

FACTORS CONSTRAINING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN RESOLVING CONFLICTS AT THE ZANZIBAR STATE TRADING CORPORATION (ZSTC)

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ABSTRACT

Despite the critical role of leadership in conflicts management in public organizations, alongside with the various initiatives undertaken to enhance this role, ineffective conflicts management continues to be a big challenge in public organisations and at the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC) in particular. Consequently, this study looks into the factors constraining leadership role in managing conflicts and recommends strategies for improving leaders' capacity to conflicts management at ZSTC. Qualitative approach was adopted and data were drawn from a purposive sample of 65 respondents through in-depth interviews, documentary review, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and non-participant observation. Findings confirmed that constraints to leadership in managing conflicts were in four categories; notably lack of effective communication, ineffective leadership and management practices, inequitable distribution of resources, and nonexistence of conflicts management institutions. To ensure effective leaders' role in managing conflicts, leaders need to have sound plans, adequate budget, engage in financial resources mobilisation and ensure recruitment of staff with relevant skills, as well as build capacities of the existing staff on communication and conflicts management skills. The organization should devise effective policies to smoothen conflict management.

Keywords: *Leadership, Conflict Management, Resolution, Public Institutions*

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Conflict refers to a disagreement between parties or a situation whereby one party perceives another party as affecting its interests (Barmao, 2013). It is a situation in which two or more parties struggle to acquire the same scarce resources at the same time (Swanström & Weissmann, 2005). Accordingly, Burton (1990) differentiates between a dispute and conflict. The author notes that a dispute is a short-term disagreement that involves issues that are negotiable while a conflict, is a long-term disagreement with deeply rooted issues that are seen as “non-negotiable”. In this paper, the words conflict and dispute are used interchangeably to refer to the same thing. On the other hand, conflict management essentially refers to a process of preventing the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict in a group or an organisation (Alper, Tjosvold & Law, 2000). It is aimed at enhancing learning and group outcomes, which may include but not limited to the effectiveness or performance of an organisation (Alper, Tjosvold&Law, 2000).

In many organizations, conflicts may be caused by a number of factors which include but not limited to structural factors such as specialization of employees, resources scarcity, misuse of authority as well as the differing peoples' roles and expectations (Barmao, 2013). Moreover, conflicts happen when the parties have a situation in which their concerns, desires, preferences, and goals differ from those of other parties (Baton, 2000). This can be caused by different perceptions, opinions, personalities, communication styles, values, backgrounds, interests, wants, needs, preferences or goals, differing values, lack of trust and understanding, personality conflicts, hostility, opposing interests, poor communication, personal problems as well as frustration (Baton 2000; Sharma & Sehrawat, 2014; Kazimoto, 2013).

Conflict management plays a very important role in workplaces which include but not limited to increasing productivity due to its ability to prevent conflicts and enabling employees to concentrate on their work. This consequently suggests that, leaders are compelled to resolve conflicts properly for the sake of increasing organizational performance. Indeed (Obasan, 2011) suggests that, effective conflict management improves decision outcomes especially on task-related conflict and group through a constructive criticism since most tasks allow exchange of ideas and assist better performance among work force. Likewise, (Vigil-King, 2000) suggests that effective conflict management results in good commitment in the organizations as well as ensures support, job satisfaction and higher productivity in the organisation.

Leadership plays a major role in conflicts management. It is defined in terms of "particular type of power relationship characterized by a group member's perception that another group member has the right to prescribe behaviour patterns for the former regarding his activity as a group member" (Janda, 1960). One of the critical roles played by leadership in conflict management is based on its values such as active listening skills, team management, ethical and moral standards. Such values play a positive role in both preventing as well as resolving conflicts (Kazimoto, 2013; Maier, 2010; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Conflict management naturally applies leadership skills such as paying attention to good interpersonal communications, operating with a strategic plan as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities that are obviously essential for conflicts management in organisations (Program, 2006;Kazimoto, 2013). Specifically, leadership helps to prevent or resolve conflicts through providing balance between organization's interests over the individual's own interests that ultimately ensure harmonious relationship between leaders and subordinates thus either preventing conflicts or minimising negative effects of conflicts (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Furthermore, effective leadership ensures the situation whereby subordinates are capable of cooperating with one another rather than maintaining rigidity that leads to conflicts (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Specifically, leaders play a critical role of moving employees involved in a conflict situation from antagonistic to a more integrative and collaborative solutions, thus changing conflict situation into a mutual problem sharing situation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Needless to mention, effective leadership has been associated with higher rates of solidarity among workers. This has created collective identity among workers and subsequently maintained harmony and prevent conflicts (Carless et al., 1995; Shamir et al., 1993). To this end, it is therefore fair to conclude that leaders in organizations play a major role of managing conflicts both directly and indirectly, since they guide, direct and often inspire their employees or teams to focus on positive aspects of the conflict in an organisation (Monteset al., 2012).

Owing to the crucial role played by leadership in managing conflicts in public institutions, various relevant stakeholders including trade unions, the government of Tanzania and specifically, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar have made significant efforts towards ensuring effective conflicts management within and outside organizations. Some of the efforts include but not limited to the formation of trade unions aimed at managing conflicts at organisational, regional and national levels which include the Tanzania's Higher Learning Institutions Trade Union (THTU), Researchers, Academicians and Allied Workers Union (RAAWU), Zanzibar Teachers Union (ZATU) and Tanzania Union of Government and Health Employees (TUGHE). Above all, there are also a number of formulated laws, policies as well as strategies for enforcing conducive working conditions through conflict settlement between the parties in various public organizations (Babaiya, 2011; Nchimbi, 2018). For example the government has established employment and labour relations Act [principal legislation] as well as employers' associations and federations in order to enforce employment standards (Salum, 2017). Above all, the formulated Acts spell out organisational as well as employees' duties and rights, collective bargaining strategies, strikes and lockouts as well as dispute resolution mechanisms for the purposes of overseeing and resolving conflicts in the organizations. Other dispute resolution mechanisms enacted include compulsory arbitration, correction of arbitration award, and revision of arbitration award and application of arbitration ordinance. In other words, the Act has established the strike and lockout mechanisms

such as right to strike and lockout restrictions on the right to strike and lockout, essential services, disputes of interest in essential services, and minimum services during a strike or lockout. The Act further spells procedure for engaging in a lawful strike, procedure for engaging in a lawful secondary strike, procedure for engaging in a lawful lockout with an intention of minimizing conflicts, however, conflicts are witnessed to great extent in the organizations (Mcclinton, 2014).

Despite the existence of leadership in organisations as well as the various efforts put forward to create conflicts management mechanisms, there is evidence that leadership or leaders in some public organisations are incapable of managing conflicts (Chanzi 2017). Such situation has led to existence of many conflicts in organisations with side effects resulting from poor conflict management in organisations (Barmao, 2013; Thomas, 2000; Terzievet al., 2018). This situation has also been observed at the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC), where there are currently unresolved conflicts between the Corporation and various stakeholders. For example, the existing dispute between the corporation and suppliers, traders and farmers over their payment of their entitlements for services and goods they supplied. This has been happening at various occasions. For example, in 2010 and 2011 ZSTC failed to settle payments timely, due to the sharp decline of cloves price thus forcing the ZSTC to enter into disputes with traders and farmers. According to farmers and suppliers, this was against their agreements. It was also observed that the corporation had issues on resolving disputes between senior and junior staff serving at various capacities.

The above noted situation raises a question as to whether the leaders are capable of playing their critical role of managing conflicts in the organisation. Indeed, tackling this matter is of critical importance because organizational conflicts results into several negative effects which include lack of smooth working environment, delay in decision making process, hence reducing performance of the organization and reduced communication among employees (Barmao, 2013; Thomas, 2000; Terzievet al.,2018). The existence of conflicts in the organisation coupled with poor conflict management demotivates and leads to employees' dissatisfaction. It further demoralizes others stakeholders, frustrates both internal and external clients, aggression towards others, and paralyses effective communication (Barmao, 2013; Thomas, 2000; Terzievet et al., 2018). Commenting on other negative consequences of unresolved conflicts in an organization Turkalj et al. (2008) writes that unresolved conflicts leads employees blocking each other's efforts for accomplishing organizational goals, reduction of work performance and efficiency in general, reduced communication among employees, motivation fall and ultimate employees' dissatisfaction. In addition, conflicts lead to increased and unnecessary costs, resignation of potential employees, low morale of the workers, poor quality services delivery and delay in project completion and implementation. It is further recorded that lack of interest in work, work anxiety, peptic ulcers, respiratory problems such as asthma, hypertension, headaches, coronary problems to mention just a few may be caused by unresolved conflicts (Omisore&Ph, 2014;Mcclinton, 2014).

While it is known that leaders are expected to resolve continuous conflicts, however, conflicts in some public institutions still exist despite the existence of leaders in institutions Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC) in this case. In this regard therefor, the overall objective of this research was to assess the role of leadership (leaders) on conflict resolution in public organizations. The study further envisages to determine why some leaders in public organisations fail to perform their expected role of managing conflicts and recommend measures to improve the leadership role in the public organization in the bid to reduce conflicts.

Even though significant research has been undertaken in the area of leadership and conflicts management, such research has not been exhaustive and specific. Findings from these studies portray that, most of the factors inhibiting leadership role in conflicts management rotate around communication related constraints, resources scarcity related constrains, structural constrains, scarce resources and inequitable distribution of resources. Ultimately such constraints are related to poor leadership and management practices. Under communication related factors, authors point out that inability to manage conflicts is sparked by lack of effective communication in managing conflicts in an organization (Orbison, 2015; Noone, 2014). Basically, leaders lack interpersonal skills such as ability to use considerate, polite and positive language (Cohen, 2002), and negotiation inability or lack of essential skills for facilitating amicable and less harsh conflicts management (Fells, 2009; FAO, 2011). Moreover, inadequate communication channels in an organization escalate conflicts. However, the existence of activities that bring people together like meetings, encourage smooth and transparent exchange of information that can prevent and resolve conflicts (Montes et al., 2012; Carless et al., 1995; Shamir et al., 1993).

Other factors inhibiting leaders' capacity to handle conflicts have been associated with poor leadership and management practices. It is suggested that, poor leadership skills deny one the ability to opt an effective management style and application of sound policies and structures for managing conflicts (Noone, 2014). It also robs them of the ability to make appropriate use of authority thus compelling them to, among other things, to resort autocratic management style that further increases or worsens the existing conflicts (Noone, 2014; Kazimoto, 2013). Conflicts can be managed when a leader effectively uses appropriate leadership approaches to introduce and enforce organisation goals and also resolve existing conflicts (McClinton, 2014; Chowdhery, 2015).

Another category of literature maintains that leader's inability to manage conflicts in organisations relates to inadequate and less equitable distribution of financial and material resources (Huan et al., 2012; Sharma & Sehrawat, 2014). Moreover, scarce financial and material resources inevitably lead to resources competition, a situation that is likely to cause conflicts (Barmao, 2013; Kazimoto, 2013; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Reasonable, equitable and logical distribution of scarce resources among users may ensure harmony among actors thereby minimising the conflicts and normalising the situation at the work place.

Leaders' ability to deal with conflicts is ultimately jeopardised by lack of sound conflicts management institutions notably structures and policies which makes it hard for conflict management (Stamato, 2003). This constraint is complicated by or inadequate organs for monitoring and coordinating internal behaviour, that may prevent or facilitate conflicts management among teams and individuals (Saha, 2017; Pamela McClinton, 2014; Çatişmanin et al., 2015). In some organisations accountability and transparency in handling various activities is missing makes conflict resolution hard (Algert & Froyd, 2002; Hener, 2010; Shanka & Thuo, 2017; Çatişmanin et al., 2015). As can be noted from the preceding paragraphs, the existing literature has proved that, basically capacity to manage conflicts in organisations is impeded by four major constraints. Much as these aspects can be relied upon to understand constraints of leaders' capacity in managing conflicts, they are not very specific to public sector and more specifically to the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC). This apparent gap provides the justification for undertaking the current study. Ultimately, the findings of this work can be relied upon to improve leadership role in managing conflicts in organizations as will be revealed in the findings section.

Research Methodology

This study was conducted at the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC) where business conflicts exist between the corporation and its clients (suppliers and farmers for spices and foods). This study employed a qualitative approach and case study strategy. This is due to the ability of the method to explore, explain, discover and understand issues such as leadership constraints to conflicts management. The approach made it possible to capture feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of various groups in relation to conflicts as formerly suggested by qualitative research experts (Astalin, 2013; Spinks & Canhoto, 2015). Purposive sampling was employed considering the respondents' experience and their ability to provide relevant information. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion and documentary review. Interviews were conducted to 65 respondents who included the leaders, suppliers and some employees. The interviews were kept short, between 10 and 15 minutes in order not to disturb the respondent's working time. Moreover, some of the respondents were in hurry in such a manner that they were not ready to stay for too long. Furthermore, 5 FGDs were conducted and groups consisted of 5-8 participants, aged 30–52 years. FGDs helped to capture perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of the respondents towards the leadership role in managing conflicts. It also provided checks and balances of the collected information thus, adding to the reliability and validity of the data. Data analysis was done through content analysis strategy that made it possible to summarize, arrange, organize, interpret, analyse, and present the findings in relation to the specific study objectives. The reports were generated based on the two research objectives. Qualitative data analysis was facilitated using MAXQDA 10. Data was grouped accordingly; codes were generated, leading to categories and themes. Handling of the quantitative data was done using the mixed methods function of MAXQDA [VERBI Software, Marburg, Germany].

Findings and Discussion: Factors constraining leadership capacity in resolving conflicts

Communication constraints to leadership capacity in managing conflicts

The study identified five communication related factors that jeopardised leaders' capacity to manage conflicts. These factors include the leaders' inability to negotiate effectively in the conflicts context, inability to use clear and positive language, inability to listen effectively and communicate clearly as well as inadequate communication infrastructures in the organisation. Leaders' inability to negotiate was the leading communication related constraint as confirmed by 90 percent of the respondents who further explained that owing to the lack of this skill by leaders, leaders

preferred win-lose negotiation as opposed to win-win strategy when negotiating with suppliers. This kind of preference more often than not led to discontent between leaders and suppliers, thus infuriating conflicts situation as further attested by one of the respondents here under:

It is true that leaders are supposed to handle conflicts in an amicable and gentle manner. However, these leaders of ours here are always in panic and they can hardly negotiate or discuss effectively. They tend to always use inappropriate and disgusting words. This shows that they lack good negotiation skills. (Male Respondent (29) ZSC employee). The second communication related constraint was the use of unfriendly language to suppliers by leaders as attested by around 60 percent of the respondents. The respondents clarified that intentionally or unintentionally some few leaders notably directors, managers or heads of departments would sometimes use inflammatory statements that were offensive and provocative to suppliers hence fuelling conflict in the organization as further attested by the suppliers at ZSTC below:

Yes [indeed] it is true that sometime these leaders of ours here use inappropriate conducive language especially when we ask for the payment of the services we have rendered or goods we have supplied to the corporation. Definitely, the inflammatory language increases disputes in the organization and affects the performance of organization. It is very dangerous because it intensifies the problem instead of solving it (Male interviewee, ZSTC supplier). The third communication related constraint that impeded leaders' capacity to managing conflicts was the leader's inability to listen effectively as evidenced by 50 percent of the respondents who were interviewed and as further justified by some two respondents below;

If our leaders would listen to what we told them, they would reduce the conflict in the organization even by 90 percent. I swear! The problem is that most of the leaders tend to hypothetically involve low level employees but in reality, they don't implement the suggestions of the employees (Female Respondent (34), ZSTC employee). We still have a long way to go here regarding this aspect. You know what? Most of the heads of departments think that we can't advise them and they also think that they are more educated and professional than we are. However, the truth of the matter is that we are more experienced as most of us have stayed in this organization for long time. If they want problems solved, they would better listen to us. (Male Respondent (51), ZSTC supplier).

Moreover, inability to communicate clearly and use of positive language by the leaders in particular, seriously hampered the leadership capacity in managing conflicts as evidenced by 45 percent of the respondents and as further attested by one of the respondents below:

Most of the time Swahili is the means of communication in the organization but to some extent the clarity of the message provided is questionable. Such messages need to be structured and clarified for one to understand. (Male interviewee, ZSTC employee).

Last but not least, leaders' capacity to manage conflicts was hindered by the existence of inadequate communication infrastructure in the organisation. Respondents explained that, forums such as meeting, feedback and suggestion boxes and other forms of discussions were not common at the work place. Moreover, they were not aware of various institutions and structures that that they would turn to in case of any conflicts. Accordingly, a summary of communication related factors is provided in table 4.1 below. As can be observed in the table many respondents mentioned more than one barriers to participation in groups so the percentages do not add up to 100% but are calculated based on how many respondents mentioned the responses.

Table 4. 1: Summary of communication related factors

Communication related factors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Inability to negotiate effectively	56	90	1
Inability to use positive language	37	60	2
Inability to listen effectively	31	50	3
Inability to communicate clearly	28	45	4
Inadequate communication infrastructure	20		5

Source: Field data 2020

It is evident that, communication related factors that hindered leader's capacity to manage conflicts at the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC) include the leaders' inability to negotiate effectively, inability to use positive

language, inability to listen effectively, inability to communicate clearly and the inadequate communication infrastructure. Indeed, leaders' inability to negotiate is earmarked as leading by 90 percent. These findings are supported by a number of previous studies (Sylvester & Ferrara 2003, Slaikeu 2005, Ammon 2006, McCormick 2007, Olasumbo Oredeina and Eigbe 2014). This is a clear sign that the current study effectively complements to the existing body of knowledge.

Inadequate and inequitable distribution of resources

This study also investigated how inadequate and inequitable distribution of resources undermined leaders' capacity to manage conflicts in the organisation. These included aspects related to inadequate budget, skilled human resources and inadequate time to deal with conflicts as further explained in the subsequent paragraphs. Respondents ascertained inadequate financial resources or budgetary constraint as reason number one that denied leaders capacity to manage conflicts as evidenced by 85.5 percent equivalent to 53 respondents. These respondents explained that inadequate resources were caused by the budget constraints that prevented them from making various payments promptly. This is further attested by this respondent as captured hereunder:

Budget constraints is a big issue in most of the organization and ours is not excluded from this scenario. Sometime this makes it hard for leaders to ensure equal distribution of the financial resources and thus reduces leaders' capacity to solve some of the problems which could lead to conflict in the organization (Male respondent, ZSTC Leader). It was further revealed that inadequate number of skilled human resources in managerial issues and conflict management led to inadequacy of leader to deal with conflicts. This was evidenced by 85 percent of respondents and as further explained by one of them as follows:

From human resource perspective. I can say we [as the organisation] are quantity oriented as opposed to quality oriented. I'm saying this because our organization has abundant human resource staff but in terms of qualified human resource who can resolve conflict are scarce in our organization. Our human capital is for doing other administrative works only (Female interviewee, ZSTC employee).

The third factor related to inadequate resources was lack of time to handle arising disagreement among staff as well as between management and suppliers as evidenced by 46.8 percent equivalent to 29 respondents out of 62 respondents as further supported by one of the respondents below:

I wonder what exactly makes them busy! They [leaders] are busy all the time. It could be too much managerial responsibilities as our organization is relatively huge with a lot of routine activities. I can't comment on behalf of others but I can talk about myself. In my case I can say that I'm always available and, I resolve conflicts within the normal working hours and this works out well in case something is wrong in my department (Male interviewee, ZSTC employee).

Accordingly, a summary of resources constraint related factors is provided in table below. As can be observed in the table many respondents mentioned more than one aspect on inadequate and inequitable resource factors; and therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100% but are calculated based on how many respondents mentioned the responses.

Table 4. 11: Summary inadequate and inequitable resource factors.

Resources related factors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Lack of funds/ small budget	53	85.5	1
Inadequate staff skilled in conflict management	40	64.5	2
Lack of time to handle conflicts	29	46.8	4

Source: Field data 2020

Concluding from the above table, it can be said that, resources constraint related factors that hindered leaders' capacity to effectively manage conflicts included aspects of inadequate budget, skilled human resources as well as inadequate time to deal with conflicts. These findings correspond well with those advanced by Smiley (2018) and Sundry and Kinsey (2019) who noted that lack of funds can severely hampered leaders capacity in managing conflicts in various ways. Indeed, other scholars (Abiodun, 2014; Lan, 2005; Tonder, Havenga et al., 2008; Din, Khan et al. 2011) who emphasised that majority of the organization do not recruit staff who are expert in conflict resolutions in their organizations as they don't expect conflicts that can interrupt organization operations.

Lack of good leadership and management practices

Finally, this study paid attention to factors related to lack of good leadership and management practices and the extent to which they jeopardised the leaders' capacity to manage conflicts. The findings show that three main factors constrained the leader's capacity in managing conflicts at the organisation. The first one was lack of effective leadership and management skills as evidenced by 87 percent of respondents. They pointed out that, leaders were not well equipped with leadership skills to cope with the changing social, cultural and psychological issues in organization and among employees as further supported by one of the respondents as quoted below:

Organisations are changing every day and so are the people in these organisations. Everyday we're experiencing new cultures and behaviours that need different interventions and approaches to deal with them. Our leaders are not changing with the current situation. Therefore, several challenges related to their inability to resolve conflicts emanate from lack of skills of dealing with people of diverse characters in diverse environment (Male interviewee, ZSTC leader).

Another factor was related to the leaders' inability to apply appropriate conflict resolution styles to different conflict situations. The respondents argued that inappropriate use of authority as well as presence of weak or autocratic management styles may have led to conflicts and worsened the management of the existing conflicts.

The third factor related to ineffective leadership and management had to do with lack of sound policies and structures for managing conflicts as evidenced by around 75.8 percent of the respondents. Respondents mentioned that the existing management structures, policies and regulations were somehow rigid and not in line with the changing environment. These policies and structures lacked the room to accommodate and resolve the arising conflicts because their policies and structures are outdated and dependent to central government directives. As can be observed in the table below, many respondents mentioned more than one aspects on leadership and management practices; and therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100% but are calculated based on how many respondents mentioned the responses.

Table 4. 12: Summary of leadership and management practices

Leadership and management factors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Ineffective leadership and management	54	87	1
Inability to apply effective management style.	49	79	2
Inadequate conflicts management mechanisms e.g. Policies & structures	47	75.8	3

Source: Field data 2020

In a nut shell therefore, constraints related to lack of good leadership and management practices that jeopardised the leaders from effectively managing conflicts include but not necessarily limited to the lack of effective leadership and management skills, leaders' failure to opt for effective management style as well as lack of sound policies and structures for managing conflicts. These challenges correspond well with the existing literatures as formerly discussed in Tanzania and outside Tanzania such as (Brewer, Mitchell et al. 2002, Rahim 2002, Spaho 2013, Saeed, Almas et al. 2014, Fusch and Fusch 2015, Johansen and Cadmus 2016, Rispens, Jehn et al. 2020). Wide literature establishes that conflict management is a skill that leaders must be able to employ when needed to help foster a productive working environment (Guttman, 2004). However, even though this skill is a priority for leaders, most of the leaders do not poses it. This jeopardises their capacity to manage and resolve conflicts effectively in their respective organisations (Kazimoto, 2013).

Sound conflicts management institutions (structures and policies)

Findings for this particular component pointed out to a number of factors that held the leaders back from effectively resolving conflicts at the organisation. They include lack of conflicts related policies and structures, inadequate knowledge and awareness on existing conflicts resolution mechanism and lack of conflicts resolution forums, such as

meetings. Lack of conflicts related policies was mentioned the first one as attested by 70.9 percent of the respondents as further confirmed by one of the respondents below:

“Indeed this is one of the weaknesses we are facing right now. You can notice a sign of conflict but there is no effective policy that can guide you as a leader to solve the problem. We are engaging in more of dialogues to solve the conflicts but it is the high time for our organization and other organizations in Zanzibar to come up with conflict resolution policies in order to smoothen the process of solving the conflicts” (Male interviewee, ZSTC Leader).

Moreover, inadequate knowledge and awareness on existing conflicts resolution mechanism by leaders was mentioned the second factor as evidenced by 64.5 percent of respondents as well as echoed by one of the key informants below:

It is impossible for leaders of the organization who have diverse background to possess adequate knowledge and skills in conflicts resolution mechanism but it is possible to upgrade them by offering them regular trainings (Male interviewee, ZSTC employee).

Thirdly, lack of conflicts resolution forums e.g. meetings, departments and committees were also mentioned to be another cause. This was attested by a respondent who was quoted below:

The biggest problem with us is that we have very little time to discuss issues. There are not forums like meetings where the workers would air their concerns or even advise the management about the suppliers. Leaders deal with conflicts in isolation, they do not request for pieces of advice from their subordinates (Male Interviewee, ZSTC Employee).

They added that although the department is working tirelessly to contain these issues; still there is no specific committee related to conflicts resolutions in organization or specific department related to conflicts resolution. One of the respondents interviewed provided the following testimony in support of the above presented findings:

A committee or even an office responsible for conflicts is really a good idea. However, as we speak, we don’t have such specific department for resolving conflicts in case they occur. In my understanding we have committee for disciplinary matters but no committee for conflicts resolutions (Male interviewee, ZSTC employee).

Conclusively, conflicts management constraints related to sound conflicts management institutions include lack of conflicts related policies and structures, inadequate knowledge and awareness on existing conflicts resolution mechanism and lack of conflicts resolution forums e.g. meetings.

Table 4. 13: Summary of sound conflicts management institutions constrains

Conflicts management institutions factors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Lack of conflicts related policies and structures	44	70.9	1
Inadequate knowledge and awareness on existing conflicts resolution mechanism	40	64.5	2
Lack of conflicts resolution forums	30	48.4	3

Source: Field data 2020

Therefore, it can be concluded that, factors related to lack of sound conflicts management institutions that jeopardised leaders’ capacity to manage conflicts include lack of conflict related policies, inadequate knowledge and awareness on existing conflicts resolution mechanism, lack of conflicts resolution mechanisms and lack of effective conflicts management mechanisms. Generally speaking, most of these factors correspond well with the existing literature as formerly ascertained in various parts of world (Maug and Yilmaz 2002, De Graaf and Van Der Wal 2010).

5.2: Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to explore the factors constraining leadership role in managing conflicts at the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC) in order to recommend strategies for ensuring effective conflicts management at the Corporation. Accordingly, factors constraining leaders’ capacity to manage conflicts were clustered based on communication related factors, effective leadership and management factors, equitable distribution of resources as well as existence of sound conflicts management institutions notably structures and policies. Firstly, communication related factors that hindered the leader’s capacity to manage conflicts at the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC) include the leaders’ inability to negotiate effectively inability to use positive language, inability to listen effectively, inability to communicate clearly and the inadequate communication infrastructure. Secondly, the resources constraint related factors that hindered the leaders’ capacity to effectively manage conflicts included some aspects of inadequate budget, inadequate number of skilled human resources more especially in the area of conflicts

management as well as inadequate time to deal with conflicts. Simply leaders were busy with other day to day schedules and paid little attention to conflicts management.

Thirdly, constraints related to effective leadership and management practices that jeopardised capacity to effectively manage conflicts included lack of effective leadership and management skills, failure to opt for effective management style as well as lack of sound policies and structures for managing conflicts. Fourthly, constraints related to sound conflicts management institutions included lack of conflicts related policies and structures, inadequate knowledge and awareness on existing conflicts resolution mechanism and lack of conflicts resolution forums e.g. meetings.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations should be taken into account as strategies for alleviating constraints to leaders' capacity to manage conflicts in public organisations and more especially ZSTC. Firstly, in alleviating constraints related to communication, leaders should be empowered on effective communication skills notably improving their abilities to negotiate effectively and listen actively in different conflicting contexts. They also need to be empowered on ways of practicing and maintaining clear and positive language to workers and other clients thereby minimising chances of creating more conflicts. Moreover, the organisation should strive to institute or rather put in place relevant and effective communication structures that would facilitate feedback mechanism. Such systems should ensure effective horizontal and vertical communication including both formal and informal communication.

Second, in order to ensure effective and equitable distribution of resources, leaders should ensure availability of adequate budget right from the planning phase. Leaders should engage in effective financial resources mobilisation from financial institutions, parent ministry and from local and external donors.

Leaders should strive to ensure that the available financial and non-financial resources are equally and equitably shared in such a manner that suppliers will also benefit, by being paid justly and timely without delays. Also, in order to ensure availability of adequate and skilled human resources, the organisation should employ effective recruitment and placement method. Moreover, leader should champion capacity building of all the staff especially those directly interacting with the suppliers in terms of effective conflict management strategies. Moreover, the organization should prepare effective guidelines for resources distribution and human resources development, to facilitate smooth process of contract management in the organization.

Third, in order to alleviate constraints to sound conflicts management institutions the organization should devise effective conflict management policies to smoothen the conflict resolution management. The conflict resolution policies will act as a roadmap and blue prints for conflict management in the organization. Moreover, organizations should adopt different existing technologies to diffuse the knowledge and awareness on conflict resolutions mechanism to leaders and other employees of the organization. Needless to say, the organization should establish a committee which is responsible for conflicts resolution mechanisms in the organization. All these will ensure that conflicts are kept at a minimum in the organization.

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