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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS): A CASE STUDY OF ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN UGANDA

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Abstract

Higher education institutions have continuously attracted both students and staff from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Due to diverse cultures, experiences and education backgrounds, conflicts have also continued to occur. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how conflicts are managed at the Islamic University in Uganda. Thirteen semi-structured interview questions were designed in accordance to research questions for data collection. Four respondents were contacted and they approved to answer the interview question. However only two respondents participated in this qualitative study. The questions of the study were; "What are possible means of managing conflicts at HEIs level? What are the causes of conflicts in higher education institutions of learning in Uganda? What are the processes used in the management of conflict in HEIs? What are the positive and negative contributions of conflicts on the performance of HEIs?". The study contributed to the area of conflict management by sighting both the secular and Islamic approaches used in managing conflicts at the university. The relevance of conflicts towards building both institutional and interpersonal relationships among staff and students were also mentioned. It is thus recommended that more studies can be carried out on larger samples using other research designs to accept generalizability of the study findings on the management of conflict at the Islamic University in Uganda.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Types of Conflicts, Approaches of Conflict Management, Higher Education Institutions.

Background of the Study

As the world is experiencing different issues that range from massification, commodification, customer care and privatization, to mention but a few; huge demands and challenges have also continued to surface in human endeavours. These forces require great improved standards of living so as to address issues related to technological advancement, human development and community transformation (Nwabueze & Bernard, 2017). Besides, education has turned into a commoditized business with mixed approaches that not only aim at providing solutions to global challenges but also require learners to have both hard and soft skills in critical thinking and problem solving. In today's world learners are expected to have the ability to ask right questions, influence networks for collaboration, led by influence, agility, malleability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, access situations, analyses information and then communicate effectively in both written and oral ways through curiosity and imaginations. To achieve these skills, it requires both the teachers and learners to accept the norm of unlearning, relearning, synthesizing, contextualizing and actualizing issues in day today life.

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Meanwhile, the education system that the world must adopt to equip learners with required skills of humanism and address challenges that relate to social, political, economic and religion within higher education institutions (HEIs) must contain an element of knowledge with soul so as to produce a balanced personality (Firdaus & Fatah, 2013; Hamayun et al., 2014; Hashim, 2015, 2017; Miir, 2017; Miir & Othaam, 2016). Moreover, the many mushrooming education institutions at all levels always form a community with mixed individuals of both staff and students. This community is attracted from societies with different backgrounds in terms of culture, upbringing, education, exposure, and climate. These individuals and groups normally meet with a common agenda of executing institutional goals. While working together to facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision of the institution, interaction of both staff and students among themselves is always inevitable. This is due to the fact that there must be situations that enhance the smooth teaching and learning so as to cause transformation of communities through knowledge generation. While exerting efforts to innovate and generate knowledge that cause change in society, issues that relate to competition, collaboration, among workers normally arise which are both intended and unintended (Adepoju & Sofowara, 2012). In addition, when employees meet at all levels of their occupation in an organization, their common agenda is always to implement institutional believes, norms and values. While working together to meet the common purpose of their employment, conflicts normally emerge and sometimes with complex situations that also call for complexity in theories addressing them. Literature about conflict management has been in place for quite some time. The efforts of scholars and researchers on this concept were to always find strategies through which harmonious life can continue to exist if humanity finds itself at the crossroad when conflicts arise especially in HEIs. Many of these studies so far done have not examined situations where both the Islamic and secular strategies are intertwined to address conflicts in educational institutions. The purpose of this study therefore is to establish conflicts management from both Islamic and secular perspectives using Islamic University in Uganda as a case study. Therefore, the current study would like to illustrate the complexity of management of conflicts with a mixture of two world views.

In the perspective of HEIs, the issue of conflicts has been experienced since the 18th century. For example, the University of Glasgow experienced unbearable and difficult situation when one of its founders turned against it and before that scenario could cool down in the same university, a staff set a computer laboratory ablaze. Similarly, in 2003, a leading public university in America that is the university Berkeley was closed down for some good years due to conflicts (Alistair & Sinclair, 1998). Moreover, another interesting scenario that merits this study were the results advanced after an inquiry into the ‘‘Great Battle’’ and later published in the ‘The Davies Report’ (1994). The report exhibited that the University College of Swansea was put to standstill from 1989 to 1993 due to conflicts (Allen, 2003; West, 2006). Meanwhile, it is important to note that, as these institutions advance themselves into modern organizations with corporate agendas intend to provide solutions to the dynamics of the knowledge economy, leaders of HEIs should also to put it in mind that conflicts are part of the modern society and if they erupt, professionalism in addressing the situation should be exhibited (Akinwale, 2011; 2019; Madalina, 2016). This is because conflicts are normal unavoidable situation and behaviours that happen within a society as a result of communication process, both internal and external discordance due to differences in perceptions, values, ideas, or emotional state between two or more people. Unbearable situations are caused by many factors for instance; group, individual, staff, student and management leadership styles. These multiple groups are bound to bring chaotic situations due to differing interests (Mohamad Johdi Salleh & Safarali, 2013). Also, some studies opine that goal contradictions among workers and their organizations can lead to conflicting situations (Morris et al., 1998). Meanwhile as staple attend to multiple tasks and co-worker demands, students may also come up with issues that lead to stressful situations that in many cases lead to negative responses, behaviour

attitude and strain (Bampoh-Addo & Ansah-Koi, 2016). In addition, anxiety can lead to conflicts due to mismatch in work demands, unstated job description with unintended tasks. Also, in HEIs Students can lead to conflicts and their ways of exhibiting them is always done through protests as an expression of their dissatisfaction especially in social and political extremism. Students' conflicts are normally attached to rigidity in rule and regulations yet they are not captured in both constitutional and governing laws of the state. It is also important to note that, as self-governing and open-minded as the society is, there is no institutional management that can admit protests that lead to conflict between students and administration. Since intimidation and threats are not solutions to conflicts, leaders of higher educational institutions should always avoid this type of mechanisms while handling conflict because they are criminal weapons in a free society like educational organizations. It is important for university leadership and staff to notice that for any institution to proposer, the rule of reason and not the rule of fore is a fundamental governing principle in managing institutional affairs. Whoever discards that belief loses his position to be a member of the academic society. The university leadership that is not in line with this principle, endangers one of the fundamental pillars of an organization progress in terms of research and innovation. For proper management of institutional affairs, management, staff and students should also have the willingness to unlearn, relearn, and learn with an open mind that sees every challenge as an opportunity to prosperity. However, in many academic institutions sometimes anger and selfishness overpower people's reasoning and end up making decisions that are not only disastrous to institutional existence but also kill the sense of humanity within their environment and climate. Among other factors that may cause conflicting situation is the failure of staff and students to negotiate their ways with institutional leadership on strategies through which rights and wages, incentives and other motivating factors can be achieved. Likewise, the ambiguity role is another factor that cause friction between subordinates and supervisor. This is normally experienced when one of the two parties looks at the other as usurping powers or executing duties that are not in his or her docket (Mukhtar et al., 2011). With the nature of HEIs that run full-time, evening, external courses and extramural, there should be a mechanism for arresting issues that can cause stress and conflicts due to overload and job turn over. That is to say; managers and administrators should be more listening, ready to learn, unlearn, and accept diversity and flexibility so as to keep joy and friendship among staff and students.

In addition, in a study done on Japanese organizations, findings showed that there was overworking of staff and this situation resulted into severe staff deaths and suicide due to their failure to accomplish the tasks and agendas given (Cavanaugh & Strickland, 2011; Takahashi, 2019). This kind of life in some places of work, should be resisted by HEIs so as to avoid situations of ambiguity, and at the same time appreciation extended to their staff. It is therefore important that supervisors and subordinates work hand in hand to so as to enjoy from their employment. Also, institutional managers should avoid burdensome situations that lead to role conflict and tension as this may lead to complexity and unnecessary pressure when it comes to rule and regulation enforcement.

From the studies reviewed above, it is indicated that the causes of conflicts within societies both educational and business enterprises are collusion in interest due to divergence in institutional goals, group loyalties, personal ambition, and scarcity of resources visa high demand. Therefore, the call for improvement of organizational performance and change of policies without proper structures and planning for their change can lead to resistance to change, unplanned staff transfers and turnover, among others. Notwithstanding, issues related to quality of institutional leadership, nature of the government in power, government policies, faulty negotiations, management and group behaviours and labour market were among the major causes of conflicts. However, the issue of management seems to be scanty especially when it comes to employment of two conflict management approaches from different world views. Therefore, this forms the cornerstone for formation of this study.

Problem Statement

Like any other organizations, HEIs have become part of conflicts and conflicts have become part of them, this kind of life has become a paradox of human organization due to the energy and resources spent on it. The nature of HEIs is supposed to maintain a harmonious and conducive environment that facilitates the teaching, learning, research, innovation and development so as to yield the highly skilled and talented manpower. When these institutions turn into centers of excellence in both human development and economic transformation of their communities, their countries will always compete favorably on the world market. However, as managers and administrators tend to provide quality leadership and respond to environmental pressure so that they align the goals to suit the mission and vision of the institution from all units, the situation seems to get worse due to unprecedented conflicts that arise from staff, students and the surrounding for several reasons known and unknown. These conflicts may come into play due to interpretation of policies, failure to adopt and adapt the changing working conditions and at the same time address the dynamics of the world of work. In such situations, when two or more parties fail to agree on priorities due to policy issues, conflicts are inevitable and cannot be suppressed because they are part of change.

Meanwhile, in the recent past; many African HEIs have experienced persistent go slows, strikes, riots and destruction of property from within and outside the institutions, both public and private. These conflicts are sometimes either caused by students or staff. These disagreements do not only fail the progress of students but also interrupt both parents and institutional programs (Akinwale, 2011; Altrais et al., 2017). In the same vein, Ugandan HEIs have not been spared by conflicts due to the fact that institutional structures allow two or more units to share boundaries to meet the set objectives and goals. In such a culture and climate where people have to work homogeneously and fulfill the institution's goals, differences have also been encountered because of variances in nature, background, education levels, ethnicity, religion, to mention but a few from both students and staff. Likewise, the situation has been alarming especially in the struggle to share knowledge and experience, values, behaviors and beliefs coupled with unlimited boundaries. Leadership positions, wrong conceptions of issues, influence of god fathers and the like are also attributed to causative factors that make conflicts inevitable and indispensable. Moreover, the surge of internal contradictions among the seniors and junior administrators have not been left out as some of the reasons that cause conflicts.

When these disagreements happen in an organization, the institutional leadership must find proper ways in terms of system, structures, values and skills to have them addressed in a professional manner (Din et al., 2012; Miir, 2016, 2017; Ramani & Zhimin, 2010; Rommel & Bailey, 2016). This study is timely and urgent because as institutions develop, many unprecedented issues arise without proper solutions outlined from either Islamic or secular perspectives. When this situation arise; the management, staff and students fail to have a balanced course due to invested interests. This study is paramount to unearth the current situation of Islamic university in Uganda.

Conceptual Framework

Also many schools of thought from both Islamic and secular perspectives, developed several mechanisms and strategies through which conflicts can be resolved but there is no agreed framework of how to manage conflicts. For instance; in a study done in Pakistan by Hamayun et al. (2014) on conflict management strategies in higher education institutions, public sector universities, it was established that management of conflict was handled through use of self and concern for others and the subconstructs employed in this process were competing, integrating, avoiding, obliging and compromising.

Conversely, Bampoh-Addo (2015) found that promotional policies and processes were the key issues in handling conflicts. Moreover, in Nigeria HEIs leadership employed Compromise, confrontation, mediation, consensus, collective agreement and integration. However, Bua et al. (2015) and Din et al. (2012) emphasized in their studies that process and mediation should be key factors in the management and handling conflicts. Meanwhile, in a study done by Yassien & Yassien (2015), on conflict management from an Islamic perspective calls for diversity as way through good outcomes can be yielded. This can be achieved through rigorous diagnosis of the causative factors and process so as to arrive at a reasonable decision. Ghaffar (2009) alludes that conflict management should be handled through mediation, negotiation, avoidance and collaborating.

Nevertheless, most of these studies were done using quantitative research paradigm for instance; Bampoh-Addo (2015), Mukhtar et al. (2011), Zamir & Khan (2018), the findings from their studies; may not apply to Ugandan situation due to time, locality and nature of its natives. Further still, since there is no agreed upon mechanisms for managing conflicts, this study was carried out to bridge the gap in the literature. Besides, they have not been enough studies carried out to understand the management of conflicts at the Islamic University in Uganda.

Purpose of Study

This research was designed to understand the perspectives of conflict management in reference to Islamic University in Uganda as a case study.

Central Research Question

What is conflict management for selected management and teaching staff in HEIs?

Sub Research Questions

1. How do managers define conflicts in the context of HEIs?
2. What are the processes used to resolve conflict in HEIs?
3. What are the contributions of conflict towards HEIs?
4. What are your suggestions towards management of conflicts in HEIs?

Methodology

This qualitative study was designed based on the interview designed in consultation with experts so as to arrive at its goal. The main aim of using this paradigm was to attain a deeper understanding of the concept conflict management in the perspective of HEIs. Meanwhile, the informants of this study were able to express their views which would not be the case with quantitative method. Thus giving the research a firm ground to carry out this phenomenological study.

Participants

Two informants were purposively selected for this study with an intention based on the scholarly views of Baker & Edwards (2021) who asserts that small numbers of informants in qualitative research do not matter as long as interviews are done to attain a deep understanding of the phenomena. Therefore questions of “how many” do not matter in this case. On that basis two male staff one in administration and other one in teaching participated in the study. This was based on their working experience, level of education, maturity and English proficiency.

Credibility and Worthlessness

To attain the credibility and worthlessness of the findings of this study, interviews were developed and a pilot study was conducted to validate the instrument which is interview questions. Before actual research interview was done, a preliminary interview was conducted in relation to the research questions of the study. The intention was to understand whether the set interview questions aligned with both the objectives and research questions. Furthermore modifications in the interview questions were effected with minor changes. Secondly to achieve high levels of worthiness of the data, inter-rater was done on the generated themes by experts. The validation of this research, proved worthwhile with 90% hence leading to further steps of the study.

Data Analysis

The aim of this section is to interpret the data on the conflict management in higher education institutions (HEIs) a case study of Islamic university in Uganda using qualitative method. A scientifically developed interview guide was used in relation to study's research questions to attain the purpose of this study. Under this section, a thematic data analysis method was used. After data collection, transcription of the interview audio recorded information was done through the use of Express Scribe Transcription Software and in order to achieve the plausible transcripts, data matrix was created for both informants and respondents to indicate the discourse units.

Thematic data analysis technique was employed in the process. In that case, data analysis started with transcription of the audio-recorded interviews verbatim with the help of Express Scribe Transcription Software. In order to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, a transcription data matrix was created for each interview which clearly indicated discourse units from both the research and the informant. For generation of main ideas from the transcription process, a (7) seven-column matrix was used. Under this column, interview questions, subordinate keywords, subordinate main points from conversation, elaboration from verbal statements to support subordinate, occurrence of main idea were transferred as key words. The frequencies plus discourse unit orderliness were included in the process. Lastly, the generated themes from the data were achieved and this was in line with correspondents from the informants and their main ideas. Key words were selected from the informant's responses in reference to interview questions. To attain these themes the researcher focused on the main subjects from the informants.

Findings

How Do Managers Define Conflicts Particularly in the Context of HEIs?

The first objective of the study, sought to understand the definition of conflicts in the context of higher education institutions. From the findings of the study, it was established that members understand conflicts as "a misunderstanding between staff where by staff of the same organization, can have a disagreement between them over issues of the organizational management. In other words, it can be termed as unbearable inter-relationships between themselves and find the situation not warranting them to continue working together." It may also mean political; issues whereby, the organizational leadership and management can end up in misunderstandings with some government officials and the whole situation turns into a victim of political turmoil and members turn the organizational business partisan GM2 on this definition states that, "there are conflicts between administration its self and the some government officials there are conflicts between staff members and administrators.....," bad attitude and clash of interest among the warring groups. This is experienced when the facilities and resources are shared among members of staff, but because of negative mentality from some people, some may decide to bar others from using the available resource favorably by others who may in better position or have dare need for utilizing them as per the

statements of different informants. KT1 in his view towards conflicts in HEIs context states “I would say that conflicts or define them....arise out of misunderstandings between people, they may arise out of clash of interest from people you know! Sometimes because of bad attitude you know! Interrelationships are not now working out well”, this is in consonant with what some scholars have written about the causes of conflicts before. For instance, it can be viewed as misunderstanding, differences over methods, personality clashes, value and goal differences, frustration and irritability among individuals of the same educational institution aiming at achieving the mission and vision (Adepoju, & Sofowara, 2012). Different interests and views arise amongst them some opposing the approaches or goals and this it leads to misunderstanding (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2019). Furthermore a misunderstanding which results from different thoughts, values and feelings between two individuals or organizations can erupt and cause antagonism to the system (Bampoh-Addo, 2015; Morris et al., 1998; Yassien & Yassien, 2015). Also, the concept can be referred to as misunderstanding due to relationships and emotional tendencies, frustrations, anger and interpersonal clashes among staff. However, there were no studies that describe conflicts as issues managers encounter from economic, social and political reasons within higher educational institutions as part of daily interactions that are bound to disagreements due to authority and hierarchical nature of the institutions and if not attended to professionally they lead to conflicts. Students’ protest is an expression of the feelings that center on social and political discomfort due to institutional rules and regulations yet they streamlined in conventional and governing laws of the country (Madalina, 2016). It can be noted that different attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills can still ignite differences of interests among people. Meanwhile, stressful working environment can also in most cases lead to attitudinal and negative behavioral responses and strain can result in negative attitudinal and behavioral responses (Mukhtar et al., 2011; Rommel, A. & Bailey, 2016). However, according to the data gathered, no one of the above mentioned authors happen to have defined conflicts as unbearable relationships with in the context of HEIs. They may have used words that seem to mean this, although the results indicate another definition. Therefore, the current study has come up with another definition of conflicts in accordance with HEIs management.

What Are the Causes of Conflicts in HEIs?

According to the interviews conducted, informants gave different views on the causes of conflicts. For instance, cultural background that is to say; the past history, the upbringing and educational background of an individual has an influence on his nature of dealing with others. When it comes to Psychological factors; these range from the nature of work, the stress and personal issues for instance; anger management, the social issues which may seem to be official and personal if not handled well, they lead to conflicting situations with workmates etc. Administratively, there are factors that range from supervision rigidity and not providing enough resources for different departments to use while executing their duties. So, through shared facilities, collusions may take part in daily events of executing institutional business. For the sake of adamancy, where the top managers and administrators are given complaints by subordinates to help them have a health and conducive environment of work, but they prove not to be listening which in the end may be termed as enmity, not listening and being negative about certain issues. Through this kind of environment, procrastination of duties may take part in the event that leaders do not listen or do not want to be advised and later may be termed as witch-hunting. Another important factor is political issues where some of the members of the organization tend to hide into political influences to ignite fire against one another to appear as bad boys in records of government officials. Lastly, disagreements; this is as a result of different opinions on the ways to opt for in forging a way forward for institutional visions and mission.

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KT1 states that “Yes they do ... because there is a background which we do not know know.....psychological ...out of clash of interest.” While GM2 described the causes different as “people do not someone responsible like the supervisors tell them to do what they are supposed to do they take him for an enemy so ... what he is supposed to do accuses the supervisor of being biased or being high hunted etc.. On another side however administrators also are very rigid on some things and they do not want to listen so there is always a power gap between administrator the... The administrator does not seem to have the ear to listen to what they are...”

From the information given above, one can conclude that conflict causes in HEIs are determined by several factors that range from multicultural diversity, culture and administrative issues. This is because the global world is increasingly challenged by multicultural diversity and the identity crisis resulting from this paradoxical situation in organizations and in the end it derails the efforts of developing sustainable critical mass (Montanini, 2013; Nwabueze & Bernard, 2017). In addition, when the situation is not arrested, the promotion of understanding and dialogue as a prime issue in the management of multiculturalism diversity to secure organizational peace and security for future prosperity will be doomed (Etim & Okey, 2013; Nwabueze & Bernard, 2017). From the psychological point of view, conflict may arise as a result of psychological issue related to emotional tendencies, frustrations, anger and interpersonal clashes among staff (Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011; Rahim, 2005). However, other studies contend that there are still conflicts that can arise due to lack of clear job status and description within the institution. Therefore, it is important that managers of educational institutions take precautions to address issues that can arise due to social, economic and political reasons within educational institutions. This is due to daily interactions that are bound to disagreements because of authority and hierarchical nature of the institutions and if not attended to professionally they lead to conflicts. Moreover, it an obligation of institutions to endeavor and provide a suitable situation for staff and students to carry out their duties in terms of management systems, welfare, reward and physical facilities to avoid revolts and attain quality management education system. Its further worthy to note that for disagreement as a cause of conflicts is unavoidable due to the fact that, as long as educational institutions are global and dynamic places that continue to attract people of different setting for purposes of training and developing them to do their work professionally, through their interactions, differences and disagreements come into play hence leading to conflicts (Basit, Rahman, & Jumani, 2010). Omemu & Oladunjoye (2013) states that conflict is a disagreement between two or more organization members or groups arising from the fact goals, values and perceptions. Conflict can also be the result of individual maladjustment to the requirements of the job. That they must share resources or work activities and that they have different statuses. However, in the literature cited, the issue of enmity as a cause of conflict is not mentioned which evolves as a result of accumulated anger and grudge on fellow individuals without being open to air out grievances and cause harmony in the community.

What Are the Groups Involved in Conflicts?

Under this sub theme, the study aimed at establishing the categories of people who are vulnerable to institutional conflicts. The following themes were developed from the data. It was observed that conflicts happen between students and administrators, managers and subordinates, amongst students themselves, students against staff, and amongst staff. KT1 in his statements elaborates” There are conflicts that sometimes arise between students and their lecturers, even among students themselves and at the last level is among the staff and staff so I gave witnessed” meaning institutional key players are always part of conflicts whenever they happen. On the same note GM2’s submissions also seemed to be in line with what KT1 mentions as stated “they are conflicts between administration its self and the government there are conflicts between staff members and

administrators, there are conflicts between amongst students, between students and staff, and amongst staff, and students and administrators which kind of conflicts are interested in. This in line with other studies that were conducted before, for instance, in a study conducted in past, where many African HEIs have experienced persistent go slows, strikes, riots and destruction of property from within and outside the institutions both public and private caused by both students and staff, these kind of disagreements make one not to understand some times when he can complete the studies and on the other hand some students and staff tend to loose completely (Futrell & Walter, 2001). Also, conflicts may happen from students' inattentiveness, students arriving late to class, engaging in side conversations, or acting indifferent and bored. Nevertheless, in such a culture and climate people have to work homogeneously to meet the institution's goals, however much there are differences in nature, background, education levels, ethnicity, and religion mention it from both students and staff conflicts are inevitable (Etim & Okey, 2013). Yet in the struggle to share knowledge and experience, values, behaviors and beliefs coupled with unlimited boundaries, conflicts become inevitable and indispensable due to contradiction that may result from the elements mentioned above from the different groups of both staff and students (Nakatsugawa & Takai, 2013). Managers are encouraged to provide quality leadership and respond to environmental pressure to align the goals to suit the mission and vision of the institution from all units, the situation seem to get worse due to unprecedented conflicts from staff, students and the surrounding for several reasons known and unknown.

What Are the Conflict Management Process?

Under this research question the researcher sought to establish the mechanisms used by managers to resolve conflict. From the results got, the following themes were found suitable to describe the ways through which university policies and guidelines are employed. The meaning of policy implementation in dealing with the violator and in reference to particular rules and regulations of the game, in moments where the policies are violated, disciplinary committees sit where necessary to take a joint action. In cases when the factors instigating conflicts seem to be more suitable for counselling service, it is used. However, in situations where the laws are not giving the actual solution, bench marking is used in line with policies, rules and regulations. In other words, universities can copy from others or refer to precedence. Ad hoc measurements to handle and unavoidable circumstances without waiting for the usual structures, practice of religion is used. Under this pretext, people are reminded about the Islamic teachings so that, the rival parties' tempers are cooled and have smooth running of institutional business. In the interview carried out, the following mechanism were found to be in place in the context of HEIs conflict management. In this kind of mechanisms, reconciliation and avoidance can be adopted to help members cool down.

KT1 in his statement says "okay aim overall the way to manage conflicts is to follow the university regulations, university policies and disciplinary procedures. The reason why we have all this type of policies and regulations is because we have got to be able to control behavior. So if we know that we have set our limits; we have set our regulations; this is the tool we have in order to manage conflicts so and so".

In confirmation of his statements GM2 "okays conflicts, I will tell you that our institution has structure in a particular hierarchical and issues are handled at various levels of the organization The students have their committees and there is a hierarchy which handles those issues up to the last one. Likewise, the staff has its hierarchy." Under this, when teachers' expectations are not stated clearly and also unfair, student's dissatisfaction towards their teachers are an avoidable (Basit et al., 2010). There are different types of conflict that exist in educational organizations and each type requires different approaches and theories depending on the circumstances of their occurrence. These include; structural conflicts, data conflicts, relationship interest conflicts; thus causing grievances,

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disputes, unnecessary complaints, strikes, and disciplinary actions (Ramani & Zhimin, 2010). In another statement for emphasis, KT1 states that "...imply that you know we have got to be able to use our ownthe only institutionalized method you know our falls back on the regulations. In case we did not use regulations, then this is kind of ad hoc arrangements may be, to speak to people and try to calm them down and try to seek interventions that are not necessarily based on the rules" GM2 "the best tool we actually have is called a policy guideline and in this case we have what is handled at the bench mark of the university policy. This policy has to be played by the rules. So it's the policy which is the most important tool. Then, another important thing is to make sure that beyond the policy, people are religious and they practice the religion. The manager as the top person, you have always to be prepared but if it reaches such circumstances this is what we have to use". This was found to be in line with first of by engaging in a constructive communication process and this should be spearheaded by an influential negotiator coupled with a good rapport and personality (Etim & Okey, 2013). Meanwhile, personality and negotiator's readiness to convey the needed information plays a crucial role towards achievement of harmony among the worrying groups.

In line with above, the role of administrative style is also important towards conflict management process. This can be realized through laying strategies that lead to peaceful resolution of crisis by employing mediation, reconciliation and arbitration. Meanwhile, since prevention and avoidance are also important elements of conflict management, authorities should endeavor to use their positions to provide problem solving strategies coupled with command, dialogue, advice, consultation, verification, compromise, signing of agreements, change of organizational environment and behavior (Abdul Cader, 2017; Randeree & Faramawy, 2011). Also, for conflicts related to interpersonal power struggles and exaggerated use of rewards and punishments, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail, and flattery or ingratiation, require a different approach due to the fact that when issues related to unresolved power conflict can recycle and cause breakdown and termination. Therefore, approaching such a complex situation may call for a mixed approach towards its resolution (Yassien & Yassien, 2015). As the chancellor or rector steering the institution business, it is his responsibility to ensure that whatever takes place at work is on his finger tips for smooth running of the institution's business.

Contribution of Conflicts to HEIs

The research question on this part was seeking to understand the contributions of conflicts on HEIs. The following elements have been derived from data as effects of conflicts on the institutional performance. These include; poor motivation and poor quality service delivery. This comes in when staff issues are not attended to by the top managers. GM2 postulated "yes when the human resource, if the human resource is affected in one way or the other definitely everything else would be affected because the human resource is the key enabler of all other resource in that sense...a lecturer who is supposed to teach the students if this lecturer is not motivated to teach, the students will not get the quality of services they are supposed to get the teaching will be affected, that is if a lecturer is not paid or is not motivated if the payment is not still enough likewise if the supervisor is not doing his job on the whole system will get affected. Just take it"

It was further established that conflicts can lead to misunderstanding among workers for several reasons as mentioned before, however to have the infighting settled, reconciliation comes into play whereby, the parties that are at rift are sat down to negotiate and reach an agreement over the issues of divergence whereas, transfer of staff from one working place to another may contribute to intended objective that lead to creation of harmony and improved working relations among workers with in the institution. KT1 sates in support of the above, "okay when they are conflicts of course between people working at the same place naturally it is going to affect the work we have experienced

situations of the type where you know people cannot pool up together because they have got misunderstanding. People reconciling you know ...the easiest way is to get some people transferred in changed from where they work so that work can continue without problem.”

It can further be observed that to avoid disastrous effects on both human resources and the organizational performance, the human resource manager (university secretary) comes in, to play an important role as the custodian of policies. Through his office, conflict matters are handled as stipulated in the university policies. For instance, if it is an issue regarding staff welfare and raise someone's status an increment in his salary must be done, where issues call for action then he invites the disciplinary committees to deal with the indiscipline cases. Also, if there is need to selection and recruitment of more staff to over avoid burdening staff with a lot of tasks, then appointment takes effect?

In conformity with this information, KT1 states that “We have got human resource division under the university secretary's office am largely the mandate of human resources, they just deal with official procedures of appointment and, you know contracts and so on... I see lots of times when we involve ourselves in disciplinary mechanisms you know disciplinary is one way to settle things ...other mechanism like you know counselling you arrangements for public you know discourse and so on I have not seen.” GM2 also states that “is supposed to have a human resource manager we call him university secretary. The university secretary who handles issues to do with human resource in he over sees the recruitment of staff and interviewing them, doing background check, appraisal and all other factors related to human resource.... secretary's office is represented on the various committees with in the university that handle conflicts. The department its self is responsible for recruiting, background check, appraisal etc. Even the final stage of getting dismissed, it's the same department committees, disciplinary committees going up to appointments committee. It also handles disciplinary issues now”.

Conclusions

The paper presented, analyzed and discussed the findings of the research of the study in relation to earlier studies, with aim of bridging the gap in the literature and also generate some new knowledge in the field of conflict management. The findings indicated that, university employs both approaches of the world to handle conflicts that is the secular and the Islamic one. Regarding the results obtained, it showed that the overall in the HEIs context, conflicts are defined depending on different situations, and the causes also differed due to several reasons. Finally, it was also found that mismanaging conflicts can cause negative responses to institutional performance

Also from the views observed above, its worthy noting that the term conflicts has different meanings due to several factors that relate to organizational culture, staff background, levels of education and exposure. Therefore, conflicts management requires resilience, composure and thorough understanding of the root causes. This is because the groups that normally involved in such disagreements are always part of the organization. Therefore, handling issues among staff and their leaders normally requires serious sacrifices and efforts aligned with the organizational strategies and policies so that the organization and its workers are all protected from the unpleasant situations. Meanwhile, when conflicting parties are put to task to understand that the organization is bigger than any one of them, leaders who are forecast and quantum in nature should avoid controversies that may call for further escalation of conflicting situations in order to avoid antagonism that may ruin institutional image and staff progress.

It is also important that leaders and their management team get to know that many of their staff are aware of their responsibilities, status, rights, services and output needed to propel

organizational development and transformation. Therefore disadvantaging them from their rights should be uncalled for in order to avoid frustration of organizational agendas and institutional mission and vision.

Even though conflicts contribute a lot towards and organization and its staff, it is important that they are avoided especially in this era where people can use other avenues like courts where they can seek for their protection, safety and compensation. It is also important to note that education institutions that are religious based also center so much on the guidelines from their beliefs in order to attain justice, fairness, patience and maturity in the way they deal with issues related to conflict management.

In Islam, conflict is considered inevitable in human nature as long as people stay together in one community. When conflicts are well managed, they yield to positive results due to the fact that it can engage members in discussions that can lead to social justice, seeking for advice, consultation, appreciation, verification, brotherhood, patience, creation of elders forums, maturity, understanding, contemplation, forfeiting, forgiving, respect, good assumption and cooperation. When people of warring sides are brought to terms and listen to one another, it therefore becomes a learning session of experiencing of the above elements in their life style and places of work (Abdalla, 2000; Abdul Cader, 2017). Meanwhile, conflicts can ignite or cause antagonism, and great sedition in an organization which can later escalate the situation into wars in words and actions especially if not handled well. For instance, the roots of conflict Islamic can be traced from the story of two children of Saydina Adam Alayih Salam when they failed to control their anger, emotions and jealousy towards one another and as a result one was killed (Abdalla, 2000; Abdul Cader, 2017; Randeree & Faramawy, 2011; Yassien & Yassien, 2015). Since then this topic has been hot and has continued to attract several researchers to study it further; this one inclusive. There are several models that work hand in hand with western authors in matters of conflict management and resolution. In instances where the western thinking does not contradict with the Islamic knowledge, its values in problem solving are appreciated. (Abdul Cader, 2017; Randeree & Faramawy, 2011). Abdallah (2002) in his study opines that, the principles of Islamic models of conflict management are based on firm foundations, that lead to restoration of social justice, freedom of expression and equality among people of the same community, therefore engagement of community members in the resolution and intervention processes is another important stage that should be followed with substituting intervention techniques in relation to the conflict situation and stages.

In addition, the above-mentioned elements are part of the Al-maqasid Al-shariah that does not only emphasize harmony among people but also calls for preservation of religion in whatever people do in a society. Therefore, members of the community especially leaders are required to provide justice that leads to equality, freedom and affirmative critical thinking and goal oriented. The major intention derived from al-maqasid al-shariah concept is to ensure that whenever conflicts arise, their management should result into better organizations' performance and a peaceful community at large.

Recommendation

Further studies on a similar topic can be carried out using quantitative techniques and establish if divergent findings can be arrived at. This is because the current study interviewed a few informants which may not be the case with quantitative approach.

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Statement of Research and Publication Ethics

The research was carried out in accordance with the principles of publication ethics.

Authors' Contribution

The author has prepared the article alone.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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