

ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ON AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEE'S JOB PERFORMANCE IN OGUN STATE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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This study assesses organisational conflict management on employees' job performance in Ogun State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), Ogun State, Nigeria. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select eighty (80) respondents from the study area through a well-structured questionnaire. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Results revealed that the mean age of respondents in the study area was 33 years, while majorities (57.5%) of the respondent were males, also 81.3% were married. Considering the religion and educational status of farmers, 72.5% were Christians while 32.5% were OND holders. It was also revealed that 18.8% of the respondents had spent 10 years in the study area. Major performance indicators were: employees' training overseas enhances their job performance ($\bar{x}=4.31$) together with effective collaboration with other departments ($\bar{x}=4.25$). The study also showed that differences in organisational values among the managers and the staff ($\bar{x}=4.05$) and goal differences between the managers and employees ($\bar{x}=3.83$) were the major causes of conflicts identified. Furthermore, Effective communication ($\bar{x}=4.35$) and dialogue ($\bar{x}=3.93$) were major techniques of managing conflict among the employees in the study area. The results also shows that level of conflict management strategies with coefficient value of 0.383, for age(0.259), working experience (0.167) and causes of organisational conflict (0.102) were variable influencing agricultural employee's job performance. The study concluded that improvement in communication, self-discipline, mutual understanding among staff were the most effective means of resolving conflict in Ogun State ADP. Prompt payment of salary and mutual understanding within the organisation will give better performance.

INTRODUCTION

Organisation can be viewed as a body whose members seek multiple goals jointly. Achievement of these goals goes with their personal goals and aspirations through their coordinated activities (Dodd, 2003). In other word, organisational goals can be achieved if employees are well coordinated. An organization exists to render goods and services to people in order to achieve organisation aims and purposes. Basically, in Nigeria agricultural organization existed to render agricultural services to farmers in order to increase their productivity. These goods and services are the products of combine effort and the behaviours of workers who occupy different level of the organizational structure (Henry, 2009).

The employees who constituted a particular setting have different cultures, ethnic, skills and educational background as well as different attitude, perceptions, roles, expectations and values which can cause disorder or conflict in an organization and also affect agricultural production (Armstrong, 2009). According to Schramm-Nielsen (2002) conflict in an organisation may varies based on the degree with which the manpower is met with opposition in protecting their interest, values and goals. However, the establishment and continuous existence of organisation through the realization of set goals and objectives requires the continuous and effective functioning of its material input with the human element being indispensable (Tseveendorj, 2008).

The human elements required to facilitate goals attainment often engage in disorder and variance over factors such as; interest, views, style of management among others (Adomi and Anie, 2005). The resultant effect of ability of the employees to accommodate each other or interference of one oppositional group or the other is known as conflict. Also, Azamoza (2004) observed that conflict involves the varieties of behaviours and attitudes between employees and employers in a particular organisation. Also, conflict is a state of disagreement over issues of substance or emotional antagonism that may arise due to anger, mistrust or personality clashes. In other word, workers may not agree over issues in their workplace which can trigger conflict that can reduce organisational performance (Pondy, 2003).

According to Guetzkow and Gyr (2006) conflict assessment is the essential first stage in the process of conflict management and resolution. The main goal of such assessment is for all concerned parties to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics inherent in their relationships. Conflict is a necessary and useful part of organisational life and this may affect employees' performance in attainment of organisational goals (Lee, 2011). Therefore job performance is the way and manner employees do their job in a satisfactory manner (Tang and Chang, 2010). Performance of the employees can be determine based on leadership skills and ability of the

employees to manage their time effectively and efficiently in such a way that organizational conflict will be drastically reduced. There is need for assessment of organisational conflict in order to positively influence the outcome and success of any firm or organisation (Robins *et al.*, 2006). In light of this background, this study aims at assessing conflict management among agricultural employees in Ogun State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP). The specific objective of the study include the description of socio economic characteristics of the respondents, causes of organisational conflict and its effect on agricultural employee's job performance in Ogun State ADP.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area

The study was conducted in Ogun State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP). Ogun State ADP was created from enclaves project in Northern part of Nigeria in 1981. Ogun State ADP has an agricultural extension programme which comprises of four agricultural zones as Abeokuta, Ijebu-ode, Ikenne and Ilaro. Each zone is divided into blocks which is anchored by Block Extension Agents (BEA), each block into circle or cells and each of these is also anchored by a village extension agent (VEA) who oversees the activities of their coverage area. Ogun State ADP is known for extension services to rural farmers in order to increase food production and farm incomes.

Data collection and analyses

The population of this study comprise of employees in Ogun State ADP, Ogun State, Nigeria. Proportionate sampling techniques were used to select the respondents from the study area. The research was carried out among 87 out of 478 staff which amount to 18.2% of the respondents in ADP. The data for the study were obtained using a well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured into sections to generate information about personal characteristics, Organisation conflict management and its effect on employee's job performance. All these variables were measured using 5 points Likert rating scale of: Strongly agree =5, agree = 4, undecided= 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree =1. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Data obtained on personal characteristics were presented and analysed using descriptive statistics, while regression analysis was used to determine effect of conflict management on employee's job performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal characteristics of the respondents

Results on age revealed that less than half (38.8%) of the employees were between the ages of 46-55 years, while 31.3% of the respondents were between the age brackets of 36-45 years. The mean age of respondents was 33 years, which implies that the respondents in the study area were very active, vibrant and energetic people. This result supports the findings of FAO (1997), Isaac (2011) and Irmasusanti *et al.* (2013) who reported that agricultural employees in the south western part of Nigeria were between the age ranges of 30-40 years which also determines organisational success. The results from the study also revealed that majority (57.5%) of the respondents were male while 41.3% were females. This indicates that male staff was more than the female staffs in the study area. This result is also in line with the findings of Julie (2015) that men are more employed than women in almost every organisation. Furthermore, the result shows that most (81.3%) of the respondents were married. This observation supports the finding of Banmeke (2012) who was of the opinion that there were more married researchers in research institute in Southwest Nigeria. The result revealed that more than half (53.8%) of the respondents had household size that was less than five. The mean house-hold size of the respondents in the study area was 5 persons. This may be as a result of their level of education because higher number is expected among illiterates.

In addition, more than half (55.0%) of the respondents had Higher diploma/Bachelor of science certificates. It was revealed that less than 7.5% had master's degree while 3.8% had Ph.D as their highest academic qualification. This is an indication that most of the respondents are literate considering their higher degrees. It is worthy to note that the mean income of the employees was ₦76,625.00 per month. That is less than half (48.8%) of the respondents earn between ₦51,000-₦100,000 monthly, 28.8% had monthly salary than are less than ₦50,000 and only a few (8.8%) had monthly salary above ₦151,000. Also, the mean years of working experience acquired over time by respondents in the study area was 9 years. This result shows that some of the respondents had acquired reasonable years of experience which influence their performance in the study area. This result is in line with the findings of Abiona (2015) who asserted that experience gathered by employees overtime always influence their performance and often increase their productivity.

Causes of organisational conflict in Ogun ADP

Conflict is an unpleasant scene in any organisation as long as people compete for one thing or the others in a particular setting (Robins, 2003). Based on this fact, organisational conflict was examined during the course of the study. Major causes of organisational conflicts identified were: Difference in value (\bar{x} =4.05) and goal differences between the managers and the employees (\bar{x} =3.83). This result is in line with the assertion of David (1997) who

said that conflicts are inevitable part of organisational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staffs are often incompatible. More so, delay in the payment of wages and salaries ($\bar{x} = 3.74$), different expectations from both the managers and the employees ($\bar{x} = 3.73$), lack of cooperation among the staff ($\bar{x} = 3.69$), personality clashes/ego problem ($\bar{x} = 3.51$), poor employees performance ($\bar{x} = 3.49$) and Lack of cordial relationship between labor and management ($\bar{x} = 3.38$) were also identified. This result is in accordance with Ikeda *et al.*, (2008) who observed that organisational conflict involves interpersonal conflicts with colleagues or supervisors, or intergroup conflicts within different sections of an organisation.

Table 1: Personal characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentages	Mean
Age(years)			
Less than 25	3	3.8	
26-35	15	18.8	
36-45	25	31.3	33years
46-55	31	38.8	
56-65	6	7.5	
Household size			
Less or equal to 5	43	53.8	
6-10	28	35.0	5person
Greater than 10	1	1.3	
Marital status			
Single	7	8.8	
Married	65	81.3	
Separated/widowed	4	5.0	
Income			
<50,000	23	28.8	
51,000-100,000	39	48.8	₦76,6250
101,000-150,000	8	10.0	
>151,000	7	8.8	
Working experience(Years)			
Less or equal to 5	11	13.8	
6-10	15	18.8	7years
11-15	11	13.8	
>15	43	53.8	

Other causes identified were competition among employees ($\bar{x} = 3.38$), unfavorable government policies in the organisation ($\bar{x} = 3.35$), strong negative misperception ($\bar{x} = 3.29$), perceived breach of faith and trust between individuals ($\bar{x} = 3.23$), repetitive negative behavior exhibited by the supervisors and employees ($\bar{x} = 3.23$), Interdependence among the employees ($\bar{x} = 3.21$) and poor communication/miscommunication between the supervisors and the employees ($\bar{x} = 3.19$). This result corroborates the finding of Awan and Ibrahim (2015) who was of the opinion that lack of communication can affect mutual relationship. If not resolved, it can degenerate to conflict which may eventually affect agricultural employee's job performance. In addition, unresolved disagreement that was escalated to an emotional level ($\bar{x} = 3.15$) was also identified. This result is supported by Robbins and Judge (2011) who explain disagreement as a level that is characterized by emotions such as anxiety, frustration and tension or hostility.

Level of agricultural employees' job performance

Employees' level of ADP employee's job performance was examined during the course of the study. Among performance indicator identified was that 'overseas training enhances employee's performance ($\bar{x} = 4.31$)'. This result is in line with the assertion of Lam *et al.*, (2002) who said that employee will be motivated through training because management considers them as partners in contributing to organisational success and increase productivity. Also, another indicator was that 'effective collaboration with other department ($\bar{x} = 4.25$)'. Among others identified was that 'supervisor actively listen to their issues and suggestion ($\bar{x} = 4.13$)'. All these observations are in line with the assertion of Chen and Tjosvold (2006) who revealed that participation of employees with management decision making process enhance employee's performance. Furthermore, another performance indicator identified was that 'Employees deal appropriately with confidential information and also consult with their supervisors and co-workers when the need arise ($\bar{x} = 4.08$)'.

It was reported that employees like their current job ($\bar{x} = 4.07$) and respond appropriately to feedback on job performance ($\bar{x} = 4.05$). Most of them find enjoyment in their job ($\bar{x} = 4.01$) and also manage information and data effectively ($\bar{x} = 3.92$). Also employees are satisfied with problem solving task ($\bar{x} = 3.90$) with provision of tools and recourses ($\bar{x} = 3.81$) which make them enthusiastic about their job ($\bar{x} = 3.72$) which make them contented with their job ($\bar{x} = 3.67$). In addition, respondents performed well because they have working hour that gives them

enough time with family and time to pursue other strong interest ($\bar{x}=3.55$). Some of the employees often think that their job ($\bar{x}=3.47$) base on disagreement among staff which have negative effect on their job ($\bar{x}=2.81$) and probably make them to loss interest in their job ($\bar{x}=2.56$).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by causes of organizational conflict

Organization conflict	Mean	SD
Difference in values among the managers and the staff	4.05	0.93
Goal differences between the managers and the employees	3.83	1.11
Delay in the payment of wages and salaries	3.74	1.17
Different expectations from both the managers and the employees	3.73	0.90
Lack of cooperation among the staffs causes organisational conflict	3.69	1.05
Personality clashes/ego problem	3.51	1.20
Poor performance among the employees causes organisational conflict	3.49	1.04
Lack of cordial relationship between labor and management	3.38	1.01
Competition among employees bring about organisational conflict	3.38	0.96
Unfavourable government policies in the organisation	3.35	1.20
Strong negative misperception	3.29	1.21
Repetitive negative behaviour exhibited by the supervisors and employees	3.23	1.28
Perceived breach of faith and trust between individuals	3.23	1.38
Interdependence among the employees brings about organisational conflict	3.21	1.08
Unresolved disagreement that was escalated to an emotional level	3.15	1.28
Poor organisational structure	3.09	1.17
Poor communication/miscommunication between the supervisors and the employees	3.19	1.07

Table 3: Level of agricultural employees' job performance

Job performance	Mean	SD
Training overseas will enhance my job	4.31	0.73
Effectively collaboration with other department members when necessary.	4.25	0.87
My supervisor actively listen to my issues and suggestion	4.13	0.91
Employees deal appropriately with confidential information	4.12	0.97
Interaction among staff is of necessity	4.08	1.02
They like my current job	4.07	0.83
Appropriate response to feedback enhance employee's job performance	4.05	0.93
Employee find enjoyment in their current job	4.01	0.89
Employee had passion for their job	3.72	1.21
In my job, I am satisfied with how often I take part in problem solving	3.90	0.83
Management of information and data effectively	3.92	1.13
Availability of tools and resources for employee to do their job	3.81	1.41
They are contented with my job	3.66	1.23
Working hour that allow me enough time with family and time to pursue other strong interests	3.55	1.06
Employees often think my job is very job	3.47	1.41
A times they lose interest in my job	2.56	1.04

Conflict management techniques

Different conflict management techniques were discovered by studied organization. Most prominent among conflict management techniques adopted in Ogun State ADP was improvement in communication channels ($\bar{x}=4.35$). In other word, effective communication motivates employee towards the achievement of organisational goal. This result is in line with the report of Abiona (2015) who asserted that if communication is well channel among the staff it will encourage and improve job performance. Also, self-discipline ($\bar{x}=4.21$), mutual understanding among staff ($\bar{x}=3.96$), continuous orientation/training among staff ($\bar{x}=3.96$) and constant dialogue when matter arises ($\bar{x}=3.93$) were figured out as the most effective techniques. It is a well-known fact that collective bargaining is one ways of resolving conflict in any organization which gives room to mutual understanding and dialogue in resolving any pressing issue (Fajana and Shadare, 2012).

Other conflict management techniques identified were: free environment ($\bar{x}=3.66$), open policy ($\bar{x}=3.63$), solution to problematic issues ($\bar{x}=3.55$), avoidance of conflict information ($\bar{x}=3.48$) and bargaining or regular meeting among staffs on issues related to conflict management ($\bar{x}=3.22$). This result is supported by the findings of Rahim (2002) who opined that conflict management involves designing effective strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhance the constructive functions in order to optimize learning and effectiveness of an organisation. Also, combination of various strategies will help to manage conflict in an organisation. The identified strategies is also supported by the findings of Vigil and King (2000) who observed that the use of

integrative style of managing conflict is likely to create better result and higher commitment in individuals than teams using non-integrative conflict management.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents on conflict management techniques

Conflict management strategies	Mean	SD
Improvement in communication channels	4.35	0.97
Constant dialogue when matter arises	3.93	1.27
Mutual understanding among staff	3.96	1.09
Work free environment	3.66	1.29
Avoidance of conflict information	3.48	1.28
Solution ton problematic issues	3.55	1.38
Continuous orientation among staff	3.96	1.07
Self-discipline	4.21	1.17
Open policy	3.63	1.35
Bargaining or regular meeting among staffs on issues related to conflict management	3.22	1.40

Relationship between organizational conflict management and their job performance

The result of regression in table 5 showed that age of the ADP employees had coefficient of 0.019 and is significant at 5% level of probability. The implication of this result is in line with the assertion of Abiona *et al.* (2014) who assert that the lesser the age of workforce in organisation the better the performance. Also, Years of experience was found to have a positive coefficient of 0.017 and is also significant at 5% level of probability. This also showed that year of experience also assist in conflict management. Results obtained in this study corroborate the earlier finding of age of respondent in this study which aid in gaining of experience over the time in resolving conflict in their organisation. It was also discovered that household size had coefficient of 0.030 and is also significant at 5% level of probability. This finding implies that small household size reduces family pressure and thus improves employee's job performance. Similarly, household size could be a pointer to the fact that employees with large family may be directly or indirectly linked to organizational conflict due to family pressure. Causes of organisation conflict had a positive coefficient of 0.010 with employee's job performance and was statically significant at 5% level of probability. Causes of organisation conflict of the superior employees can be a proxy for job performance thus one would expect management or organisation to handle technical issues relating to staff in other to increase employee's job performance and thus reduce indulgency and misunderstanding among workers. In addition, conflict management strategies had a coefficient of 0.020 with employee's job performance. This result indicated that despite numerous conflicts identified in the studied organisation, management has various measures to combat conflict in order to the better the performance of the employees at the same time meet the organizational goals.

Table 5: Regression of causes of organisational conflict and agricultural employees' job performance

Variables	Standard error	Standard coefficient	T value	P value
(Constant)	7.543		6.301	0.00
Conflict management strategies	.108	0.383	3.284	0.00**
Causes of organizational conflict	.102	0.142	1.228	0.02*
Age	1.024	-0.259	-1.726	0.01**
Gender	1.404	-0.035	-0.325	0.75
Religion	1.463	-0.014	-0.133	0.89
Marital status	1.179	0.016	0.142	0.89
Household	0.344	0.074	0.631	0.03**
Educational qualification	0.689	-0.091	-0.746	0.46
Income	0.785	0.026	0.200	0.84
Working experience	0.142	0.167	1.008	0.01**
years of institutional experience	0.134	0.111	0.810	0.42
R ²	0.274			
R	0.524a			
F- ratio	2.336			

**Significant at 5% and * Significant at 1%

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that various causes of organisational conflict that affect ADP employees' job performance in the study area were due to differences in value, goal differences between managers and employees, delay in the payment of wages and salaries and different expectations from both the managers and the employees. Despite the numerous causes of organisational conflict identified. The study provides different integrative style to combat

conflict in the studied organisation. The study recommends that: Agricultural organisation should endeavor to minimize the causes of conflict in the organisation to the bearest minimum via improvement in communication channels and creation of free working environment. Organisation should also encourage training for employees, ensure effective collaboration with other department when needs arise. Open door policy should be encouraged among the employees together with feedback approach that will enhance agricultural employee's job performance.

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