

Authority, Power, and Conflict in Organization: Analysis of the Impact of Their Functional Relationship In Organization Performance

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ABSTRACT

Working together effectively in organization is not an easy task. This is because it is human beings in the organization that work together and human beings naturally are complex and unique. In order to effectively work together, the human beings in organization are divided into two groups – the leaders and the led i.e. managers and workers. Even at that, the division is simply a means to an end and not an end itself. This is true because managers cannot effectively manage the workers to work effectively without administrative “force” and that “force” consists of authority and power.

Authority is the formal right to make decisions and to influence workers behaviour to implement those decisions based on organizational relationship. Power on the other hand is the ability of a manager to influence the behaviour of workers based on informal relationship.

Whether formal or informal, the essence of authority and power in organization is to mould, modify, direct, and influence the behaviour and actions of workers toward the achievement of organizational objectives. In the process of directing and influencing the workers, conflicts are bound to occur. Conflict as a natural phenomenon and part of organization life can occur within and between individual workers, within and between groups of workers, and even between the workers and management.

In practice, the outcome of the influence of authority and power on the behaviour of the workers can be positive or negative depending on their multiplying effect on productivity and growth of the organization. If the multiplying effect increases productivity and growth of the organization, the influence will be said to be positive while it is negative if the multiplying effect result to a drop in productivity and growth of the organization.

KEYWORDS: authority, power, conflict, impact, relationship, organization, performance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Managers are hired to ensure that organizational goals are accomplished, and they do this by making choices among alternatives. This decision making process would be only an exercise if the managers could not put these decisions into effect. Power and authority are the means for accomplishing this purpose. In the management of organizations, managers use both the official and the unofficial powers and authority in their disposal as managerial weapons to guide, modify, direct, and influence the behaviours and actions of their subordinates toward the realization of the organizations objectives. In carrying out this critical managerial function, there is the obvious tendency that these activities will generate disagreement and conflict between the managers and their subordinates, among the groups that make up the subordinates, and within the individuals that constitute the groups that formed the subordinates.

It is the ability of a manager to effectively and efficiently use his managerial powers and authority to manage these conflicts in such a manner so that they will positively contribute to the realization of the organization objectives instead of producing dysfunctional behaviour that will be detrimental to the operations and growth of the organization that differentiate between experience and inexperience manager.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In every human endeavour, it is objective that directs what should be done and how it should be done. Objective is simply the “where” of management. It is when one knows where one is going, that he or she will know how to get there and when he or she has gotten to the place or destination.

Relying on the above background, the objectives that direct the flow of this article are stated below.

- (a). To examine the functional relationship of authority, power, and conflict in the management and operations of organizations.
- (b). To find out the nature of their relationship – whether positive or negative.
- (c). To evaluate the implications of each of the relationships as they relate to the overall functioning, growth, and development of organizations.

2.0 AUTHORITY

The word authority probably brings to our mind a picture of a parent scolding a child or a military officer giving a command to a troop or a manager guiding or altering the behaviour of subordinates. Well, all these are aspects of authority. Authority is a formal right to make decision based on formal organizational relationships. Authority is also seen as the right to command others to act or not to act in a manner deemed by the possessor of the authority to further organization objectives. Directing the behaviour of others is based on two sub-rights:

- (a). the right to decide, and
- (b). the right to issue appropriate implementing instructions.

Without the right to decide, no manager could be a successful planner, and without the right to issue orders and instructions, the manager's plans would be worthless. This is because there could be no assurance of the implementation of the plans.

Authority is the corner-stone of every organization. It gives every organization the characteristic of hierarchy that establishes a defined chain of command. Authority establishes the relationship between the job to be done and the people that will do the job.

Thus, authority is fundamental to every organization because the nature of managerial responsibility involves decision making and influence.

2.1 FORMS OF AUTHORITY

There is no general consensus among management writers and researchers on what constitute the forms/ types of authority. Although different writers and researchers give different names to the forms of authority in obedience to the angle from which each of them looks at it, a careful analysis of the different forms shows that the actual meaning which they attach to the forms if summed together goes to the same direction. The difference is only in the connotation and nomenclature and not on the facts. In this article, we adopt the following forms of authority and the aim is to treat the components and uses of authority in order to demonstrate how they affect organizational behaviour and therefore its performance.

1. **Managerial Authority.** This is the form of authority given to managers of formal organizations because they are responsible for acquiring, deploying, and controlling resources needed to accomplish objectives. Managerial authority is composed of the right to enforce those choices based on official position. Without these components, no manager, can successfully carryout responsibilities. This is true because all managers, regardless of their positions in the organization structure, are charged with the responsibility of making decisions and ensuring that they are carried out. Thus, managerial authority is the key means for executing managerial responsibility.

The exact nature and amount of managerial authority required at any given location in the organization structure should be a function of the responsibility there. Consequently, the manager's responsibility should be a determining factor in deciding the amount of authority that the manager is granted. This balance between responsibility and authority is in keeping with the principle of parity of authority and responsibility – a long recognized guide to building and maintaining a sound organization structure.

2. **Staff Authority.** This is a kind of authority given to all staff of an organization to make suggestions and recommendations about the solution to problems, procedural changes or how their jobs could be made easier or more attractive. Even though we normally associate this type of authority with experts or professional personnel, it is actually possessed by every member of the organization. This is because everyone in an organization whether superior or subordinate has the right to recommend, to suggest, and to advice.

One possible confusing aspect of the use of staff authority is the fact that subordinates often do not elect to use their staff authority for one reason or the other. In addition, some superiors discourage their subordinates from using it. This situation can be compared to the right to vote. In voting situation, there are those who voluntarily choose not to exercise their voting rights, and there might be occasions where they are virtually prohibited from doing so by others. Whether they are used or not, voting rights are possessed by all qualified citizens and so it is with staff authority.

3. **Situational Authority.** This is a form of authority that has both the elements of managerial authority and that of staff authority. Generally, this kind of authority is delegated to a staff expert who is restricted in the areas of organization structure and functions in which it can be exercised. This expert is given the right to make binding decisions about a given function in the organization structure.

This type of organization relationship often begins as a staff authority relationship. For example, an accountant may be given the right to make recommendations, give advice, or make suggestions on the matter

of proper accounting methods. As time passes and the expert's superior gains confidence in the quality of advice, the expert might be given a grant of situational authority that is approved by the officer who supervises the chief accountant. This means that the accountant can now issue decisions that have the prior approval of the superior through the grant of situational authority. Therefore, it is not necessary to involve the superior in every decision.

In practice, situational authority can be quite disruptive to the organization if it is misused but if properly used, it can be an effective managerial aid. Situational authority is a potent right and should only be delegated after careful consideration and it should have some safeguards about over what activities it can be exercised.

4. Operative Authority. This is a type of right given to members of an organization to take certain decisions about how, in what order, and with which tools they will carry out their assignments. Also included here is the right to work without undue supervision.

Some people do not include the operative authority in their list of forms of authorities but here, we deemed it necessary to include it in order to give a complete explanation of the rights of organization members. For example, at times a worker may be asked to take a decision about work priorities, schedules, and tools and materials to be used for the work. The decision is outside the scope of the managerial, staff, and situational authority and because of that, the decision will be made by using operative authority.

Operative authority is made up of two basic rights – the right to carry out responsibility and the right to determine, within reason, how and when it will be done. Whether one is a manager, a technician, or an unskilled labourer, one has these minimum rights. Without them, it would not be possible to plan and carry out one's personal responsibility.

3.0 POWER

Power is the potential or actual ability of a person to affect the behaviour of others. This ability can be based on a number of factors, such as knowledge, personality, and even on authority. When power receives formal recognition and backing by the organization, it will be called authority. In other words, power is a larger concept than authority and indeed, subsumes it as a formal power relationship. Power can also be seen as the influence that is not based on organizational positions. Because of this, power applies to any interpersonal influence that exists either within or outside the bounds of formal organizational relationship.

The brief explanation below throws more light on the difference between power and authority. If a supervisor issues directives to subordinates on how to carry out a normal work routine, these directives will be considered by both the supervisor and the subordinates to be official. Here, the supervisor can be said to have used power in the form of position authority which attaches to his or her role as a manager and which has been delegated to him or her by a superior officer in order to get certain organizational goals accomplished.

If a supervisor directs a subordinate to do a personal errand for him or her, this errand is clearly outside the official relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate and therefore, the instruction cannot be founded on authority. This instruction, then, is an attempt to use power as the basis of influence.

The extent to which an individual can exercise power can be viewed as a function of the dependency relationship that exists between the parties. The higher the dependency ratio; other things being equal, the higher the power and vice versa.

3.1 FORMS OF POWER

Influence that is based on power has many forms and in our discussion here, we shall try as much as possible to explain how power gains its support and potency in organization as the base for our classification.

1. Rational or Legal Power. This is a type of power that is recognized and accepted by subordinates as being in agreement with the laid down rules and regulations that are considered legitimate by both parties. Here, there is little or no question about whether its use is considered proper or not. Whatever its source might be, whether through ability or knowledge, once the members of the society or organization consider it legitimate to accept a given type of influence, that influence will be properly classified as rational power.
2. Reward Power. This is a form of power that comes from one's ability to control and dispense benefits to others. The controller of the benefits has the ability to shape the behaviour of others by the simple act of dispensing or withholding these benefits.

The strength of this type of power is primarily determined by two major forces and these are the size of the reward and the belief that it will be dispensed. This proposition is based on the assumption that other things being equal, a large reward gives greater power than a small reward.

3. Coercive Power. This is a kind of power that emanates from a person's ability to punish others. This ability to punish others is often strong motivation and can, in many ways, be viewed as the obverse of reward power.

While reward power relies on dispensing of rewards for its strength, coercive power depends on the meting out of punishment for its effectiveness.

The effectiveness of coercive power depends on the definition of the punishment, its perceived impact, the probability that it will be used, and the measurement of desired behaviour. For example, if the possible punishment is not defined as such by the offender, if it is seen to be relatively mild, or if the chances of its being used is slight, coercive power will be less effective and vice versa.

4. Referent Power. This is a form of power that exists when one has influence over another because the other identifies with him or her. For instance, if "A" has influence over "B" because "B" identifies with "A", that power or influence will be called referent power. This identification will give "A" the power to influence the behaviour of "B" even though "A" may not be aware of the identification.

For example, star athletes are worshipped by aspiring youngsters who see that their own abilities can be enhanced by emulating the star's behaviour. At times, people with whom others identify might not be aware of their own referent power. Because of this, it is often difficult to completely trace power relationship in referent power.

5. Charismatic Power. This is a kind of power that occurs as a result of one's magnetic quality of personality. The possessor of the personality uses it to influence the behaviour of others. For example, Hitler exercised this type of power in Germany before and during World War II.

Those who possess' charismatic powers find it relatively easy to influence their followers. One of the dimensions of charismatic power that helps explain its potency is that charismatic leaders also help their followers attain personal goals. By following such leaders, the followers can realize their own objectives.

6. Expert Power. Expert power exists where one exerts influence over others because of one's possession of knowledge or special skill. This skill attracts respect for the expert. For example, Nobel Scientists are respected for their skills and because of this; they are said to possess' expert power.

Those who admire the skill or who need it to solve problems are willing to subordinate themselves in return for the expert's assistance. A student who needs a teacher's help in solving a problem is an example. The student attributes the power of knowledge to the teacher and behaves in a manner that will enable him or her to have the advantage of the teacher's knowledge in solving the problem. A successful use of expert power within its sphere of influence tends to increase its potency while its use outside its sphere tends to weaken its strength.

3.2 SOURCES OF POWER

In the work environment just like the general society, there are numerous sources through which managers and leaders or anybody in authority can enrich himself or herself with power. These sources all revolve around the dependency of one actor on another. The ability to create and manage dependency relationship is among the most important determinants of the amount of power any actor can wield. Some of these sources of power are discussed below.

1. Power through the Control of Resources. This is one of the most important sources of power in the organizations and even in our society. Those that possess resources exert tremendous influence on the behaviour of others. Naturally, resources such as money and materials are not equitably distributed and because of this, those who possess them command respect and wield influence which enables them to influence the behaviour of others. This is in line with the general notion in commerce that money commands variety. The word "variety" here includes respect and influence.
2. Position Power. This source of power is attached to offices in organization. Various offices have powers emanating from them and the higher the office in the organization chart, the higher the power that comes from it. Organization chart generally depicts the hierarchy of formal authority through which position power gains its potency and recognition.
3. Personal Qualities. Personal qualities are another good source of power to some managers and leaders. These qualities consist of knowledge, charisma, and possession of special skills. These qualities enable the individuals that possess them to influence the behaviour of others and therefore enhance their ability to manage and control their subordinates.
4. Professionalism. Professionalism as a source of power in organization comes as a result of an increase in professional expertise through professional examinations and training. In the organization, those people that passed professional examinations and equally had some training usually possess more power than those that did not pass any professional examination and did not even attend any training.

4.0 ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

Conflict is a problem. Human life is full of problems. There is no living human being that does not have one type of problem or the other no matter the person's level of intelligent, wisdom, and the amount of authority and power that the person possesses. This is the same thing with organizations. Organizations are made up of human beings and therefore cannot avoid conflict.

Organizational conflict occurs when two or more individuals or groups that have opposing goals, ideas, philosophies, or orientations disagree with each other in organization decision making. The conflict most of the time is as a result of disagreement on resource allocation. At times, conflict can occur as a result of bad organizational system which does not allow enough freedom to the workers or as a result of clash of values that is caused by job requirements. Conflict is central to organization life and no organization can do without it. Although conflict often leads to some frustrations and confrontations within or between organizations, it is part of the universal principles of organizational management.

4.1 THE VALUE OF CONFLICT

Conflict is a natural phenomenon and therefore unavoidable in organization life. In managing organizations, managers must appreciate and recognize the value of conflict as it relates to the performance of organizations. Our discussion of the value of conflict covers both the negative and the positive aspects of the conflict and their contributions to organizational goals.

On the negative side of conflict are the consequences or adverse effects of conflict in organization where some management writers and researchers of the classical thinking argued that conflict could cause losses in productivity because groups or workers would not cooperate in getting work finished on time as they would not share important information. They equally pointed out that too much conflict distract managers from their work and reduce their concentration on the job and that conflict can affect the morale of the workers. Buttressing their points further, they said that long stretched conflict could cause stress, frustration, and anxiety, which are detrimental to workers well-being.

It was based on these arguments that Robbins, S.P. (1978) pointed out that conflict should be avoided by all possible means and when it appeared by any mistake, it should be stopped as quickly as possible by managerial fiat.

On the positive side of conflict are the management writers and researchers from the modern school of thought. Here, they argued that conflict can be a catalyst for change as it can force organizations to re-examine corporate goals or reset priorities and that it can also force managers to face important issues they have been ignoring and make higher-quality decisions on those issues. They also pointed out that suppressing all conflict at times leads to further negative consequences as workers will begin to sabotage each other covertly rather than confronting each other directly. They went further to say that managers should allow some levels of conflict in organization because it can serve as a mechanism for fine-tuning the organization's goal hierarchy and that after its resolution, it can clarify the proper power and authority relationships between different organizational members or subunits. It was on the strength of these arguments that Paul L. and Lorsch J. (1969) advised that some optimal levels of conflict are necessary in organization and that managers should be recognized and rewarded based on their skills in conflict diagnosis and management rather than on their skills in conflict suppression.

A summary of all the arguments show that the modern view and by implication the popular view is not to oppose conflict but to provide for it. The aim is not to eliminate fire, or have a wildfire, but to have a "controlled burn". Managers, like foresters, must know when conditions are right for "burning" and when it is enough. Seen in this perspective, conflict can be considered healthy and good for both the organization and the workers; not evil and inhibiting in the organization's striving for effectiveness.

4.2 LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Basically, there are four levels of conflict in organization and these are intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup.

1. Intrapersonal Conflict. This is a type of conflict which occurs within a person. It is usually caused by a worker being pushed in two or more different directions at once. For example, when managers delegate responsibility to their subordinates, they often create intrapersonal conflict within the latter group by issuing conflicting instructions. Managers can create role overload for subordinates even when they assign compatible tasks, simply by expecting too much from them. In order to cope, subordinates must set priorities for themselves that can differ from those of fellow workers and managers. This constant strain is seen as intrapersonal

- conflict for the subordinates.
2. **Interpersonal Conflict.** This type of conflict occurs as a result strain between two or more workers in organization. This is a serious conflict in organization and if not properly managed, it can have adverse effect on organization's effort at effective goal accomplishment.
 3. **Intragroup Conflict.** Intragroup conflict occurs as a result of strain within a group in an organization. It is often a consequence of members of a group not working harmoniously within the group. Intragroup conflict is of three basic types and these are the role conflict, issue conflict, and interaction conflict.
 - (a). **Role Conflict.** Role conflict occurs when a worker exceeds a defined boundary in performing assigned duties in a group. When a worker exceeds a defined duty boundary, he or she will interfere on another workers duty which may result to confrontation. This confrontation if not properly checked, will automatically mature into role conflict.
 - (b). **Issue Conflict.** This kind of conflict usually occurs when members of a group come together to make decisions or solve problems. When they come together, there is a high probability of clash of values and orientation because of their differences in reasoning and background.
 - (c). **Interaction Conflict.** This type occurs as a result of workers cooperative and team spirit behaviour in a group. When people form a group, they work collectively and share praises and blames. Naturally, those that are not directly involved in the problem that brought the blame normally have resentment. This resentment when it happens usually matures into interaction conflict.
 4. **Intergroup Conflict.** Intergroup conflict usually occurs as a result of differences in departmental objectives and departmental rivals. In managing organization, it is often difficult to reconcile the numerous objectives of the various departments. At times, the difference will result to disagreement because of conflict of interest among the rival departments. Intergroup conflict can also happen as a result of difference in opinion over the proper assignment of responsibility and low formalization in an organization. Low formalization is said to exist in organization when there are few rules and little order to help prevent conflict by regulating the conditions that breed it.

4.3 CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Although conflict is natural and part of organizational life, it does not manifest in organization from the thin air. Conflict is a problem and there is no problem without a cause. Something must happen to trigger the conflict and it is those things that we are looking for in this section. Some writers simply call them bases of conflict. Whether causes or bases, they are the same thing. The only difference is the approach. Some of these factors that trigger conflict in organization are explained below.

1. **Change in Role Expectation.** Workers are often thrown into a conflict situation when their roles are changed or when different expectations are applied to established roles. For example, if the criteria for evaluating a worker are changed, the worker may likely suffer from role conflict as the worker has to modify his or her existing role so as to be in conformity with the new standard performance and behaviour.
2. **Change in Status.** Changes in status can cause conflict in organization. For example, when the authority of a manager is reduced, the action can make the manager to suffer intrapersonal conflict. This will make the manager feel humiliated and this perception can cause severe emotional disturbance on the part of the manager and this will affect the manager's morale and input in the organization.
3. **Change in Goals/Objectives.** If the objectives of an organization are changed, there is a high probability of argument, disagreement, and even quarrel between the workers and also between the organizational units. The disagreement can breed all kinds of conflict in the organization if not properly managed by the authority. This is because it is a known fact that human beings do not like change and will do anything possible to avoid change.
4. **Organization Overlap.** Organization overlap occurs when two or more workers are assigned to carry out the same task. Overlap causes interpersonal conflict. For example, in a hotel where receptionists and billing cashiers are both assigned the task of collecting money from quests, there would undoubtedly be situations in which conflict could occur. The situation can also cause conflict with their superiors if neither group did the work while assuming the other was responsible.
5. **Resource Competition.** Two or more workers or even groups who are competing for the same resources at times engage in argument, disagreement and eventually move to conflict if the different views are not well reconciled. Again, their energy and attention will be channeled toward gaining a larger share of the resources instead of being directed to the fulfillment of their primary purpose of doing the work.
6. **Cultural Differences.** There are many ways to explain the meaning of culture. Here, we shall simply say that culture consists of values, beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes that members of a particular society hold in

common and which they use as behaviour and problem-solving guide. For example, where heterogeneous culture exists in organization, there will be high probability of conflicts because of differences in the way workers perceive and attach meaning to issues.

4.4 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict is part of organization and has been recognized as a fact of organization life. Therefore, the issue is not whether to have it, but how to manage it. Conflict management is one of the most difficult, yet important job for managers as they cannot do without it. In practice, there are many ways through which managers can handle conflict situation and if diligently done, can transform what seems to appear as a negative conflict to a positive contribution that will enhance the welfare of both the workers and the organization. Some of these conflict management strategies available to managers are explained below.

1. **Suppression.** Under this method, what managers usually do is to use their authority to order the conflicting parties to cease their conflict and go back to normal behaviour. Although the method is quick in providing solution to minor conflicts, it does not work very well in organizations where managers do not possess authority commensurate with their responsibility.
2. **Smoothing.** Managers that use this technique attempt to defuse the conflict by consoling the conflicting parties. They use supportive and effective language in restoring peaceful relations among the parties. By smoothing the conflict, managers hope to decrease the intensity of the conflict and avoid an escalation of open hostility.

Like forcing a solution, smoothing is generally ineffective because it does not address the key points of the conflict which are likely to keep resurfacing.

However, smoothing can sometimes be effective as a stop-gap measure to let workers cool down and regain perspective. In the heat of disagreement, workers are likely to make statements that escalate, rather than de-escalate the conflict, and smoothing can bring the disagreement back to a manageable level.

3. **Avoidance.** This is another technique of dealing with conflict. Here, managers play the role of fathers in organization and in doing that ignore or over-look certain things in order to manage conflict situations. For instance, a manager that sees a subordinate doing certain acts though not too detrimental to the success of the organization or receives report of a minor disagreement between some workers can decide to over-look such things in order to avoid conflict.

Quite often, executives who adopt this strategy disregard the causes of the conflict, and, as a result, the conflict situation frequently continues or gets worse over time. Some notable situations where avoidance is recommended in practice are where the conflict issue is trivial and where the issue seems symptomatic of other more basic conflicts.

4. **Bargaining/Compromise.** Here, managers seek to establish a middle ground that yield somewhat from the original position that generated the conflict. If both parties can move to a middle position, conflict can be controlled. Typically, what happens in bargaining is that each side begins by demanding more than it really expects to get. Both sides realize that some concessions will be necessary in order to reach a solution, but neither side wants to make the first concession because it will be seen as a sign of weakness. A lot of what happens in bargaining is tacit communication. The practice here is that each party signals a willingness to be flexible in exchanging concession without actually making an explicit offer or promise. This approach decreases the danger of appearing weak since tacit proposal can later be denied if it fails to elicit a positive response from the other party. Bargaining continues until some sort of mutually satisfactory agreement is reached.

It is also important to note that bargaining at times may result in a compromise agreement that fails to deal with the underlying problem in a rational manner and that is not in the long-term interest of the parties. However, for bargaining to be feasible at all as a conflict resolution strategy, both parties should be of relatively equal power. If not so, one group could simply impose its will upon the other and the solution would not be mutually acceptable as the weaker group would have no recourse in obtaining its concessions from the more powerful group. Again, bargaining is more likely to work if there are several acceptable alternatives that both parties would be willing to consider. If each party has only one acceptable settlement, bargaining will likely end in deadlock

5. **Third Party Intervention.** Under this method, one or more people who are not a party to the conflict are brought in to find a means to resolve the conflict issue. For instance, in industrial disputes, labour arbitrators as third parties to the dispute are often effective in resolving labour-management disputes.
6. **Cooptation.** Cooptation as a technique of conflict management occurs when one group takes over or subsumes

another group. A typical example of this technique is corporate merger. Often the merger is brought about only after a bitter and sometimes drawn-out proxy fights among the stockholders of the organizations. Once the merger is completed, the means for peaceful resolution can then exist.

7. Job Rotation. This involves posting of workers from the department of their primary assignment to other departments. It is an inter-change of workers. This method as a technique of conflict management works on the assumption that when members of an organization work together with other groups, they can come to appreciate others tasks, attitudes, and orientations. An idea about the worth of others will possibly remove some conditions that might cause unhealthy competition which often result to conflict.
8. Confrontation. This method relies heavily on facts and objectives in its process of solving organization conflict. Confrontation does not suggest that emotions should be ignored completely in conflict management. It only suggests that objectivity and facts should be emphasized rather than emotions. It simply attempts to minimize the role of emotions in conflict management and stresses the importance of facts and objectivity.
9. Structuring the Interaction between Groups. Structuring entails many dimensional approaches to problem solution. The most frequently and effective strategies in this area include: (a) decreasing the amount of direction interaction between groups in the early stages of conflict resolution; (b) decreasing the amount of time between problem-solving meetings; (c) decreasing the formality of the presentation of issues; and (d) limiting the application of historical precedents.

Structuring the interaction between groups as a means of intergroup conflict resolution is seen most frequently in governmental relations such as diplomatic talks in union- management relations. Two common situations where structuring the interaction can rightly be used as conflict resolution strategies are: (a) when previous attempts to openly discuss the conflict issues led to conflict escalation rather than to problem solution, and (b) when a respected third party is available to provide and maintain some structure to the interaction between the groups and to serve as a mediator.

10. Integrative Problem Solving. This strategy involves the two opposing groups working together to define the problem and to identify mutually satisfactory solutions. In order to implement this strategy, organizations generally bring in an outside consultant. The consultant tries to establish some initial trust between the conflicting groups, and to set up ground rules for further discussions. The consultant also helps the groups identify their most important problems and assist them in designing the solutions.

There are two preconditions for integrative problem solving to work. (a) There must be a minimal level of trust between the groups. Without the trust, each group will unlikely reveal its true preferences and will equally suspect that the other group will give it inaccurate information in return. (b) There must be enough time and less pressure for quick solution.

Integrative problem solving takes a lot of time and can only really succeed in the absence of excessive pressure for quick settlement.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Groups of people can achieve much more than individuals acting alone. The quality and standard of life that we experience can be improved by tackling human needs and problems collectively. Our society is heavily dependent on collective and organized activity. Organizations have a strong claim to the title of dominant institution in contemporary industrial societies. The ultimate limitation on human goals is not human intelligence or technology, but our ability to work together effectively in organizations. But what is organization? Organization is a combination of people working together in pursuit of certain purpose called organization goals. Ricky Griffin (1984) defined organization as any group of two or more people working together to achieve a common goal or goals.

Working together effectively in organization is not an easy task. This is because it is human beings in the organization that work together and human beings naturally are complex and unique. In order to effectively work together, human beings in organization are divided into two groups – the leaders and the led i. e. managers and workers. Even at that, the division is not the end but a means to an end as managers cannot effectively manage the workers to work collectively in the organization without administrative “force” and that “force” is made up of authority and power.

Authority is the formal right to make decisions and to influence workers behaviour to implement those decisions based on formal organizational relationships. Authority is also the right to command others (workers) to act or not to act in a manner deemed by the possessor of the authority (managers) to further organization objectives. Power on the other hand is the ability of a manager to influence the behaviour of workers based on informal relationship. The influence that comes from power is not based on organizational positions. Power

applies to any interpersonal influence that exists either within or outside the bounds of formal organizational relationships.

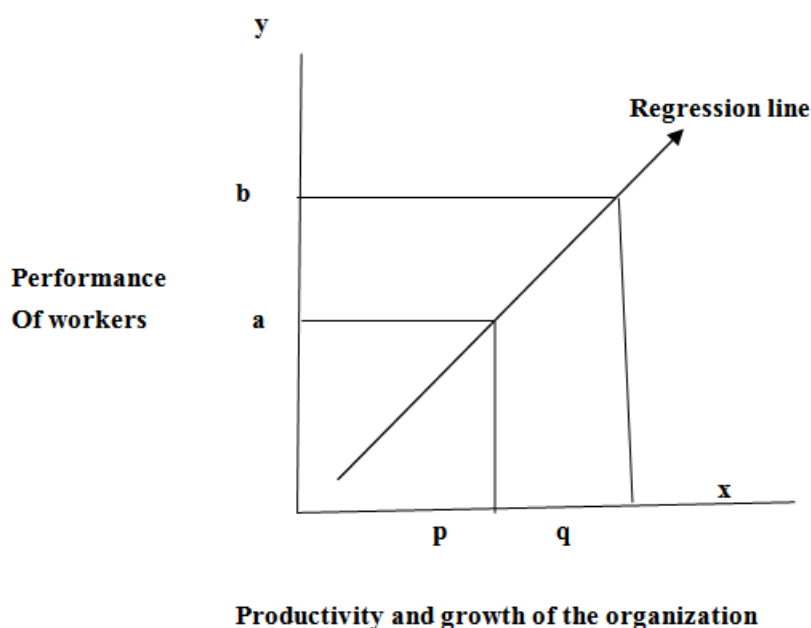
Whether formal or informal, the essence of authority and power in organization is to mould, modify, direct, and influence the behaviour of workers toward the achievement of organizational objectives. In the process of directing and influencing the behaviour of workers, conflicts are bound to occur. As the workers work together, conflicts can occur within the workers as individuals or between the workers. Conflicts can equally happen within groups of workers or between groups in the organization. This conflict is natural and important in organization life. Managers should provide for it instead of trying to eliminate it. This is because its benefits outweigh its side effects in organization. What is important is how to productively manage it to bring positive change to the organization and not how to suppress it with managerial fiat.

The influence which authority and power exert on the behaviour and actions of the workers permeates every aspect of the workers life in the organization. For instance, as workers perform their duties by engaging in different activities in the organization, it is authority and power from the managers or supervisors that moderate and direct the efforts of the workers towards achieving the set objectives of the organization. Again, if disputes arise between the workers or even between groups of workers in the organization as they perform their duties, authority and power will help managers to effectively handle the crisis. This is because it will be extremely difficult for a manager that has no authority and power to settle workers disputes or conflicts as the workers may look-down on the manager and at the same time, may not respect and obey the manager's decisions and judgments.

Therefore, authority and power are central in managing all aspects of the workers life in the organization. In practice, the result or the outcome of the influence which authority and power exert on the workers can be positive or negative depending on their effects on productivity and growth of the organization. In a situation where managers effectively and efficiently with empathy utilize their authority and power in moulding and directing the performance of the workers, and equally settle conflicts with a win-win atmosphere, the workers will be happy and probably put in their best while the managers will manage the workers with ease. The multiplying effect of all these will be a positive improvement in the productivity and growth of the organization.

Statistically, this can be demonstrated with the help of a regression line showing the relationship between the performance of the workers as a result of good application of authority and power by the managers and the productivity and growth of the organization. Geometrically, the regression line slopes upward from left to right showing how a proper application of authority and power by managers increases the performance of the workers and the productivity and growth of the organization. The pictorial representation of the above explanation is shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Positive relationship



The “y” axis of the graph (figure 1) represents the performance of the workers while the “x” axis represents the

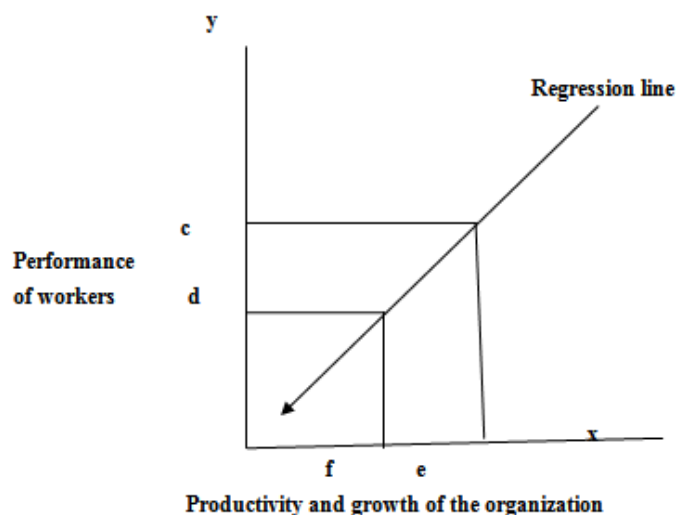
productivity and growth of the organization. The regression line represents the relationship between the workers performance and the productivity and growth of the organization. Increase in the workers performance from “a” to “b” as a result of good working environment created a positive increase in the organization’s productivity and growth from “p” to “q”.

On the other hand, when managers negatively utilize their authority and power in moulding and directing the behaviour and actions of the workers and in settling conflicts in the organization, the workers will work with fear and anxiety; they will not be happy and will exhibit all kinds of dysfunctional behaviour. This unhealthy atmosphere will not motivate or ginger the workers to put in their best while the managers will find it difficult to manage the organization as they will spend a greater part of their effort in managing crisis. The multiplying effect of the unconducive atmosphere will be a decrease in the workers performance and a drop in the organization’s productivity and growth.

Statistically, this is an indication of a negative correlation between the workers performance due to bad application of authority and power by the managers and the organization’s productivity and growth. Geometrically, the regression line slopes downward from right to left showing how a decrease in the workers performance creates a drop in the organization’s productivity and growth.

The pictorial representation of the negative relationship is shown in figure II.

Figure II Negative relationship



In the graph (figure II), it can be seen that a decrease in the performance of workers from “c” to “d” caused a reduction of productivity and growth of the organization from “e” to “f”

With all these analysis and interpretations at the back of our minds, we can rightly say that there is a clear relationship among authority, power, and conflict in organization and equally on their impacts on the performance of workers and the productivity and growth of organizations. Although the relationship can be positive or negative, the most important aspect of it, which is crucial to us, is that there is a relationship which can help us to predict what happens to one as a result of actions of the other. In this case, we can predict what will happen to the productivity and growth of organizations as a result of workers performance due to managers’ application of authority and power in the overall management of the organization.

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