concern. They indicated that, these choices you have in a conflict are the conflict-handling modes. These are: competing (assertive and uncooperative), collaborating (assertive and cooperative), compromising (falls into the middle), avoiding (unassertive and uncooperative), and accommodating (unassertive and cooperative) (Thomas and Kilmann 1976; Howell, 2014; Nischal, 2014; Hussein, Al-Mamary, and Hassan, 2017).

First, the competing mode/style, is a power-oriented made which is made up of both the assertiveness and uncooperativeness (Thomas and Kilmann, 1976). When there is contention, people pursue their own interest at the expense of others, by using whatever they deem appropriate to win their position. According to research, competing may mean: protect someone or something against attack; standing up for a position you believe is accurate; or seeking to win (Kodikal, Rahman, and Pakeerrappa, 2014).

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Second, the collaborating mode/style is also made up of assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas and Kilmann, 1976). Collaborating involves probing into issues to discover the underlying concerns of people as well as identifying alternatives that satisfy all. It also includes the exploration of disagreements and resolving conditions that would otherwise have led to competition for resources, or confrontation (Nischal, 2014).

Third, accommodating mode/style is about resolving conflict by obliging the needs of others or making an adjustment to suit a particular purpose (Thomas and Kilmann, 1976). Mangers often resort to this strategy to try and calm situations from escalating (Momanyi and Juma, 2016). This strategy is also applied to reach intended objectives, goals and desired results. Moreover, it is a style that aims at reducing differences and focusing on common needs but does not resolve the causes of conflicts (Howell, 2014).

Fourth, the compromising mode/style, is an intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness (Thomas and Kilmann, 1976). In conflict situations, compromise holds due to the fact that not everything is known (Vokiý and Sontor, 2010). Parties gain something and give up something through a bargain. With compromise, participants change attitudes through interventions, negotiations and voting (Hussein, Al-Mamary, and Hassan, 2017).

The fifth is the avoiding mode/style. This style is also called withdrawing or ignoring style. This style is about taking passive roles and avoiding it all together. From the viewpoint of managers, in situations that may stimulate further controversy or escalate conflict, this style

is applied. Because conflict create frustration and tension to parties, it is better to avoid it (Howell, 2014).

2.9 Definition of Communication

According to Agarwal et al, communication is about exchange of information, thought and emotion between individuals of a groups. In other words, communication is fundamental when balancing individual and organizational objectives (Agarwal and Garg, 2012). According to research, communication is about sending of information from one person to another (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Studies that, communication becomes relevant, when there is the need for the establishment and maintenance of quality work relationships (Luthra and Dahiya, 2015). To understand one-self as intended is an important part of communication. According to literature, a receiver may hear a sender, but may still not understand what the sender's message meant (Massa and Mengjo, 2016). Moreover, being constantly engaged in encoding and decoding messages does not make one an expert in communication. This is because, understanding is a personal matter. People may interpret messages differently. Besides, if the idea received is not the one intended, communication has not taken place. Therefore, the sender has merely spoken or written (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver has understood the message of the sender. Moreover, during the process of communicating, feedback is critical between parties. Feedback ensures that an effective communication process has been achieved (Agarwal and Garg, 2012).

2.10 Channels of Communication

In communication, messages are sent through a carrier called medium or channel. Selection of the medium for transmitting the message can be critical, because there are many choices. The medium can be verbal, nonverbal, written, computer-aided or electronic. For written media, an administrator or other organization members may choose from memos, letters, reports, bulletin boards, handbooks, newsletters, and the like. For verbal media, choices include face-to-face conversations, telephone, computer, public address systems, closedcircuit television, tape-recorded messages, sound or slide shows, e-mail, and so on. Nonverbal gestures, facial expressions, body position, and even clothing can transmit messages. People decode information selectively (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014).

2.11 Types of Organizational Communication

Communication within organizations is classified into two groups as formal and informal. The types of formal communication are "up to down", "down to up", "horizontal" and "cross" communication. There is also the communication that describes the process of conveying meaning in the form of non-word messages called the nonverbal communication. Research shows that most communication are nonverbal, also known as body language. Some nonverbal communication includes; chronemics, haptics, gesture, body language or posture; facial expression and eye contact, object communication such as clothing, hairstyles, architecture, symbols infographics, and tone of voice as well as through an aggregate of the above (Agarwal and Garg, 2012).

2.12 Effective Organizational Communication

Babatunde (2015) observed that, communication is crucial within or among workgroups and the lifeline in every organization. He also indicated that, communication is also probably one of the most frequently cited sources of interpersonal conflict when it is poorly carried out. According to him, many of the problems that occur in organizations are the direct result of people failing to communicate. And that, what we hear or understand when someone speaks to us is largely based on our experience and background. Instead of hearing what people have told us, we hear what our minds tell us. Research has also established that, if what people say does not fit into our framework of reference, we adjust it until it does. The lack of effective communication has serious implication within an organization. According to him, this can lead to confusion and may even cause a good plan to fail. Communication can be a channel to flow information, resources, and even policies (Babatunde, 2015).

According to Sadia et al (2016), organizations run successfully, if effective organizational communication takes place. A decision, whether strategic or operational, cannot be made without communication and the necessary information. Studies have established extensively that, there exist a relationship between organizational communication and productivity of workers. Communication is often used to identify and communicate corporate strategy and goals and management (Massa and Mengjo, 2016). Because everyone has a common goal to ensure good and effective communication, there is an increase in trust and organizational success (Sadia et al, 2016).

In planning for an effective communication, consultation should both be top down and bottom up, while all facts are rendered implicit and explicit (Koontz and Newig, 2014).

Consideration should be given to the content and tone of the messages. And the language or tone should not only edify, but must be messages the receiver would find valuable. Communication messages that are precise and are of short run often possess long run importance. Therefore, stakeholders should be encouraged to develop good listening habits. Actions must be accompanied and accomplished with communication. Communication that is effective require a follow up and a feedback mechanism process (Shonubi and Akintaro, 2016).

According to research, several obstacles impedes effective communication within an organization. Although in contemporary times, technology has increased the efficiency and productivity of organizations, it has also created new types of conflicts. Poorly communicated information and wrongful selection of appropriate channel to transmit the information can lead to conflict (Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012). According to Lunenburg (2010), an organization's structure influences the communication patterns within the organization. The structure of an organization should provide for communication in three distinct directions: downward, upward, and horizontal. These three directions establish the framework within which communication in an organization takes place. Therefore, an examination of each one enables better appreciation of the barriers to effective organizational communication and how to overcome these barriers. According to Ivancevich et al (2011) as cited in Lunenburg, an organizational structure is a formal

prescribed pattern of relationships existing between various units of an organization (Lunenburg, 2010).

2.13 Conceptual Framework

According to research, to achieve organizational objective, it is imperative to improve harmony, develop favorable relationship and alleviate organization conflict among workers/employees (Hossain, 2017). Studies show that, in the contemporary environment of work, achieving organizational performance and quality service delivery requires teamwork (Sanyal and Hisam, 2018). However, a major hindrance is the 'conflict' phenomenon that exist within most organizations. Literature recognizes that, the effectiveness of an organization/project is about the efficiency of every employee working to help achieve organizational objectives (Bashaer et al, 2016). However, there may be issues that the workers/employees may not necessarily have control over, that require the attention of management or competent leadership. One of such issues is the competencies for resolving conflicts.

From the above background, it has been demonstrated that, conflict management is extremely important for effective functioning of organizations/projects (Awan and Sehar, 2015). The way conflict is managed can sometimes cause more tension instead of the conflict itself (Hossain, 2017). Research show that, when it comes to workplace conflict management and resolution, the strategies adopted are the behavioral methods for resolving them (Salami, 2010). Further, conflict management is extremely important for the effective functioning of personal, cultural, and social development of workers/employees. Any

professional who is concerned about supporting others and the organization in changing negative conflict situations should have an objective of inventive and productive conflict management (Howell, 2014).

Waithaka et al, in their studies observed that, the volume and intensity of impending conflict is determined by how the conflict is handled (Waithaka et al, 2015). Moreover, effective conflict management encourages enthusiasm, boosts morale, and stimulates individual and organizational development (Howell, 2014). While an ineffective conflict management produces more conflict and destructively effects the whole organization (Huan & Yazdanifard, 2012). It also involves the use of an assortment of styles dependent on the conditions of the conflict (Rajkumar, 2010).

Based on the above understanding, the conceptual framework of this study was adopted. The framework proposes appropriate ways that organizational conflicts can be resolved through effective communication during project execution. The structural argument of the framework is that, conflict resolution requires effective communication strategies to achieve the desired outcomes (Darrington and Brower, 2012). Unfortunately, that can only be achieved if the various communication modes are appropriately identified (Fjermestad, 2004).

According to Fjermestad (2014), communication mode is the medium or media of communication used by a group. It comes in the form of Face-to-Face or Group Support Systems. According to organizational literature, the various modes can either function as an appropriate communication channel during conflict resolution or serve as a means of

communication as observed in Figure 2.1 of the Conceptual Framework below. According to Bambaeeroo and Shokrpour (2017), non-verbal communication skills, also called sign language or silent language, include all behaviors performed in the presence of others or perceived either consciously or unconsciously. From the Conceptual Framework, any situation that sends the wrong signal if not handled appropriately can cause further harm in an attempt to resolve project or organizational conflicts. According to literature, when using these forms of conflict resolution strategies or modes, it is important that, appropriate communication channel is adopted to ensure high level of performance and co-operation (Knippen and Green, 1999).

Giles and Ogay (2007) observed that, the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) provides a framework that predicts and explains many of the adjustment individuals make to create, maintain, or decrease social interaction. The theory explores the different ways in which we accommodate our communication and motivations for doing so, and the consequences thereof. It addresses interpersonal communication issues as it links it to the larger context of intergroup encounters. It is a good tool for analyzing communication breakdown. In other words, communications that are driven by personal identities, nonverbal, and demeanor are fueled by our social identities as members of groups. Moreover, we send out messages that are neither oral nor written yet can be equally, or in some cases more, persuasive. When communicating, it is necessary to consider what implied messages you send out. This could cover areas such as; attitude, body language, and presentation (Giles and Ogay, 2007).

Since the Conceptual framework establishes that, conflict resolution largely depends on the use of appropriate communication channels as indicated in Figure 2.1 and corroborated in

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literature by Adu et al, (2015). It therefore means that, effective communication process leads to effective work delivery as well as improved work cooperation. Further, the use of the appropriate communication channel provides the platform for regular updates to notify the status of the project as well as achieving organizational performance and project goal. It is also true that most project managers spend considerable time communicating what is supposed to be done as well as what has been done. Aside that, project manager's role also involve adequate coordination of the work of people and handling different aspects of the project such as work teams. Since, project managers are required to ensure that workers are clear about what must be achieved, and to clearly report on progress to the project board and/or project sponsors. It is necessary that, an effective communication is established and maintained (Rajkumar, 2010). This is what the Conceptual Framework adopted seeks to address (See Figure 2.1).

Moreover, in resolving conflict during project execution, there is the need for the adoption of an appropriate communication strategy (Awan and Sehar, 2015). Systems must be established and procedures followed to resolve any conflict in the organization. Therefore, depending on the nature of the conflict it`s recommended that management apply appropriate strategy to resolve it. Further, organizations should also encourage open communication policy, so that all employees can get the right information at the right time. This minimizes the degree of suspicion within the organization or during project implementation.

Conceptual Framework on Appropriate Communication Channel in Conflict Resolution
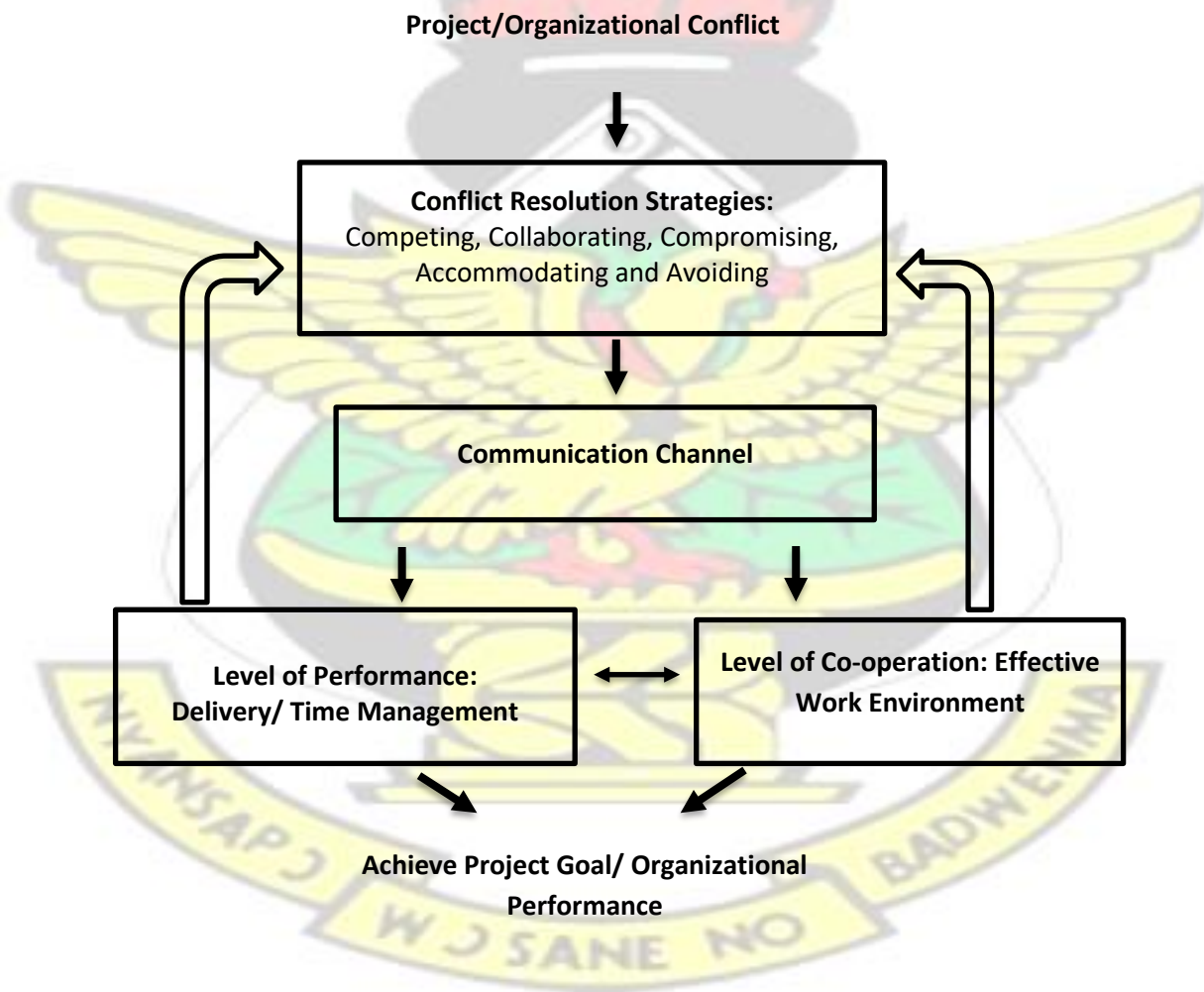
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Adapted and Modified (Knippen and Green,1999)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of several components that together addresses the research questions as well as the research strategy and the empirical techniques applied. It also give detailed discussion about the research methodology employed in collecting the data for the study. The chapter covers the research design and methodology, including project location, sampling and sample size, population, data collection process, ethical considerations and data analysis.

3.2 Project Location

The project is located within the Tema Metropolis. The residential areas form about 60% of the total land area with the remaining land cover of 40% purposely for industrial and commercial activities (TMA, 2017). According to the medium-term development framework, the Metropolis is situated about 30 kilometers East of Accra, the Capital City of Ghana. It shares boundaries on the North-East with the Kpone-Katamanso and NingoPrampram Districts, South- West by Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal, North-West by Ashaiman Municipal (Formerly Adenta Municipal) and the Ga East Municipal, North by the Akuapim South District and on the South by the Gulf of Guinea. The Ashaiman Municipal is an in-lock enclave within the Tema Metropolis. The Municipality has recently seen the creation of another in-lock enclave called Tema West Municipal Assembly. The Metropolis covers an area of about 121km with Tema as its capital lies within the coastal savannah zone of Ghana. The municipality is the host to the largest Seaport in Ghana. The

project understudy when completed is a major interchange which connects to every part of the country and beyond. The Motorway forms an integral part of the Trans-Africa Highway, stretching from Lagos through Lomé, Accra, and Abidjan to

Dakar, and effectively serves as the junction to the Sub- region (Moore-Adingo, 2019).

Below is the Map of the project Location in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: An aerial view of the Project Site

Souce: thebftonline.com

3.3 Research Approach

The researcher adopted the quantitative approach for the study. This was done through a survey conducted to collect information from respondents. The instrument for the

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collection of the data was the questionnaire. The data that was collected gave a descriptive analysis of the research findings. It also provided the opportunity to test the objectives of the study and examine the theories of the various variables identified. These variables were measured using percentages, numbers, graphs and other central tendencies as may be required.

3.4 Unit of Analysis

This research adopted individual workers as units of analysis. The project is structured such that, the main contractor (Shimizu-Dai Nippon from Japan), is the project executioner, together with other six other sub-contractors who are supporting the project implementation at various levels. Therefore there are workers working on the same project, under different contractors. According to the Project manager, the sub-contracts includes; scaffolding, excavation and materials supply, overhead foot bridges, drainage and steel bending works and the main road works. The units of analysis for this research covered workers at the project site working at various levels under different contractors and as superintended by the main contractor of the project. These included workers of the Main contractor and sub-contractors working on the project.

3.5 Sources of Data

The data for the research depended on both the Primary and the Secondary Data sources. Primary data sources were gathered through the survey approach. Secondary data sources covered government publications, technical documents, studies and reports conducted and reviewed.

3.6 Population

The population of the study covered workers at the project site. According to the Project Manager, as cited in the information on bftonline.com, about 400 workers were engaged under the project (Moore-Adingo, 2019). However, a further check by the researcher at the project office, indicated that close to 640 persons have been engaged to undertake the project. With this information in mind, it gave a clear understanding of what the estimated population for the project was (N=640).

3.7 Sample Frame

The sample frame is the total number of workforce on the project, which is 640 workers based on information provided by checks conducted at the project office.

3.8 Sample Size

The sample size of the study was determined based on the sample frame. Since the sample frame is 640. The sample size was generated using the sample size generator at www.surveysystem.com at a confidence interval of plus-or-minus 0.10 (margin of error). This gave a sample size of 84. The process was also repeated on another sample generator website called www.qualtrics.com. The researcher repeated the process with the same confidence level of 95%, population size of 640, margin of error of 0.10 and the perfect sample size calculated was 84. However, the researcher chose to round it up to 95 sample size. The difference is to take care of low response rate and respondents who may not be able to give accurate information (Errors).

3.9 Sampling Technique

The study was carried out using the multi-stage sampling techniques. The researcher employed both the probability and the non-probability sampling techniques to undertake the study. For the probability sampling technique, the researcher applied the simple random and stratified sampling methods. Also, for the non-probability sampling technique, the Convenience Sampling was used when conducting the study. The use of the convenience sampling is to avoid unnecessary obstruction at the project site. Therefore subjects were selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Availability).

3.10 Data Collection Instrument

The main data collection instrument for this research was the questionnaire. Because is a Primary research aimed at giving descriptive analysis of findings, the researcher held the view that the use of the questionnaire will help gather the needed information to achieve the research objectives and to test the theories of the research. The questionnaire consisted of a number of questions that respondents answered in a set format mostly on a likert scale. Most of these questions were closed-ended questions. The use of the closed-ended questions was to allow respondents pick an answer from a given number of options. Respondents were made to exhaust all the set questions as they answered them. Moreover, it helped in focusing the respondent's attention on the significant items in the research as well, so it brought about some uniformity in the responses.

3.11 Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected were processed and analyzed with IBM SPSS statistics Version 20 (formerly statistical package for social science). When the quantitative information was collected, the results were carefully analyzed with the above software. To avoid confidentially issues, the questionnaires were first coded and then fed into the software. The software was used in analyzing the data, whiles the findings were discussed narratively. The information from the data were then presented in diagrams, graphs and tables.
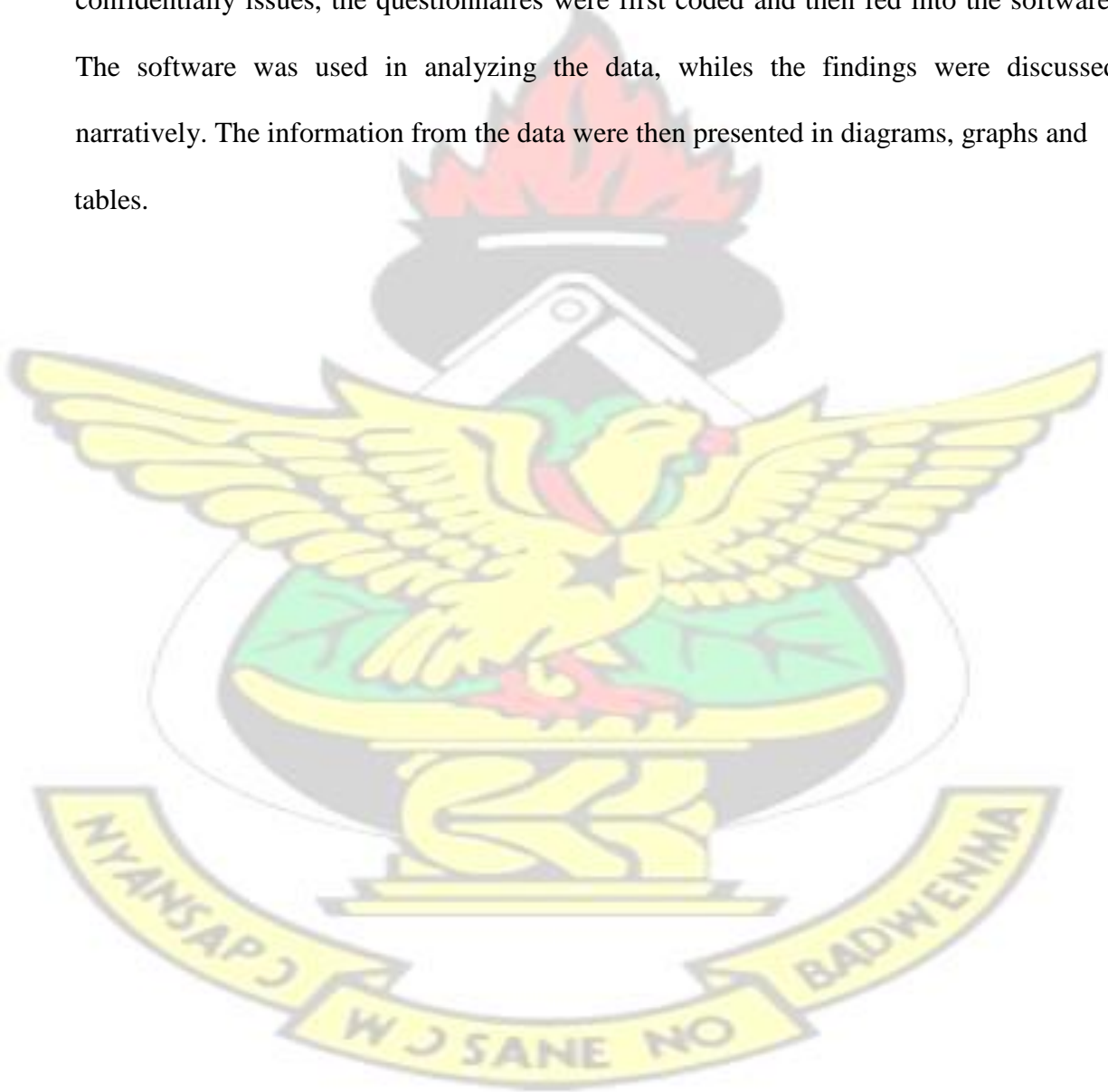
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with analysis of data and discussion of findings in the research conducted. The findings relate to the research questions that guided the study. Data were analyzed to identify, describe and explore issues related to conflict resolutions through appropriate communication channel during project implementation.

A total of 95 questionnaires were administered however, 80 were received, of which 76 questionnaires qualified for analysis were used for the study. The Data were obtained from self-administered questionnaires completed by 80 workers, on the Tema Motorway Roundabout Project representing a response rate of 80%. This represented 80% of the expected population.

4.2 Demography of Respondents

The demographic information, presents the general background of respondents in terms of their characteristics. This information is necessary to make deductive assessment of the respondents who participated in the study.

Figure 4.1 presents the percent distribution of Education levels of respondents sampled for the survey. This represents the overall education attained by respondents working on the project who participated in the study. From the study, about 7.9% of respondents have

Masters Degree, 30.3% have Bachelors Degree, 28.9% have Diploma and another 7.9%

have a higher Certificate education. About 13.2% of respondents also indicated that, they

have WASSCE/SSCE education, 5.3% have BECE and the remaining 6.6 have no

education. Generally, the data showed that, majority of the respondents were educated and

had higher education. This is because, close to 89% of the respondents had education

beyond SSCE/WASSCE. Out of the 89%, about 67% had between Diploma to Masters

degrees. This educational and qualification prowess, show that majority of the respondents

were in the position to answer the administered questionnaire.
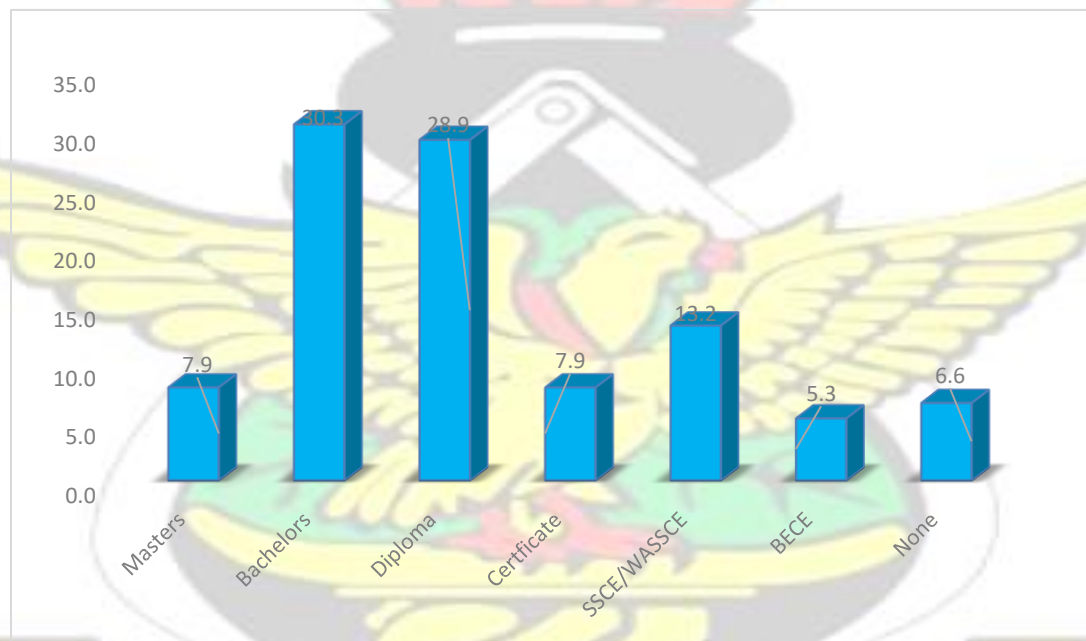
Figure 4.1: Educational Attainment of Respondents (Field Survey, 2019)

Figure 4.2 show the percentage distribution of the role/position of the sampled respondents

working on the project. From the study, about 15.8% of respondents were

Laboures/Artisans, 13.2% were Site Forman, 17.1% were Administration Staff, and 32.9%

were Supervisors. The data also show that 10.5% of respondents were Project Managers

and another 10.5% were Departmental Heads. The role/position as observed, show that the respondents were spread across all the relevant positions and structures of the project.
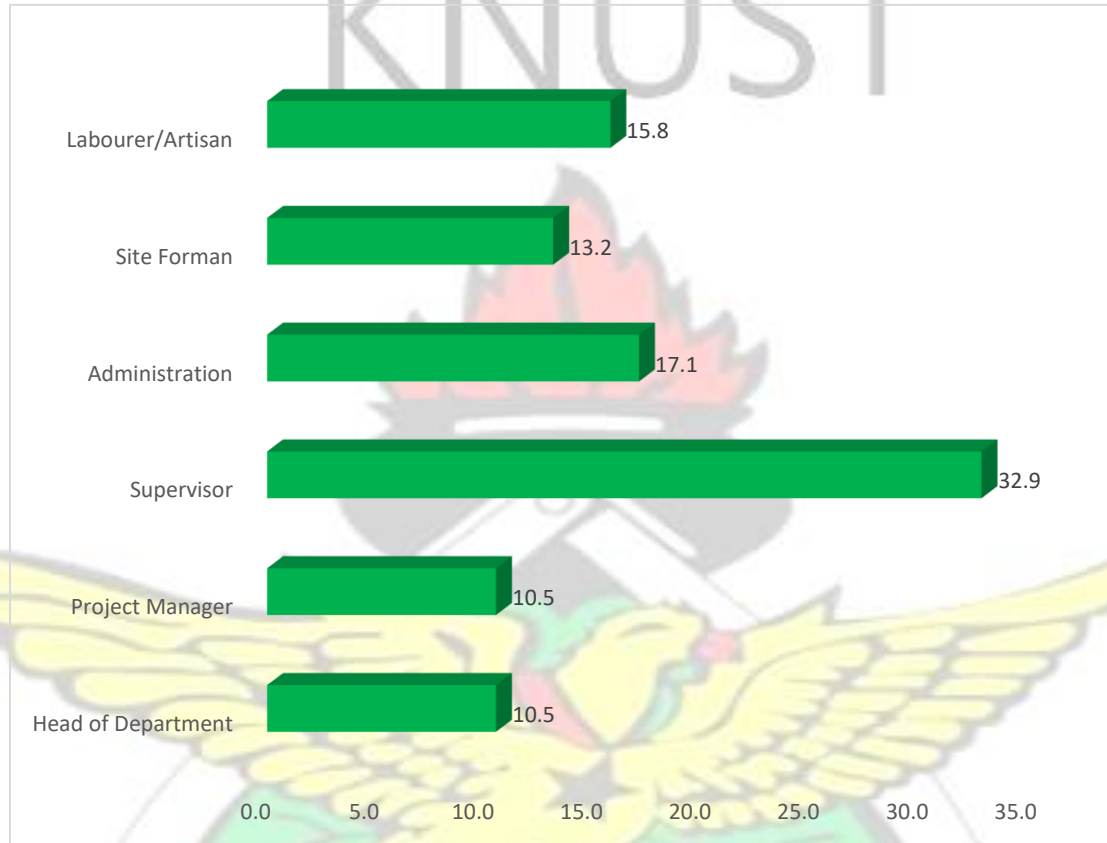
Figure 4.2: Respondents Role/Position on the Project (Field Survey, 2019)

4.3 Causes of Organizational Conflict

Table 4.1 show the causes of conflict in the ranked based on a mean score descriptive analysis of a five-point likert scale of between Very Low to Very High. From the findings, it was revealed that, the main causes of conflict among workers was incompatibility of goals among team members. This is because respondents ranked it higher than the rest when it was tested, as it recorded with a mean score of 3.13.16. This confirms the study by

(Rahim, 2002; Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012; Omisore and Abiodun, 2014; Mohamed, 2016; Hossain, 2017), where they indicated that, behavioural challenges such as goal incompatibility is major cause of conflict in most organizations. This was followed by personality differences with a score of 3.0789. The third highly ranked cause of conflict is the weak task interdependence with a mean score of 3.0658. The rest of the causes identified were; poor project management and organizational structure with a mean score of 2.9868, lack of resources/material availability to work with had a mean score of 2.8553 and finally, poor communication management with a mean score of 2.8026. The three main cause that were ranked averagely high were as a result of personality, role and relationship clashes as identified in the findings. Obviously, in every organization, some of these situations are bound to occur. However, the important thing is how it is handled, so that it does not generate into very bad situations.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics on Causes of Conflict in the Project

Organizational/Project Conflict	Level of Causes					Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5			
Incompatible goals among team members	9	16	21	23	11	3.1316	1.1701	1st
Personalities differences of workers	8	15	27	15	11	3.0789	1.1861	2nd
Weak task Interdependence	8	23	24	10	11	3.0658	1.1585	3rd
Poorly managed project and organizational structure	17	14	18	17	10	2.9868	1.3316	4th
Resource/material availability to work with	14	21	19	15	7	2.8553	1.2187	5th

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Poor communication management	18	15	19	15	9	2.8026	1.3368	6th

Field Survey, 2019

Table 4.2 also show descriptive analysis of communication management/handling factors that contribute to causes of conflict which have been ranked based on a mean score of a five-point likert scale of between Very Low to Very High. The researcher was seeking to establish that, the way communication is handled or managed can also be a cause of conflict among workers. According to literature, the perception or actual opposition to the needs, and values of people in an organization is an impediment to workplace teamwork and unity (Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012; Mohamed, 2016; Hossain, 2017). From the study, out of the five-communication management and handling factors listed, respondents rated/ranked all of them between the mean scores of 2.78 to 2.97. The factors listed, such as; the perception of not listening and making people feel valued, poor communication on project expectations or the issue of need to know basis, inability to take responsibility and figure pointing of blame were ranked high in a descending order. The other factors that follow in that trend were perceive micro-management and lack of trust and the over focus on the task to the neglect of the individuals involved in the work.

Table 4.2: Conflicts Caused through Communication Management/Handling

Communication Management Conflicts	Level of Causes					Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5			
Perception of not listening and making people feel valued	11	17	21	17	10	2.9737	1.25405	1st

Poor communication of project expectations or need to know basis only	15	12	21	17	11	2.9605	1.33107	2nd
Not ready to take responsibility and finger pointing of blame	20	12	17	12	15	2.8684	1.47279	3rd
Perceive micro-management and lack of trust	14	14	24	19	5	2.8289	1.19318	4th
Too much focus on the task and not the individuals	14	11	30	19	2	2.7895	1.09928	5th

Field Survey, 2019

4.4 Communication Channels for Conflict Resolution

Table 4.3, show the communication channel that is mostly used in resolving conflict in the organization/project. The data indicate that, verbal interactions was ranked high in terms of communication channel of was often used in resolving conflict. This was based on responses given by respondents after they answered the five-point likert scale question from "Never" which represented 1 to "Almost Always" which represented 5. Therefore, the mean score for verbal interactions was 4.0526. This was followed closely by the use of staff meetings to resolve conflict with a ranked mean score of 3.9605. The third communication channel identified by respondents was the Emails and Social Media, which had a mean score value of 3.5789. The fourth was the use of a formal open-door policy by senior staff and management which had a mean score of 3.4079. This was followed by the use of formal written grievance and disciplinary and procedure and high-level conflict resolution management committee with mean score value of 3.3421 each. The least that was identified by respondents was the use of Labour Commission and the Courts. From the findings, it was clear that majority of the conflicts that occur were resolved through verbal interactions and staff meetings. This finding also relates with earlier studies conducted

where Huan and Yazdanifard (2012) asserted that, all parties must be involved and heard when resolving organizational conflict. Obviously, in any serious institution/organization, these two means/forms/channels of communication are the common channels that should be used to address challenges and conflicts. These are things that are routinely done or are easily available for use. Interestingly, emails and social media have also taken are important position in communication. It is also another easy form of communicating. Therefore, it is not farfetched if the project adopts these three means/channels by which conflicts are resolved.

Table 4.3: Communication Channels for Conflict Resolution

Communication Channels for Conflict Resolution	Level of Frequency					Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5			
Verbal interactions	1	3	17	25	30	4.0526	.95072	1st
Staff Meetings	3	4	17	21	31	3.9605	1.1008	2nd
Emails and Social Media	7	8	18	20	23	3.5789	1.2781	3rd
Open-door policy by Senior staffs and management	9	13	14	18	22	3.4079	1.3777	4th
High level conflict resolution management committee	7	8	26	22	13	3.3421	1.1610	5th
Formal written grievance and disciplinary procedures	8	13	17	21	17	3.3421	1.2915	6th
Labour Commission and the Courts	17	16	14	15	14	2.9079	1.4346	7th

Field Survey, 2019

4.5 Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies Adopted

Table 4.4, show the conflict resolution strategy that is mostly used in resolving conflict in the organization/project at the Management or the organizational level. This was also based on responses given by respondents after they answered a five-point likert scale question from "Never" which represented 1 to "Always" which represented 5. The data indicate that, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties was ranked high with a mean score of 3.75 in relation to resolution strategy. This was closely followed by the strategy that try to find a creative solution to a problem with a mean score of 3.7105. The third was the strategy that pursue concerns at the expense of others with a mean score of 3.1316. The fourth was the strategy that postpone or withdraws issues completely with a mean score of 3.0789. The last least strategy is the charitable or selfless generosity strategy with a mean score of 2.9474. From literature, adopting the appropriate conflict resolution strategies helps form strong relationships with subordinates (Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012). The findings revealed that, the main strategy in conflicts resolution, where mutual resolution in a partial manner was identified is a Compromise strategy. This is a strategy that is applied or use when it is more important to reach a solution than for the solution to be great, or a deadline is rapidly approaching or the need for a temporary solution for the moment (Momanyi and Juma, 2016). The second resolution strategy according to respondents is the Collaborative strategy. This is the type where parties develop innovative solutions to deal with situations. The third strategy is the Competing strategy. This strategy is adopted, when there is the need for a quick decision or to force people to get on board on a particular task. It is also used to end a long-term conflict, or to prevent a terrible

situation or opposing decision from being made. The fourth is the Avoiding strategy which is used when the conflict seems trivial. Also, if management don't have the time or want to prevent resentment, they adopt the Avoiding strategy. The last strategy adopted is the Accommodating strategy that is applied when management care less about the issue and will want to keep the peace in the organization.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistic of Management/Organizational Conflict Resolution Strategy

Conflict Resolution Strategy	Level of Strategy Use					Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5			
Mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties	5	8	15	21	27	3.7500	1.23423	1st
Try to find a creative solution to a problem	3	9	14	31	19	3.7105	1.09320	2nd
Pursuing concerns at the expense of others	6	15	27	19	9	3.1316	1.11166	3rd
Postponing or withdrawing issues completely	3	16	34	18	5	3.0789	.93471	4th
Generous or being charitable to people	8	17	28	17	6	2.9474	1.09416	5th

Field Survey, 2019

Table 4.5, show the conflict resolution strategy that individual worker adopts in resolving inter-personal conflict in the organization/project. This was also based on responses given

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by respondents after they answered another five-point likert scale question from "Never", represented by the value 1 to "Always" represented by the value 5. From the data, individual workers were of the view that, Assertive and Cooperative was the main strategy they adopt in resolving conflict, and so ranked it high as it recorded a mean score of 3.25. This strategy as observed in literature as the Collaborative Strategy. The second strategy used by individuals in times of conflict to resolve differences is the Neither Assertive nor the Cooperative strategy. This strategy had a mean score of 3.1184. This strategy according to literature is the Compromise strategy. The third was the Assertive and Uncooperative strategy which had a mean score of 3.0921. This was also identified in literature as the Competing strategy. The fourth was the Unassertive and Cooperative strategy with a mean score of 2.5526. This was the Accommodating strategy. The last strategy is the Unassertive and Uncooperative strategy with a mean score of 2.9474. This stood for the Avoiding strategy.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics of Individual Conflict Resolution Strategy

Conflict Resolution Strategy	Level of Strategy					Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5			
Assertive and Cooperative	8	17	25	12	14	3.2500	1.05987	1st
Neither Assertive nor Cooperative	4	14	26	23	9	3.1184	1.11913	2nd
Assertive and Uncooperative	6	16	26	19	9	3.0921	1.24555	3rd
Unassertive and Cooperative	19	23	25	5	4	2.5526	1.13601	4th
Unassertive and Uncooperative	16	22	21	14	3	2.3684	1.09352	5th

Field Survey, 2019

4.6 Communication Challenges in Conflict Resolution

Table 4.6, show the some of the challenges associated with the communication channel that is used in resolving conflict in the organization/project. The data indicate that, inability to recognize and respect individual views was seen as the major challenge identified based on responses given by respondents after they answered the five-point likert scale question from "Never" represented by the value of 1 to "Always" represented by the value of 5. The mean score value for this major challenge was a value of 3.2895. The second major challenge identified was the inability to set clear expectations. This also had a mean score value of 3.1053. The third major challenge was poor listening skills and complaint receiving systems which had a mean score value of 3.0526. The final challenge identified was the inability to address issues immediately and openly. This also had a mean score value of 3.0132. The data therefore show that, because information come indirectly, people are required to infer from what they actually mean. This creates room for misinterpretation, especially through text/email/social media (Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012). Further, conflict situations are possible through misinterpretation of what another is trying to communicate. Once communication is clear, trust is gained and success is inevitable.

Table 4.6: Management Challenges Associated with Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution Management Challenges	Level of Challenge					Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5			

Inability to recognize and respect individual views	9	11	21	19	16	3.2895	1.28391	1st
Inability to set clear expectations	11	18	13	20	14	3.1053	1.35232	2nd
Poor listening skills and complaint receiving systems	11	16	17	22	10	3.0526	1.27431	3rd
Inability to address issues immediately and openly	12	24	8	15	17	3.0132	1.43753	4th

Field Survey, 2019

Table 4.7, indicate the effects associated with the conflict resolution strategy by the organization/project. Respondents were asked to answer a five-point likert scale question from "Very Low" which represented 1 to "Very High" which represented 5. The data indicate that, there was poor teamwork associated with conflict resolution. This was based on the data gathered, where poor teamwork was ranked at a mean score of 3.6842. Respondents also identified; Self-Doubt as the second main challenge with a mean score of 3.4605; Suspicion as the third main challenge with a mean score of 3.4342; Indecision as the fourth main challenge with a mean score of 3.3553; Low Productivity as the fifth main challenge with a mean score of 3.1447 and finally, Stress with a mean score of 3.1053 as some of the main challenges associated with conflict resolution in the organization. This show that, if conflict is not properly resolve, it affects teamwork (Howell, 2014). This may be as a result of workers hiding the real reason of insecurity, unwillingness to Cooperate or there is a serious communication challenge (Fjermestad, 2004). Therefore, self-doubt, suspicion and indecision followed in that order respectively, as second, third, and fourth main challenges, are also linked to lack of information and insecurity.

Table 4.7: Effects of Communication in Conflict Resolution

Effects of Conflicts Resolved	Level of Effect					Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5			
Teamwork	5	6	19	24	22	3.6842	1.16859	1st
Self-Doubt	4	7	29	22	14	3.4605	1.06384	2nd
Suspicion	6	9	19	30	12	3.4342	1.13532	3rd
Indecision	8	8	25	19	16	3.3553	1.22968	4th
Productivity	10	2	35	25	4	3.1447	1.04184	5th
Stress level	13	6	23	28	6	3.1053	1.20642	6th

Field Survey, 2019

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the research focuses on key findings of the study. It also draws out the main conclusion from the study and provides recommendations for conflict resolution through the use of appropriate communication channel. Finally, this chapter of the research brings

to closure the entire research, as it summarizes all what had been done to address the aim and objectives of the work.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The research was aimed at examining organizational conflicts and the appropriate communication channel that can be adopted to address workplace conflicts as they occur in organizations or during project execution. This is because research have shown that unresolved or poorly managed conflict damages and destroy relationships which then affects teamwork, performance and productivity.

Contrary to the notion that, conflict is only a destructive element in an organization. Research establishes and affirms that, conflict situations in an organization may only be a turning point for better performance and therefore does not have to lead to destructive situations especially in an organization or during project execution. Therefore, the argument holds that effective management or resolution of conflict contribute to stronger and deeper relationships as it helps in addressing ongoing problems and concerns.

Therefore, project managers and implementers can only achieve success if they develop effective communication skills necessary in successfully resolving organizational conflicts when implementing projects. This underpins the adoption of the conceptual framework used for the study and gives clear direction of possible challenges associated with inappropriate communication and the possible conflicts that may arise when implementing projects (See Figure 2.1, page 30). Further, the study was used to address the following research questions: the common causes of conflicts during project execution; the appropriate communication channels necessary for resolving conflicts during project

execution; the main conflict resolution strategies used during project execution; some of the challenges and effects associated with conflict resolution during project execution.

From reviewed literature, it was illustrated that, for any organization to achieve its set objective when implementing a project, it is imperative that, they harmonize and develop favorable relationships that can mitigate or reduce destructive organizational conflict among employees/workers (Hossain, 2017). However, achieving organizational performance alongside quality service delivery requires effective teamwork. Again, it is also important to note that, the effectiveness of an organization/project is about the efficiency of every employee/worker, working to help achieve organizational/project goals (Bashaer et al, 2016). Therefore, one effective way of team building and employee/worker efficiency is conflict management (Hossain, 2017). According to literature, conflict is about changing negative conflict situations to inventive and productive conflict situations (Howell, 2014). Effective conflict management encourages enthusiasm, boosts morale, and stimulates individual and organizational development; while an ineffective conflict management produces more conflict and destructively effects the whole organization (Rajkumar, 2010). Further, the structural argument of the framework is that, conflict resolution requires the use of appropriate systems and strategies to handle or manage organizational conflicts as they occur in order to achieve the desired outcomes (Darrington and Brower, 2012). One critical way as observed from the conceptual framework is the use of appropriate or effective communication in addressing conflict. The emphasis is on the appropriateness or the effectiveness as indicated in the framework. Since, the possibility of worsening the conflict situation is also highly plausible when the communication is not

appropriate or effective. Therefore, the following objectives below were addressed in the study.

5.2.1 To examine the common causes of conflicts during project execution.

The findings revealed that, incompatibility of goals among team members was the main cause of conflict among workers. This was followed by personality differences, weak task interdependence, poor project management and organizational structure, lack or inadequate resource/material availability to work with and poor communication management. This information confirms the studies by (Hotepo et al, 2010; Omisore and Abiodun, 2014; Longe, 2015; Mohamed, 2016; Hossain, 2017).

5.2.2 To assess appropriate communication channels necessary for resolving conflicts during project execution.

In relation to communication management, the findings revealed that; the inability to listen and make people feel valued, poor communication on project expectations or the issue of need to know basis, inability to take responsibility and figure pointing of blame, perceive micro-management and lack of trust as well as over focus on the task to the neglect of the individuals involved in the work contribute to the cause of conflict in the organisation, corroborating (Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012; Mohamed, 2016; Hossain, 2017). This satisfy the objective of the main causes of conflict in the organization/project as well as answers the reserch question.

5.2.3 To examine the various conflict resolution strategies adopted in project execution.

The findings also establish that, when people/individuals find themselves in conflict situation, they exhibit these five major behaviours listed in descending order starting with the major behavior strategy: Assertive and Cooperative (Collaborative strategy); Neither Assertive nor the Cooperative (Compromise strategy); Assertive and Uncooperative (Competing strategy); Unassertive and Cooperative (Accommodating strategy); Unassertive and Uncooperative (Avoiding strategy). The study was therefore able to successfully establish that: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating behaviours exist within the project under study. (Thomas and Kilmann 1976; Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012; Howell, 2014; Nischal, 2014; Mohamed, 2016; Hossain, 2017; Hussein et al, 2017).

According to the findings, management has adopted various conflict resolution strategies to resolve conflict in the organization/project. These strategies as identified and listed in descending order in relation to dominance and the major ones used includes; first is the mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties, thus the compromise mode/style. The second is the collaborating mode/style which is normally used to try and find a creative solution to a problem. The third is the competing mode/style which is a power-oriented mode/style, which is also used when there is the need for a quick decision or to force people to get on board on a particular task. It is also applied to end a long-term conflict, or to prevent a terrible situation or the opposition of a decision. The first three main strategies confirm the studies by (Thomas and Kilmann 1976; Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012; Momanyi and Juma, 2016). The other two strategies are often applied, when the situations seems less tense and could be ignored or internalized, confirming the work by

(Howell, 2014). This include; The Avoiding mode/style, which is used when the conflict seems trivial, or management don't have the time or want to stop resentment. The Firth mode/strategy adopted is the accommodating mode/style which concentrates on resolving conflicts by meeting the needs of others instead of addressing the conflict issues themselves. All the five main strategies identified corroborate studies by (Nischal, 2014; Kodikal et al 2014). This satisfy the third objective of the stratgy that could best help adress or rsolve conflicts.

5.2.4 To identify challenges and effects associated with conflict resolution during project execution.

The study also sought to find out the main challenges and effects associated with the conflict resolution strategy used during the project execution. The findings indicate that, the inability to recognize and respect individual views was seen as the main challenge in resolving conflict. This was followed by inability to set clear expectations, poor listening skills and complaint receiving systems, and the inability to address issues immediately and openly. This challenges arise when information are not clear and direct. This result in poeople resorting to infer. This creates room for misinterpretation and doubts confirming the work by (Omisore and Abiodun, 2014). The effects of such situations according to the findings and based on the responses given includes; poor teamwork, self-doubt, indecision, low productivity and stress. This may be the result of workers hiding the real reason of insecurity and unwillingness to cooperate which confirms the work of (Desivilya Syna and Yagil, 2004).

Since research has identify the various modes as function of appropriate communication channel during conflict resolution as it serve as a means of communication. There is the caution that, when interacting and the communication is not handled well, it sends a bad signal which causes further harm in an attempt to resolve conflicts. In other words, communication is driven by personal identities which corroborates the studies by (Fjermestad, 2004; Huan and Yazdanifard, 2012; Howell, 2014; Hossain, 2017). That is to say that, within the very same interaction, our words, non-verbal, and demeanor are fueled by our social identities as a group. Unfortunately, we send out messages that are neither oral nor written which may carry different meaning or understanding. That is why, when we communicate, have to be conscious and consider what implied messages we send out especially in relation to attitude, body language, and behaviour (Giles and Ogay, 2007).

5.3 Conclusion

The findings has so far established that, there is no uniform means to resolve conflicts. This is because, every organization and industry has different strategy and means to reduce conflict. Again, every manager and the conflict situation determine how managers go about resolving organization conflict. Often, managers try to calm situation by being understanding and supportive to both parties so that the organization can reach its objectives, goals and desired results. Although the consequences of unresolved conflict can affect employee behaviour and performance. The study has illustrated that, it is the responsibility of management officials to mitigate such conflicts from escalating by intervening and mediating, using the right methods/approach and strategy appropriately.

Per the findings, different conflict resolution and management styles have its benefits and weaknesses, therefore, managers have to identify the most appropriate conflict styles based on the different situations as well as the right communication channel to use so that the situation does not escalate as observed in the conceptual framework adapted for the study. Moreover, conflicts have always served as a learning curve for organizations to improve on what they might be doing wrong or right. Without conflict, no organization will seek to improve and ensure effectiveness and efficiency, hence the need to manage/handle conflicts with the care and attention it deserves.

5.4 Recommendations

The following are however recommended as a way of addressing issues related to inappropriate communication channel that may result in conflict during project execution:

1.   Project managers should not assume that team members understand the task required of them. This assumption can lead to a situation where, team members will become unclear on what needs to be accomplished. A good project manager takes the time to explain the tasks, their expectations and timeframes around completion. Explanation should be given to workers on the importance of the overall project to the organization and help prioritize their tasks as needed.

2.   Project managers must foster a clear line of communication between project team members to minimize duplication of efforts as well as reduce doubts. The project manager needs to be easily accessible to project team members when the need arises. If team members cannot reach their project manager or other team members, they may run around

in circles. This may result in unnecessary loafing that can cause needless tension which can also affect the performance of the project.

3.   Project officers should be trained on the various conflict resolution strategies, so that they can be in the position to properly address conflicts even when they get a saintlier of information about a conflict situation that is about emerging. Research show that, a good project manager is always proactive in avoiding the escalation of conflict situations. This can be done by managing the team with clear project plan, with timelines. It is also recommended that frequent meetings are held with the team for quick resolution of issues that can affect project outcomes.

4.   Critical to the challenges are issues that had to do with personality clashes which causes organizational conflict and is also fundamental to incompatibility of goals and the approach to things. This challenge can be addressed through comprehensive educational program for workers. Workers should be made to understand that, individuals have different views and opinions. Therefore workers should develop tolerant attitudes that will promote better organizational outcomes. Anything that is counterproductive should not be encouraged by management.

5.   Finally, the study recommends that further study be conducted on conflict prevention through effective communication during project implementation in Ghana.

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APPENDIX A

63

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Dear respondents,

As part of the award of Masters Degree in Project Management at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, we are to present a project work to fully meet the requirement for the award. I will therefore appreciate your support in helping fill this questionnaire designed to investigate **"CONFLICT RESOLUTION USING APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION".** The exercise is purely academic and your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality they deserve. Your maximum co-operation is highly anticipated

Please tick appropriately the answer

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Indicate your highest academic qualification

a. Masters [ ]   b. Bachelors [ ]   c. Diploma [ ]

d. Certificate [ ]   e. SSCE/WASSCE [ ]   f. BECE [ ]   g. None [ ]

2. Indicate your Position/Role in the organization

a. Head of Department [ ]   b. Manager [ ]   c. Supervisor [ ]

d. Administration [ ]   e. Site Forman [ ]   f. Laborer/Artisans [ ]

Section B:

3. Causes of Conflict: Which of the following is a major cause of conflict since the beginning of the project? Please rate them according to a five point likert scale from **"Very Low" to "Very High"** as indicated below:

1=Very Low   2=Low   3=Average   4=High   5=Very High

No.	Causes of Conflict	1	2	3	4	5
a	**Poor project management and organizational Structure**					
b	**Lack of resources / material availability to work with**					
c	**Weak task interdependence:** (The extent to which team members have to interact with one another or depend on each other to complete a task)					
d	**Incompatible goals among team members:** (The incapability of associating or blending with team member because of disharmony)					
e	**Poor communication management**					
f	**Personality differences:** (Individual differences in character patterns of thinking, feeling and behaviour)					

4. Effective Communication Management: Which of the following factors affect effective communication management in the project execution process? Please rate them on the five point likert scale of **"Very Low" to "Very High"** below:

1=Very Low   **2=Below Average**   **3=Average**

4=Above Average   **5=Very High**

No	Bad Communication Management Factors/Signs	1	2	3	4	5
a	Not listening and making people feel valued					
b	Perceive micro-management showing lack of trust among workers					
c	Too much focus on the task and not the individuals					
d	Poor communication of project expectations or on a need to know basis only					
e	Not ready to take responsibility and finger pointing of blame at every opportunity					

5. Communication Challenges in Conflict Resolution: Which of these communication channel is commonly used in resolving conflict in the organization. Please rate them accordingly using the five point Likert scale from **"Never"** to **"Almost Always"**

1. **Never**   2. **Hardly**   3. **Sometimes**   4. **Often**

5. Almost Always

No	Communication Channels in Conflict Resolution	1	2	3	4	5
a	Formal written grievance & disciplinary procedures					
b	High level management conflict resolution committee/team					
c	Labour Commission/Court					
d	Use of Open-door policy by Senior Staffs and Management					
e	Verbal interactions					

f	Emails and Social Media					
g	Staff Meetings					

6. Organizational Conflict Management Strategy: Literature identifies five main conflict management strategies. They are the accommodating, avoiding, competing, collaborating and compromising strategies. Each of the strategies applies to the information below. Kindly show which of the following conflict management Strategy/Strategies is/are predominate in the organization? Please rate them by ticking the box using the scale below

1. Never   2.Rarely   3. Sometimes   4. Very Often   5. Always

No.	Conflict Management Strategy	1	2	3	4	5
a	Selfless generosity or being charitable to everyone					
b	Postponing an issue or withdrawing completely					
c	Mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties					
d	Confronting and trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem					
e	Pursuing Individual concerns at the expense of others					

7. Individual Conflict Resolution Strategy: During conflict situations, behavior may be described based on where it lies along two independent dimensions **(Modes); assertiveness and cooperativeness**. Assertiveness is the degree to which you try to satisfy your own concern, while cooperativeness is the degree to which you try to satisfy the other person's concern. Please rate the following circumstances as they occur based on the resolution strategy adopted during conflict situations?

1. Very Low   2. Low   3. None   4. High   5. Very High

No.	Type of Modes	1	2	3	4	5
a	Unassertive and Cooperative					
b	Unassertive and Uncooperative					

c	Falls between Assertive and Cooperative					
d	Assertive and Cooperative					
e	Assertive and Uncooperative					

8. Management Challenges: The following symptoms affect the project execution and management during conflict resolution. Please tick appropriately as it applies.

1. **Very Low**   2. **Low**   3. **None**   4. **High**   5. **Very High**

No	Challenges from Management:	1	2	3	4	5
a	Inability to address issues immediately and openly					
b	Inability to Set clear expectations					
c	Not able to build listening skills and complaint receiving systems					
d	Do not recognize and respect personal differences					

9. Challenges in Conflict Resolution: Employees exhibit the following symptoms which affect the project/organization after the resolution of conflict in the workplace. Please tick appropriately as it applies.

1. **Very Low**   2. **Low**   3. **None**   4. **High**   5. **Very High**

No	Symptoms of Employee Challenges:	1	2	3	4	5
a	Self– doubt					
b	Higher stress					
c	Low productivity					
d	Suspicion					
e	Poor Teamwork					
f	Indecision					

Thank you.

KNUST