

Empirical Analysis of Workplace Conflict and its Influence on the Attitude of Media Employees in Ghana

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Workplace conflict is known to have severe implications on employees and organisations worldwide. Conflicts at the workplace have resulted in the destruction of cordial relationships among working colleagues as well as subordinates and superiors and has also changed enthusiastic employees to rather hostile and ineffectual actors. Consequently, these employees are not able to meet their targets due to negative attitudinal changes towards work, thus hampering the attainment of organizational goals. However, there is little empirical studies on this subject in both academic and industrial circles. In examining the outcomes of workplace conflict and its influence on the attitudes of media employees, this paper employed qualitative methodologies to select forty two (42) respondents from six Ghanaian print and electronic privately and state owned media houses. Findings revealed that attitudes of employees towards work were predominantly influenced negatively as employees decline in commitment to work and cooperation with others. Further, following conflicts, employees engaged in many adverse behavioral tendencies including not being on talking terms, not greeting one another, hostile behaviours and insecurity. Nonetheless, the paper interestingly found some positive outcomes such as idea sharing, unity, activeness and alertness from conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts in general are inevitable and are found in daily human interactions. Many types of relationships such as marriages, families, churches, ethnic groups, nations and workplaces suffer from conflicts (Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus 2006; Afful-Broni, 2012). Most conflicts are normally linked with negativities and so are workplace conflicts. Usually, workplace conflict occurs when there are misunderstandings about how a task or a job is to be done (the process of the task), the content of the task or the interactions among people or working colleagues (relationships). The outcomes of these misunderstandings are largely known to be negative and disastrous as they may result in working colleagues (superior and subordinate; subordinate and subordinate or superior and superior) fighting, not greeting each other, not talking to each other and quarreling, among others. Relationships at the workplace get strained and affect the attitude of employees towards work and this affects productivity as well as quality and other elements of production thereby making the achievement of the organizational goal very difficult. Workplace conflict usually results in high rate of absenteeism among employees and badly managed conflict causes stress, reduces confidence levels, and produces anxiety and frustrations

that result in lowered job motivation, humiliation and physical illness (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). According to Buss (2009), conflicts at the workplace result in psychological and physical distress among employees that even affects their family and friends. This consequently worsens medical conditions of employees, damages quality of work life, gives impression of ineffectiveness at work, increases labour turnover and above all declines productivity. As a result, clients also become dissatisfied because the quality of the product or service is tampered and above all the image of the organisation is destroyed (Riaz & Junaid, 2011; Buss, 2009).

Riaz and Junaid (2011) therefore outlined some outcomes of workplace conflict to include low job satisfaction, low confidence, low organisational commitment, lack of job involvement, tension, anxiety and inability to influence decisions. A report by the Chartered Institute Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2008) revealed that employees spend, depending on the country in which the survey was conducted, between 0.9 hours and 3.3 hours a week dealing with badly managed conflicts, amounting to 2.3 per cent and 8.3 per cent of the weekly working hours. For instance, the Netherlands averagely spend 0.9 hours while France and Denmark spend 1.8 hours and yet United States and Germany spend 2.8 and 3.3 hours respectively. Reynolds and Kalish (2002) who made a similar revelation emphasised that spending so much time in resolving conflicts in the workplace obviously affects the productivity of managers and employees, thus affecting organisational performance. Again, CIPD (2008) observed that workplace conflicts lead to personal insults and attacks, sicknesses, absenteeism and sometimes project failures. In Ghana, Owusu-Mensah (2009) recorded that conflict results in physical and psychological withdrawal of people, aggression and damage to property. Considering these disclosures, it is clear that workplace conflicts have negative connotations that adversely affect employees, their work and the organisation alike. It is therefore, imperative to explore workplace conflict and its influence on the attitudes of media employees. In the sections that followed, we present the literature and theoretical foundations followed by the description of the methodology after which the discussion and implications are presented.

LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Literature on conflict according to Buss (2009) does not provide a uniform definition. For instance, Wise (2000) regarded conflict as “two pieces of matter trying to occupy the same space at the same time”. That is, a conflict can occur between two people in opposing positions on the same subject. This means that two individuals struggling to occupy a vacant position could be in conflict. Again, Laue (1992) described conflict as an escalated natural competition between two or more parties about scarce resources, power, and prestige. These parties believe that they have incompatible goals so they aim at neutralising, gain advantage, injure or destroy one another. However, workplace conflict differs from other conflicts in that in the workplace, employees are obliged to work together (they are interdependent) whether they are experiencing conflicts or not in order to achieve organisational goals (Rahim, 2010). Whereas Dana (2001) explained that workplace conflict is a condition between or among workers whose jobs are interdependent, who feel angry, who perceive the other as being at fault and who act in ways that cause a problem, De Dreu and Gelfand (2007) argued that workplace conflict may arise because of scarce resources (e.g. time, status, budgets) or values (such as political preferences, beliefs, religion, moral and social values). Ramani and Zhimin (2010) further reported that organisational conflict occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with that of colleagues within their network, members of other groups or unaffiliated individuals who utilise the services or products of the organisation.

From these definitions, it could be argued that people must work together and interact before workplace conflict could occur. What seems to be clear from the various definitions of workplace conflict is that the concept has different perspectives. Aminu and Marfo (2010) observed that conflict does not submit itself to a single and widely accepted pattern. According to Rahim (2001), conflicts can occur within an organisation (intra-organisational) and between two or more organisations (inter-organisational). Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Services (ACAS) in its 2009 booklet “managing conflict at work” however stated that not all conflicts are so obvious. Some individuals might hide their

feelings as a way of coping with a problem; while a team might react to pressure by cutting itself from the rest of the organisation. In line with the distributive and the social exchange theories, employees are thus likely to relent on their efforts toward achieving individual targets and for that matter organisational goals not only if they think they are not benefiting from the organisation but when efforts outweigh returns.

Ayoko, Callan and Hartel (2003) observed that characteristics of intergroup conflicts are tasks and relationships related and that conflict is accompanied by emotions of frustration, anger, and behaviours of yelling, screaming and swearing. The authors argued that conflict is one of those specific events that arouse various emotional reactions at work. Similarly, Werner, Jan, Herman and Jenni (2012) also revealed that when employees experience intergroup conflict, it influences them and results in stress, anger, alienation and decline in cooperation among others. It also affects the functioning of the group and intergroup relations negatively. These feelings are said to manifest negatively in forms such as decline in performance, hostility towards colleagues, depression, job change, alienation from colleagues and physical health problems.

A report by the Psychometrics Canada (2008) on conflict in Canadian workplaces revealed that personality clashes and warring egos, leadership from top management and issues related to communication and stressful work environment play considerable roles in conflict generation at work. Indeed, these reflect in people leaving the organisation, sickness and absence, personal insults and attacks and firing of people. Furthermore, the Harvard Business School in 2009 on several thousand U.S. managers and employees who engaged in conflicts revealed outcome of conflicts as decrease in work efforts, decrease in time at work, decrease in work quality, decline in performance, loss of work time, worrying about the incident, avoiding the offender and decline in commitment to the organisation. In contrast, Aminu and Marfo (2010) as well as Jehn and Bendersky (2003) disagree with the claim that workplace conflict has nothing good to offer so must always be avoided. The authors averred that workplace conflict contains something positive and that it is a way of achieving some kind of unity. Stimulation of interest and curiosity, feedback, motivation, relieving of tension and catalyst to change are some of the major positive outcomes reported to be churned out through conflicts.

Among the theories that this study is anchored is the Distributive Justice Theory developed by Walton and McKersie. Bartos and Wehr (2002) re-emphasised this theory which propounds that people believe that they are treated unjustly if they receive less reward not proportional to their contributions or investments.

OVERVIEW OF THE GHANAIAN INKY FRATERNITY

There are three categories of mass communication media in Ghana namely, print, electronic (broadcasting) and film media (The National Media Policy (NMP), 1993). The print media comprises newspapers and magazines that are printed for mass readership while the broadcast or the electronic media covers radio and television. They involve the transmission by the air waves, cable or satellite of sound or images for simultaneous reception by a mass audience. The third category, the film media refers to the recording of moving images and sound on cellulose, video tape, disc or other recording medium for public exhibition. This paper, however looked at the print and the broadcast media because these dimensions of the Ghanaian media have been vibrant and occasionally experience some conflicts as well. Few decades ago, the print media in Ghana was limited mainly to state-owned publications and few embattled privately owned newspapers. Around the mid-1980s, there was a launching of a number of a privately owned newspapers and magazines. During that period, there were only about 30 newspapers and magazines in circulation out of which four of them were dailies and two weekend papers. They were the Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, Evening News, Mirror and Weekly Spectator (all state-owned) and the Pioneer which was privately owned and distributed mainly to a limited enclave. Until 1996, the only electronic (broadcast) media in the country was Ghana Broadcasting Corporation which operated both television and radio services in the country. In line with the relevant provision of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, authorisation was given in 1996 for privately owned broadcast media to be established and by mid-1999 there were 31 stations in operation in the country. Currently, there are over 100 media houses

registered with the National Media Commission (NMC) although there are many more which are yet to register with the Commission (NMC, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Design and Sampling Techniques

The study adopted the case study design because Yin (2003) argues that case study allows an investigation into retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of 'real life' events and also for obtaining meaning and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. In fact, there is a large number of media houses in Ghana, hence some were selected as cases to obtain detail information and to also determine if prevailing situation in one media orifice runs through the others. The sampling frame consisted of all media houses in Accra, Ghana, both print and electronic (broadcast), private and state owned. For the purposes of this study, six (6) of them were however selected. Since Yin (2003) and Frimpong (2014) argued that multiple case studies may be preferable for reliability and validity checks, the multiple cases of six media houses were therefore deemed appropriate.

TABLE 1
DETAILS OF MEDIA HOUSES AND CORRESPONDING NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

No.	Media House	Type	Ownership	No of Respondents
1.	New Times Corporation (NTC).	Print	State	7
2.	Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL).	Print	State	6
3.	Western Publications Limited (WPL).	Print	Private	7
4.	Metropolitan Entertainment Television Limited (Metro TV). GBC	Electronic TV station	Private	6
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTV • Radio Ghana 	Electronic TV and Radio station	State	10
6.	Omni Media Limited (OML)/CitiFm	Electronic Radio station	Private	6

The participants were drawn through the purposive sampling technique. The HR Managers at various selected organisations arranged for respondents who have had one conflict or the other to be interviewed. A total of forty-two respondents (19 males and 23 females) were engaged from the participating media houses. This explains why Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010) posited that qualitative research rarely uses hundreds of respondents, instead a handful of people are usually the source of qualitative data. The ages of respondents ranged between 23 to 59 years and the tenure of work was between 1 to 30 years. Respondents ranked from Administrators, Journalists, and Producers to Editors.

Data Collection Procedure

Person to person interviews were conducted to provide the opportunity to have in-depth conversations with respondents in sharing their experiences, thereby bringing out direct interaction for the necessary information especially when the respondents were people who have previously engaged in conflicts. Two separate semi-structured interview protocols containing different wordings but same meanings were designed for senior managers and middle/junior levels respectively. The purpose for designing different interview protocols was to assess whether data collected from the lower level staff were in line with that of the senior managers.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The data was first transcribed after which coding was done according individual responses. The next activity was categorisation or classification of the coded information to reduce the large data. Pattern matching from similarities and differences in words, phrases and sentences followed. The results were translated into numerical data as Bowen (2005) indicated that numerical data has a place in qualitative study and should be included where appropriate. In the same vein Miles and Huberman (1984) indicated that qualitative data with the aid of numbers is good method of data analysis.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This section discusses outcomes of conflict among media employees followed by the individual cases in each media house studied. List of outcomes among employees that emerged from the data analysis included stress, frustration, depression, unhappiness and dissatisfaction, not on talking terms with colleagues, marred relationships, hostile behaviours, insecurity, underperformance, fear of losing jobs, loss of trust and positive outcomes such as enhancement of idea sharing, unity, activeness and alertness.

Outcome of Workplace Conflict among Employees of the Media

Respondents from all media houses (Metro TV, NTC, WPL, GCGL and OML) except GBC said they go through stress, frustration and depression due to conflict whereas 57% and 29% of respondents from NTC and WPL respectively indicated that they become unhappy and dissatisfied. A total of 33% each from Metro TV and OML, 30% from GBC and 14% from NTC respectively had their relationships destroyed hence became unfriendly to one another. At GBC, 20% of the respondents were not on talking terms, with 50% reported to have underperformed. All the respondents from GCGL and 17% from Metro TV experienced positive outcomes while 14% from WPL felt insecure and 33% from OML feared losing their jobs. At Metro TV, 50% of the respondents said conflict makes them stressed up, frustrated and depressed while 33% exhibited hostile behaviours due to marred relationships with friends, colleagues and supervisors; meanwhile 17% on the contrary indicated a positive outcome that the aftermath of conflict enhances sharing of ideas. Some respondents remarked that:

“Conflicts influence negatively or positively, negatively it weighs you down, people have personal grudge; positive because it builds you to correct mistakes and move on.....it affects the job because when one is not talking to you, you may be uncomfortable and may leave the job eventually”.

According to one producer:

“It affects the job because when I am not talking to a colleague or subordinate, I can't call him/her and if he/she does not come it is his own cup of tea but it affects my work as a producer”.

Consistent with the studies of Ayoko et al. (2003) and Buss (2009), investigations at Metro TV revealed negative outcomes such as stress, frustration, depression, bitterness, pain, hatred and hostile behaviours as the key outcomes of conflict at the workplace. Contrastingly however, a respondent indicated that conflict has some positive implications where conflicting parties are able to interact well and share ideas after the conflict is resolved. This outcome confirms the findings of Aminu and Marfo (2010) who observed that workplace conflicts stimulate interest, curiosity, motivation, feedback and spurs change. Similarly, Rahim (2001) indicated that conflict at the workplace enhances group performance while Jehn and Bendersky (2003) pointed out that workplace conflict enhances creativity by motivating people to solve problems that might otherwise go unattended to.

However, there were different outcomes found in New Times Corporation (NTC) where 57% of the respondents expressed that they experienced dissatisfaction due to poor conditions of service which trigger emotional and social behaviours such as unhappiness, shouting and insults, less creativity and not talking to one another. A respondent indicated that relationship with some friends and superiors has been destroyed due to conflict, two also thought conflict make them depressed, frustrated and stressed out. One management member reported:

“It takes good business environment conflict free to encourage creativity and encourage people to exhibit their talents”.

These revelations give indication that employees suffer from conflicts in the Ghanaian media. It is therefore imperative for management to handle conflict issues with care and urgency in order to minimise some of the negative consequences since conflict is unavoidable and cannot entirely be prevented.

The outcomes of conflict at the workplace was not different in Western Publications Limited(WPL) where majority (57%) of the respondents reported that as a result of workplace conflict they are emotionally affected by way of depression, low morale, frustration and confusion when executing their tasks. However, 29% admitted that they become unhappy and dissatisfied, whereas, 14% indicated fear of losing their jobs. Some respondents expressing their feelings recounted:

“Sometimes you are depressed and confused; you don’t know what to do.....when it happens like that it can affect your morale.....you get sad and you are full of errors..... so you are not able to think right.....sometimes you feel frustrated”.

Some respondents also remarked:

“You don’t know the next line of action. In this country there is something we call job security because you don’t have any place to go.....you don’t know the decision they are going to take about you.....you don’t know their next line of action”.

Findings further revealed that employees are adversely and emotionally affected by workplace conflicts. These unwelcome emotional outbursts lead to dissatisfaction and decline in productivity because anytime employees are dissatisfied, it has a toll on their work and they exhibit negative behaviours such as increase in absenteeism, idleness, and lateness become rampant and people do whatever they feel (Ayoko et. al., 2003; Buss, 2009; Riaz & Junaid, 2011).

Moreover, 50% of the participants in Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) revealed that they become unproductive (underperform) as a result of conflict. This was attributed to the fact that conflict situations build in them sentiments like bitterness, timidity, withdrawal, frustration, anger and disillusionment leading to non-productivity. Besides, while a total of 30% got their relationships with friends and colleagues strained, 20% reported that conflicts result in disrespectfulness, not talking to or greeting one another.

A local union boss reported that:

“Conflict brings apathy and makes people disillusioned; not knowing what to do because they feel not appreciated so they accept whatever goes on and let it be. It brings down productivity.....they don’t want to show up their zeal so it brings down productivity. It affects the individual interest and you will be timid in your work, some get angry and withdraw”.

A senior manager expressing her feelings said:

“.....you thought you are doing your line of duty but you realise the person has stopped greeting.....and some become snobbish”.

Interestingly data from GCGL found all the six respondents reporting positive outcomes of conflicts at the workplace. They revealed that conflict makes them become active, alert and improve on their relationship with colleagues as well as build unity amongst colleagues when it is resolved.

One respondent reported:

“I will describe it as having positive influence on the work that we do. It makes all of us sit up. We don’t take conflict so serious, we just exchange words and its okay; within 2 to 3 seconds we are laughing again because we have to work for a common goal”.

This is consistent with the study of Aminu and Marfo (2010) and Afful-Broni (2012) who disagree with the school of thought that workplace conflict comes with no good hence ought to be avoided. Among the positives of conflicts enumerated by the authors include stimulation of interest, curiosity, feedback, motivation, tension relief and change catalyst. Respondents seem to understand each other and also understand the fact that conflict is inevitable wherever people interact so they do not allow conflict situations to affect them anyway. Although disagreements and misunderstandings arise they are able to resolve them immediately after they happen and they move on with their work knowing that their being there is for the progress of work.

Most respondents from OML also reported that conflict had negative outcomes among employees. Interestingly, whilst a total of 33% of the respondents acknowledged that conflict makes them upset, frustrated and high in emotions, another 33% admitted to being hostile to co-workers, with the remaining 33% indicating loss of trust among colleagues. This reflects in a remark of an administrative officer who offered that:

“Conflict makes people upset, frustrated and highly emotional”.

Employees’ Change in Attitude Towards Work

This section looks at the investigations made into the extent to which workplace conflict influences the attitude of employees towards work. Findings indicated that respondents in all the study organisations experienced decrease in commitment towards work as a result of conflict. Half of the respondents from Metro TV reported a significant reduction in their commitment towards work while four (57%) and seven (70%) from NTC and GBC respectively also experienced same. Similarly, two (33%) respondents from GCGL, five (71%) from WPL and three (50%) from OML also expressed declining tendencies in their commitment towards work. Following conflicts, some other respondents do not cooperate with co-workers. Indeed, an employee each from Metro TV (17%), NTC (14%) and GBC (10%) had such experiences whereas two respondents from WPL also reported a significant decrease in cooperation with others. Interestingly, respondents from OML and GCGL reported no such experiences.

Similarly, decrease in output and performance was experienced by employees from Metro TV, NTC and GBC with respondent each representing 17% and 14% respectively in Metro TV and NTC and two

(20%) in GBC touching on the same change. Respondents from GCGL, WPL and OML did not speak on this decrease. Some respondents from Metro TV, NTC and GCGL were rather positively influenced by conflicts but this was predominantly seen in GCGL with four or 67% of respondents speaking on the positive influence. Other attitudinal changes notably laziness and the likes were also re-counted.

It was revealed at Metro TV that half of the respondents become less committed towards work due to conflicts. According to them, this is usually experienced in attitudes such feet dragging, not going the extra mile, not giving out the best performance, playing delay tactics, not obeying instructions and exhibiting some apathetic and lackadaisical attitudes. Whereas 17% of the respondents spoke about decline in cooperation, another 17% indicated decline in performance. Remarkably, a respondent offered that conflict has a positive side where it gives people the opportunity to talk over the conflict situations and correct mistakes that trigger such occurrences. In essence, a supervisor and a subordinate respectively noted:

“People will put on lackadaisical attitudes but I don’t mind.....they drag their feet during emergencies.....a programme that needs to be covered at 8am, they go at 10am”.
“At first I used to go the extreme but I realised that it’s worth nothing so I decided to do what I can, my commitment to the work has reduced”.

These findings support the study conducted by the Harvard Business School (2009) which found that as a result of workplace conflict, employees’ commitment, performance, effort towards work and time at work decreases. It is also in line with the distributive justice theory (Bartos & Wehr, 2002) which propounds that people feel unjustly treated if their reward is not proportional to their investment made into their jobs. Commitment to work is therefore crucial for the survival and profit making for organisations desirous to succeed in any competitive business environment.

At New Times Corporation, the major changes toward work mentioned by 4 (57%) respondents were decrease in commitment with 29% and 14% respectively citing lowered output and decrease in cooperation. These were expressed by workers through dragging of feet, doing things anyhow, not observing standards, putting up argumentative and quarrelsome behaviours and not bothering to take initiatives to enhance performance. A management member explained:

“You don’t see them trying to exert themselves, trying to do something, not going the extra mile, not trying to do excellent work because they feel the supervisor or those who should approve of their work are dead against them and won’t see anything good in what they do so maybe it is not worth going extra mile”.

This finding shows that conflict at the workplace coerce employees to become less committed, less cooperative and less productive. This affirms the study of Werner et al (2012) who established that conflict significantly wanes productivity and decreases cooperation, with Rahim (2001) also emphasising that conflict results in diminishing of workgroup commitment.

In the case of WPL, 5 of the 7 respondents representing 71% revealed that conflict permits them to experience and engage in decreased commitment towards work where it is expressed in negative attitudes such as loss of enthusiasm and zeal towards work, reduction in initiative towards work, refusal to observe timelines and failure to keep valuable information to one’s self. The other 29% similarly ascribed the decreased cooperation to conflicts. In fact, an administrative officer and a journalist respectively remarked:

“On the work you can decide not to share your views. Whatever they say you should do, you do it the way they want if it does not work out they will find out later and they will come back”.
“The zeal that I will use to write the story with someone’s angle will not be same as the one I will use if I were using my own angle”.

Consequently, it seems employees, both journalists and non-journalists are restricted in taking initiatives in performing their duties; they are to tow certain directions as directed by ‘the boss’; hence they are perhaps restrained from using their imaginative and novel ideas in doing anything. They are thus compelled to accept the norm of the house. One journalist therefore avowed:

“this is a house style, every media house has its style so you have to agree with the style before you can work here and when you go to other places too they have their style, when you can’t work with the house style then you don’t go there at all so sometimes you just have to understand that it is either you can do it or you go”.

Investigations at GBC discovered that majority (70%) of the respondents decayed in commitment towards work while 10% found it difficult to cooperate with other people when in conflict; with 20% admitting that they underperformed (reduction in output) when in conflict. One junior staff recounted:

“If you work in an organisation where you expect that your effort should be appreciated and you are given your best and it is not appreciated, in a different way it affects your productivity, you change your attitude towards work because you feel whatever you do is not appreciated”.

A senior manager recounted:

“In all cases conflicts influence the individuals involved and the job.....timelines and specific assignments are necessary but they don’t cooperate.... instead of them to be on the move with their equipment, they drag their feet and the job is delayed. We are to carry out jobs within specific periods once it delays then that assignment is bound to fail”.

The findings indicate that conflict in the media adversely influences employees’ attitude towards work. The story at GBC was not different as they also experienced negative changes such as decline commitment and cooperation towards work, leading to low performance or decrease in output. While this outcome supports the findings of Werner et al (2012) that output and cooperation of employees decrease when there is conflict at the workplace, the findings are inconsistent with that of De Dreu (2008) who contended and rendered support for the view that workplace conflict is beneficial to the organisation. Indeed, 67%of the participants from GCGL Newsroom reported that their attitudes toward work are positive during conflict situations. For them, they do not allow conflict to persist; it is resolved as soon as it occurs. This suggests that they do not see conflict as a bad entity; rather they embrace it and derive the good it offers. According to them, they learn from conflict situations and learn to do the right thing, correct their mistakes and improve their performance thus becoming proactive in handling work issues. However, 33% from departments other than the Newsroom reported feeling of hesitation towards work when they are in conflict with management and/or colleagues.

Some respondents in the Newsroom reported:

“The news room is an interesting place; the minute you see us angry, arguing over something the next minute, we are laughing together. It is just the job, anything that will make the job go on”.

“We interact with each other but you know the Newsroom....the work is stressful and time bound. If you need something; you want it at a particular time and if you are not getting it then you turn to explode, that does not mean that there is conflict. After that you see us laughing. The most important thing is to get the work done”.

“Sometimes we do in-house sit down; we don’t work until our demands and requests are attended to”.

This illustrates that attitudes of journalists toward work do not change negatively while the commitment of other employees towards work decreases. This contrasts many empirical studies including Harvard Business School (2009) that conflict produces decrease in work effort, decrease in time at work, decrease in work quality, decline in performance, loss of work time worrying about the conflict and decline in commitment towards work. Similarly, the finding is inconsistent with the report by CIPD (2008) that depending on the country, employees spend 0.9 hours and 3.3 hours a week dealing with conflict instead of concentrating on their work. Although it may seem surprising that attitudes of journalists at GCGL do not change towards work even in conflict, it is important to state that casual observation during data collection revealed that they were very united and relationship among them was seen to be very cordial hence seem not to allow conflict to affect their performance. This harmony and cordiality could be the reasons why attitudes towards work are same even in conflict situations.

CONCLUSION

The study brought to bear interesting revelation that attitude of workers towards work is not always negatively influenced by conflicts. These employees appear not to allow themselves to be overridden by the destructive nature of conflict. Instead, they make use of the inherent good to improve their work because they believe that their presence is essentially for the progress of work. Another refreshing revelation was commitment towards work which ran through all the media organisations regardless of being private, state-owned, print or electronic. Other attitudinal changes that came out were decrease in cooperation and decrease in output by employees in GBC, NTC, WPL and Metro TV and ineffectiveness and inefficiencies especially at OML consequently affecting productivity. Whereas some employees experienced negative emotional feelings such as stress, frustration, depression, others record hostile behaviours as a result of marred relationships, with others being unhappy and dissatisfied hence underperformed. Despite these negative outcomes, some of the respondents largely from GCGL experienced positive outcomes such as enhancement and of sharing of ideas and opinions about work tasks and unity among themselves. Given the kind of influence that conflict has on employee work attitudes and the organisation, it is not far from right to conclude that workplace conflicts are more destructive than constructive. Management must never downplay the impact of conflict hence must always make available adequate resources, commitment, organisational will and effective resolution mechanisms in curtailing such phenomenon. Since there are always conflicting views at the workplace and organisations, the efficiency of such resolution mechanisms must be strengthened with combine efforts to fighting the spread of deadly conflicts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the ubiquitous and destructive nature of conflict, it may be helpful for organisations to adopt proactive rather than reactive tendencies in resolving them. This could significantly prevent both the employees and the organisations from attaining such heights where conflicts may escalate into undesirable outcomes such as stress, depression, and decline in commitment among others. Since conflicts may be fueled by personality traits, it is imperative for organizations to incorporate conflict resolution mechanisms into placing workers on the job. For growth and increased productivity, there is the need for organizations to limit the impasse and standoffs associated with conflicts. Working groups must be encouraged to work to promote trust and healthy communication among themselves. For future studies, larger and nationwide surveys and longitudinal studies of workplace conflict and other facets of human resource management such as selection and placement among prospective employees, merger and organisational change among others may prove worthwhile.

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