

Interrogating Psychosocial Consequences of Conflict between Employers and Domestic Workers in Rural Areas

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Abstract – Conflict in domestic employment breeds several psychosocial consequences that significantly affect organizational competitiveness. The main purpose of the study was to examine the psychosocial effects of conflict between domestic workers in rural areas and their employers. A qualitative research approach was utilized to carry out the study, with an interview being used as the main data gathering instrument. 25 snowballing selected domestic workers participated in the study. The study found out that conflict between domestic workers and their employers adversely affect the psychosocial wellbeing of workers. Conflict causes psychosocial disorders and illnesses such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, hypertension, headache, lack of sleep and loss of appetite. The study further established that conflicts in domestic employment propel depression and anxiety, low job satisfaction, sexual disorders and breeds inferiority complex. It was recommended that domestic workers in rural areas should form their own unions which pursue their peculiar needs.

Keywords – Conflict, Domestic Workers, Psychosocial, Rural Areas, Employers

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1 Introduction

Domestic work is one of the oldest and most essential careers in the universe. The career is however looked down upon in various societies; which has directly and indirectly ignited conflicts between domestic workers and their employers. The complexity of conflicts between employers and employees has made debates and studies (Nyanga & Sibanda, 2015, Dreu et al., 2004, Sabine et al., 2013, Dirrler 2022) on the subject to surge in the 21st century. The increase in the studies of organizational conflict aimed at addressing issues of conflict which continue to disrupt and hinder the performance, growth and survival of organizations throughout the globe. The prevalence of conflict at workplaces has become a cause for concern in almost all organizations irrespective of size and complexity. Conflict poses a threat to the growth and survival of organizations, including very small organizations and individuals involved in subsistence farming in rural areas. Subsistence farming in rural areas has been and continue to be the major source of employment for domestic workers in rural areas in Zimbabwe and beyond. Subsistence farming and other backyard household business ventures are heavily affected by conflicts between farmers and their workers. Nyanga & Sibanda (2019) observed that conflicts between employers and domestic workers have over the years propelled labour turnover of domestic workers in rural areas. High labour turnover is a clear demonstration of the existence of latent sources of conflicts between employees and their employers.

Pakarinen, & Vrtanen, (2016) also carried out a study on solving organizational conflict in a public matrix organization. The study established that it is very essential to timeously resolve conflicts at workplaces. Unresolved conflict usually transforms itself into dysfunctional, which consequently affect workers' emotional and mental wellbeing. This study like many other studies focused on dealing with conflict in established institutions, thereby living organizational conflict related problems in emerging organizations and vulnerable workers such as domestic workers unaddressed.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and various countries such as Denmark, Zimbabwe, Finland, Sweden and Hungary crafted several legislation, policies and conventions which aimed to protect domestic workers and reduce conflicts between domestic workers and their employers. For instance, the Rural Workers' Organizations Convention, 1975 (No. 141), and Recommendation (No. 149) crafted by ILO aimed at giving all workers including domestic workers in rural areas the right to freedom of association; encouragement of their organizations to make workers participate in the economic and social development activities in their communities. While several countries and ILO are appreciated for enacting laws that provided guidance on various domestic employment conditions of employment such as working hours, management of overtime and minimum wages of domestic workers, the problems of abuse of domestic workers have not ceased but rather continue to surge. Social media and newspaper reported numerous stories on conflicts between domestic employees and employers. Domestic employment being one of the most prevalent forms of employment in rural areas in Zimbabwe experienced devastating consequences of conflicts between employers and employees. What has not been clear is to what extent conflicts between employers and domestic workers affect the psychosocial status of domestic workers.

With these so many unanswered questions on the impact of conflict on the wellbeing of domestic workers at stake, the researcher found it necessary to investigate the extent to which conflict negatively impact the psychosocial wellbeing of employees. The intention of this research is to examine the consequences of employer–domestic employees conflict with a view to making meaningful recommendations to all the interested parties in domestic employment. The study assists in the identification of conflicts handling platform gaps and the limitation of the existing conflict handling approaches.

2 Literature review

2.1 Theoretical review

This study is guided by Thomas and Kilmann's conflict management theory and the Morton Deutsch's model. Thomas and Kilmann's theory provided 5 approaches to conflict management namely; the competitive, collaborative, compromising, accommodating and avoiding, which can be utilized to deal with all forms of conflict. Organizations or conflicting parties are guided by the nature, causes, consequences and intensity of the conflict, to choose the most appropriate conflict resolution style to apply. Studies (Tapfumaneyi & Nyanga 2019, Nyanga & Sibanda 2015) have persistently shown that there is no 'one size fit all' approach in dealing with conflict since it comes in different shapes, intensity and complexities. Conflicting parties are compelled to consider several variables before they elect the approach to utilize. For example, a conflict that needs to be urgently resolved, due to its consequences to the organization, workers or the community, require the use of the competitive approach. Another model that guided this study is the Morton Deutsch's cooperative and competitive model. The cooperative approach requires parties to analyze and interrogate issues for purposes of developing a solution with a total buy-in from all the conflicting parties. The characteristics of the style include helpfulness, orderliness in discussions, effective communication, orientation to task achievement and many other. The competitive style focuses on solutions being imposed by stronger or strongest side on weaker parties. For instance, the employer can use his/her power to impose a solution on domestic workers. The characteristics of the competitive style are lack of confidence, disagreements and rejection of ideas, mutual negative attitude towards the other conflicting part and others. These characteristics have a tendency of breeding dysfunctional conflict since most of its solutions to conflict do not last long. The application of the most appropriate approach reduces the psycho-social consequences of conflict on both workers and employers.

2.2 Empirical literature review

Several studies (Ongori, 2009; Samantara & Sharma, 2016; Lu et al., 2020; Samantara, 2004; Mills & Mene, 2020) have defined organizational conflict which is also referred to as workplace conflict, as the clash of

goals, interests, or values among workers or groups of workers in a workplace. It is the state of incongruity or misunderstanding, emanating from the real or perceived disagreement of needs, beliefs, resources, leadership style and relationship between the members of the organization or departments. Conflict refers to disagreements between two or more parties on one or more issues. Conflict at workplace is a form of conflict where employers and employees or employees among themselves are in a dispute. Nyanga & Sibanda (2015) observed that issues of dysfunctional conflict between employers and employees continue to surge and to become more and more complex. The study by Nyanga & Sibanda (2015) further established that conflict can either make or break organizations since it breeds both positive and negative effects. Nyanga & Sibanda (2015) also observed that conflict between workers and employers were mainly caused by a number of issues which include among others salaries and wages, work intensification and other conditions of service.

Domestic workers are workers employed in a private household or at the employer's home (Finland, Act No. 951). Furthermore, the Swedish Labour Act No. 943 viewed domestic workers as workers who usually work in private premises and within the family home sphere. Domestic workers in rural areas in Zimbabwe include among others housekeepers, gardeners, security guards, drivers, shepherds and herdsmen. Jose & Ramirez (2003) are of the view that it is very difficult to estimate the number of domestic workers worldwide or any part of the world chiefly because of lack of accessible data and the prevalence of unregulated work relationships. For example, in Zimbabwe all unregistered domestic workers do not appear in official statistics.

Almost all domestic workers perform domestic duties and tasks in exchange for remuneration. The work of domestic workers is in most cases carried out on under the authority, supervision and direction of the householder. For an employee to be regarded as a domestic worker he/she has to perform the work on regular basis and in an incessant manner. Jose & Ramirez (2003) argue that domestic workers are heterogeneous category of workers who are difficult to define, which makes it difficult to protect them and more still to assist them in cases of disputes with their employers. Studies (Nyanga & Sibanda, 2019; Jose & Ramirez, 2003) have shown that domestic workers are invisible mainly because they work in private households which makes labour inspection and enforcement of legislation difficult. The invisibility of domestic workforce makes it difficult for them to organize themselves into collective action groups such as trade unions. The situation makes workers more vulnerable which in a way propel conflict between workers and their employers.

Kim, Bochatay, Relyea-Chew, Buttrick, Amdahl, Kim, & Lee (2017) argue that the main causes of organizational conflict were role ambiguity, scope of practice, reporting structure, or workflows, negatively affecting job satisfactions and intent to stay. Furthermore, a study by Ongori (2009) which aimed at establishing the causes, types, effects and strategies of managing conflict in organizations so as to enhance organizational performance and effectiveness established that the major cause of conflict was limited resources. Furthermore, Makgeto et al (2024) argued that the human capital should be treated as a collection of specialized capabilities with distinct needs, objectives and responsibilities. The main sources of conflict between domestic workers and their employers are long working hours, low wages, arbitrary pay cuts, non/late payment of wages and salaries, heavy workloads, inadequate food, arbitrary

changes of employment contracts, job insecurity, absence of benefits normally granted to domestic workers, and exposure to violence and abuse. The job descriptions of domestic workers are usually vaguely defined which makes it difficult for workers to plan and execute their duties. Studies (Nyanga & Sibanda, 2015; Nyanga, 2019) have shown that role ambiguity is one of the main causes of conflict between employers and employees. A study by Kele & Nyanga (2023) showed that conflicts between domestic workers and their employers are mainly caused by role ambiguity. The study further established that employers of domestic workers, deliberately vaguely define workers' roles and tasks so that they can add more tasks and roles as and when it becomes advantageous to them. In their study which they carried out in the hospitality industry, Nyanga & Sibanda (2015) observed that conflict between workers and their employers are caused by several factors, which include inadequate resources, management style, salaries and wages, general conditions of employment and personalities of both workers and managers.

A study carried out by Kim et al. (2017) showed that conflicts pose threats to people's physical, mental, and emotional health and performance at work. They further established that uncivil behaviours and conflict hamper interpersonal dynamics thereby resulting in low degree of support from colleagues and destructive behaviours. Perceptions of disrespectful working environment and weakened team collaboration were the main interpersonal conflict consequences. Disputes between workers and employers are unavoidable and have serious consequences in the competitiveness and realization of organizational goals (Kele & Nyanga, 2023; Nyanga 2012, Nyanga & Sibanda, 2015; Dreu et al., 2004; Sabine et al., 2013). Other studies have however shown that the effects of conflict can either work to the benefit or drawback of the company's quest to achieve its goals. Conflict breeds constructive as well as undesirable outcomes such as improving decision making, team dynamics, diverting energy and resources, producing stress and dissatisfaction, reducing communication. Kele & Nyanga (2023) in their study on work intensification among domestic workers in rural areas showed that if workers receive unprecedented pressure from their supervisors, they are likely to develop a negative attitude towards their work which consequently affect their work performance. Conflict bears a very strong impact on employees, employers and the performance of firms. Workers who are not content with their compensation and conditions of service are likely to have conflict with their employers which in turn can affected the psychological wellbeing of workers (Nyanga 2012,). Conflicts between domestic workers and employers create work environment cacophony and discord which lead to performance discrepancies by workers and failure by workers to meet set targets and goals. Studies have persistently shown that employees are the most precious assets of organizations (Makgeto et al 2024) and that they play a pivotal role in the survival and growth of organizations (Nyanga, 2020; Nyanga, 2022; Nyanga 2022). Any work stoppage and restlessness among workers poses grave ramifications on the firm and also on individuals concerned.

A study by Dreu et al (2004) concluded that the conflict theory and studies to a greater extent overlooked the conceivable relationships between conflict and the health and well-being of workers. The study further established that the relationship between conflict and job satisfaction was also ignored. The study also established that poor health and well-being has the potential of propelling conflict between workers and their employers or at the workplace. The study showed that poorly managed conflict, can have adverse long-standing effects such as burnout, psychosomatic complaints

and many others on workers. Sabine et al. (2013) also carried out a study on conflict, whose main purpose was to address relations between task and relationship conflicts at work and employee well-being. The study sought to establish psychological detachment from work during off-job time as a moderator in the relation between conflicts and well-being. The study established that employees experiencing high levels of task conflicts and high levels of relationship conflicts and report poor well-being. The study shows that conflict significantly affects the health and well-being of workers. Chances are very high that workers who work in conflict infested areas experience psycho-social challenges such as stress, high blood pressure, poor concentration at work and many others.

Employee well-being is the general state of workers' social, physical, mental and financial health, which in most cases is propelled by several factors at the workplace such as workload, relations with co-workers, availability of resources and relations with managers. A study by Nyanga & Zirima (2020) showed that employee well-being plays a crucial role in staff retention and organizational performance. It was further established that employee well-being significantly affects workers' job satisfaction levels and plays a key role in determining the level of employee motivation. It is therefore essential for organizations to ensure that employee well-being is kept at acceptable levels. Organizations can promote employee well-being by developing and nurturing a culture that is favourable to the well-being of workers. Nyanga & Sibanda (2019) established that good employee health and wellbeing are key antecedents to employee performance, reduction of labour turnover, promotion of job satisfaction and motivation.

3 Methods and Data

The study utilized the qualitative research approach with the interview instrument being used as the main data collection tool. The use of the qualitative approach enabled the study to generate rich and detailed data that helped the researcher to fully understand the experiences and effects of conflict between domestic workers and their employers. Interviews, were opted for because the researcher intended to extract detailed information from the participants. The use of the qualitative approach in carrying out studies on domestic workers is consistent with (Kele & Nyanga, 2023; Nyanga, 2022) who successfully employed the same approach when they were carrying out their studies on domestic workers in rural areas. The use of the qualitative methodology enabled the researcher to get detailed information about the participants' work experiences, feelings, perceptions, opinions and aspirations. The researcher appreciated what other researchers documented relating to conflict between domestic workers and their employers or employers and employees in general. The research also extensively used secondary data.

Snow balling sampling technique was used to select 25 participants from a population of approximately 60 domestic workers in ward 29 in Mberengwa district in Zimbabwe. Snowballing was the most suitable technique to select participants because there is no data base for domestic workers where the researcher would have got the names and contact details of domestic

workers. The selection criteria required participants to have worked as domestic workers for more than three months in a rural area set up. The creation of a selection criteria is in line with Polit & Beck (2010) who assert that when choosing participants using the snowballing technique, it should always be made sure that only those people who fit into the criteria are chosen. To select participants the researchers started by identifying 3 domestic workers, who then referred them to other domestic workers in the study area. The process of identifying domestic workers went on until 25 participants were selected and consented to participating in the study.

Data was mainly collected using interviews. Interview was the most suitable data collection tool because the researchers intended to probe further and read participants' gestures so as to get the finer details of their views, feelings and perceptions on the subject under investigation. Interviews were also most appropriate because it is more inclusive than other data collection tools such as questionnaires which require people who can read and comprehend issues. Interviews were conducted on domestic workers' work stations and on average each interview lasted 45 minutes. To cater for all educational categories of participants, interviews were held using three languages namely English and two local languages; chishona and isiNdebele. The study utilized the thematic data analysis approach to analyze data. Themes and sub-themes were developed during and after the data collection exercises and processes. The use of the thematic data analysis approach is backed by several researchers (Nyanga, 2022; Mukuvisi et al., 2019; Nyanga & Tapfumaneyi, 2019) who have used it before and found it be one of the most appropriate approaches to analyse qualitative data.

4 Results

Biographical data of participants

Biographical Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	11	44
	Female	14	56
Age	>20	9	36
	21-30	10	40
	31-40	3	12
	< 41	3	12
Educational qualifications	Primary	8	32
	Secondary	13	52
	Certificate/Diploma	4	16
Work experience	>5	10	40
	6-10	8	32
	11-15	3	12
	<16	4	16

Domestic work industry in rural areas in Zimbabwe is dominated by female employees. Probably, the reason behind having more female than male domestic workers is because women can perform multi-tasks such as working in the fields, heading cattle, laundry and cooking, which their male counterparts cannot do. Due to the versatility of female domestic workers,

most employers prefer hiring them. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 47 years, with the less than 20 and 21-30 categories providing the highest number of participants. This implies that the sector is dominated by young and middle-aged adults, which is advantageous to the employers since they have an energetic workforce. The participants' educational qualifications ranged from basic to post-secondary education which shows that most domestic work in rural is done by a mixture of people with basic and high literacy skills. The less than 5 years work experience category dominated the other work experience categories, providing 10 participants, followed by the 6-10 category with 8 participants. The 11-15 and above 16 years' experience categories contributed 3 and 4 participants respectively. There are more workers in the less than 5 years' experience category probably because the industry is heavily affected by brain drain.

Psychosocial consequences of conflict

The study showed that conflict between domestic workers and their employers negatively affect workers' psychosocial disposition and the accomplishment of assigned tasks. Participants indicated that conflict between domestic workers and their employers causes mental health challenges and diseases. Participant 18 remarked, 'Conflicts between workers and their employers have adversative mental consequences and affect the general health well-being of workers in rural areas. The unresolved and recurring conflicts negative affect the mental health of workers.' This implies that mental health symptoms such as headache, lack of sleep and loss of appetite begin to show when conflict is not appropriately resolved or go for a very long time unresolved.

Participants also indicated that some of the huge and devastating psychosocial impact caused by conflict between employers and domestic employees are depression, anxiety and emotional instability. Depression can make domestic workers to become alcoholic and abuse substances. Alcoholism and substance abuse are usually done by people who are heavily stressed and dissatisfied with whatever they will be doing. Below are some of the remarks which were made by participants; participant 18, 'Conflict between domestic workers and their employers causes anxiety, depression and generally affect the psychological disposition of workers.' Participant 3, 'I take excessive beer and smoke dagga whenever I get involved in a dispute with my employer.' Participant 9, 'Most domestic workers abuse drugs as a strategy of managing workplace conflict related pressures, depression and anxiety.' Participant 4, 'There is little if any cooperation between myself and my employer because he takes advantage of my low socio-economic background and emotionally abuses me. The ill-treatment and conflict have caused depression and emotional instability in both of us.' Conflict generates depression and also breed societally unacceptable behaviours such as pilferage. Depression lead workers to behave in a manner that is not consistent with the dictates of their work. For instance, participant 16 remarked, 'Domestic workers destroy their employers' properties such as ox-drawn ploughs, wheelbarrows and others as an expression of anger.' Participant 11, 'Conflict result in some domestic workers stealing their

employers' properties such kitchen utensils, blankets, livestock and garden tools.' It implies that conflict significantly affect the psychosocial well-being of domestic workers in rural areas.

The other effect of conflict in domestic employment in rural areas are aggression, hostility, physical and psychological withdrawal by workers. Conflict can degenerate into fights between employers and employees which in turn increases the rate of absenteeism and in some instances make physically present workers psychologically withdrawn. Aggression and mental withdrawal are perilous to domestic workers particularly those who work with dangerous tools such as knives, shovels, axes since it makes them prone to accidents and gives them the opportunity to cause body harm or kill their employers. Apart from being prone to accidents conflict also compromises the performance of employees. Below are some of the direct quotes from participants; participant 7 remarked; *'I have decided to stay away from my employer because he physically and emotionally abuses me. When I go to herd cattle in the Chivavarira grazing area, I deliberately comeback home late so that I have little contact time with my employer.'* Participant 21 also remarked, *'I normally spend very few ours with my employer because of fear of escalating our conflict. After work I get into my bedroom and sleep.'* Participant 12 also said, *'I avoid contact with my employer at all costs because whenever we meet we end up in conflict which usually degenerates into fights.'* Participant 23, remarked, *'Employees who are continuously exposed to conflict usually become withdrawn and prefer to stay away from the person (s) they will be in conflict with.'* This implies that physical and psychological withdrawal from the antagonistic and hostile environment is a common conflict resolution strategy employed by domestic workers.

Conflict between domestic workers and their employers negatively affect the sexual performance of workers. Conflict ignited psychosocial orders make workers develop sexual disorders, which in turn affect the well-being of the family. Furthermore, conflict make domestic workers develop a culture of dishonesty and mistrust. Workers will become untrustworthy and dishonest and view other people as untrustworthy, a personality trait which is detrimental to the promotion organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Conflict imparts in workers an attribute of mistrust and suspicion, attributes which negatively affect team and cooperation between employers and workers. Workers steal and also destroy their employers' properties as a way of revenging on the perceived abuse and ill-treatment. Participate 22 said, *'My experience with all my domestic employers over the past ten has made me not to trust anyone in life. I view every employer as a dishonest person, who cheats, abuses domestic workers and destroy their sexual life and job satisfaction.'* Participate 4, *'My first domestic employer promised to improve my conditions of service more than ten times in one year, but never fulfilled his promises. My second domestic employer promised to give me a salary of R1000-00 but went on to give me R750. These incidents made me mistrust every employer.'* Participant 15, *'Negotiations on salaries, conditions of service and setting work targets are done in bad faith with false promises being made every day, usually to achieve immediate goals.'* If employers and workers do not have confidence in each other, chances are high that there will be little cooperation at the workplace. Mistrust destroys the spirit of creativity and innovation and lead to the deterioration of co-operation and teamwork between employers and domestic workers. Job satisfaction and morale of workers are some of the performance variables that suffer due to conflict between employers and employees.

5 Discussion

The study revealed that conflict between domestic workers and their employers negatively affect workers' psychosocial disposition. Some of the psychosocial consequences of conflict are poor mental health and various forms of disabilities such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia and bipolar disorders. An employee showing symptoms of mental health problems normally does not perform his/her tasks to the expectation of their supervisors which in turn increases and widens the conflict with the employer. The findings are consistent with Nyanga & Sibanda (2015) who argued that conflict between employers and employees significantly affects the psychological wellbeing of workers in the hotel industry. Furthermore, previous studies (Samantara, 2004; Ongori 2009; Mills & Mene, 2020; Nyanga & Sibanda, 2019) showed that if conflict between employers and employees is not managed well it has the potential of yielding devastating consequences on organizational performance and welfare of both employers and employees. Unresolved conflict sours the relationship between employers and employees, which consequently disturb the psychological wellbeing of domestic workers. Furthermore, a study by Dirrler & Podruzsik (2023) showed that conflict result in organizations incurring huge financial costs and also losing time.

Conflict also propels anxiety and depression in workers, which may lead to poor sleep, back pains or migraines. Employees operating in a conflict prone environment become depressed and have a lot of anxiety which in turn lead to change in behavior at work and home. A worker who develops depression and mental health challenges usually develops another or more contemporaneous disorders such as hypertension. The findings are consistent with preceding studies (Kim, et al 2017, Nyanga & Sibanda 2015) which asserted that conflict between employers and employees create anxiety, aggression, emotional disorder and instability in workers. A study carried out by Nyanga (2022) collaborates the findings of this study when it argued that emotional instability, and anxiety are some of the main causes of accidents at workplaces. Mental disorder, anxiety and depression and instability compromise worker effectiveness and efficiency, which is thorny to the survival and growth of any organization. The findings are consistent with Kim et al. (2017) who also argued that there are individual, interpersonal and organizational factors of healthcare conflict. Fine et al (2024) also established that conflict causes behavior problems, depression and anxiety among people.

Domestic worker/employer conflict propel emotional and other psychosocial disorders such as hostility and aggressive behavior by both employers and workers. Some conflicts especially those that are compensation related degenerate into fights which consequently strain relations between parties which should ordinarily be cooperating and working towards a common goal. Violence between domestic workers and their

employers brings huge legal battles and soils the image of the household and village. Furthermore, violence has negative consequences to the physical and mental health of workers. Violence usually occurs when domestic workers' views are not heard and no serious efforts are made to resolve conflicts. The study also showed that a hostile work environment leads to high blood pressure, cardiac events and accidents. The findings confirm Kreitner (1995)'s argument that hostile or aggressive behaviors may also lead to the damage of property and pilferage. Conflict motivate workers to develop undesirable behavior, which if not properly managed can end up becoming part of their work lives. If a worker consistently does something wrong, he/she can end up losing his/her conscience and regard it as normal behavior and practice. Employer/employee conflict ignited disorders negatively affect the way workers execute their duties. Madhumita & Anirban (2022) also carried out a study on antecedents and consequences of deviant workplace behaviour and established that deviant behaviour is usually caused by conflict and significantly affect the wellbeing of workers and organizational competitiveness. Aggression, violence at workplaces and conflict lead to high labour turnover and brain drain (Nyanga et al 2012).

Conflict between domestic workers and their employers also cause sexual disorders among domestic workers. The stress and pressure that is exerted on domestic workers affects their sexual relationships. A study by (Nyanga et al 2019) has also shown that low job satisfaction also propels conflict and cause hypertension and stress among workers, which consequently affect their sexual performance. The findings are consistent with preceding studies which argued that stress make people sexually weak or dysfunctional. Conflict stimulates apprehension in workers, alcoholism, promotes high blood pressure and reduces job satisfaction, which are all ingredients that disturb the sexual performance of a person. Abusing substances such as dagga is illegal in Zimbabwe, but domestic workers and other people regularly take them as a way of relieving themselves from pressure. Furthermore, conflict make workers develop a culture of dishonesty and also view other people as untrustworthy.

The other psychosocial effect of conflict between domestic workers and their employer is that it affects workers morale and satisfaction. Psychosocial disorders are the main precipitators of low morale and other health challenges faced by domestic workers in rural areas. Studies (Nyanga 2022, Nyanga et al 2019, Nyanga et al 2012) have persistently shown that conflicts between employers and employees causes low job satisfaction among workers in various industries. Job satisfaction and worker morale are some of the main drivers and pillars to the growth and competitiveness of organizations. Furthermore, previous studies (Zheng et al 2023; Zin et al 2023) have indicated that over working or unacceptable managerial practices significantly affect job satisfaction and promote employer/employee conflict. The study also showed that apart from reducing job satisfaction and worker morale, conflict make domestic workers develop inferiority complex. Domestic workers, being workers who usually come from less privileged families and low-income earning families may feel that conflicts are propelled by the fact that they are viewed as inferior and unworthy citizens.

6 Conclusion

The study concluded that conflict between domestic workers and their employers in rural areas breed devastating effects to the psychosocial wellbeing of domestic workers. Conflicts between domestic workers in rural areas and their employers leads to hostility, antagonism, lack of cooperation and fighting. Antagonism and fights consequently strain relations between parties, which should ordinarily be cooperating and working towards a common goal. It was also concluded that conflict between domestic workers and their employers adversely affect the psychological disposition of workers and the accomplishment of assigned tasks. Conflict ignite and propel health challenges and psychological disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, hypertension, headache, lack of sleep and loss of appetite, among domestic workers. Long standing, unresolved and recurring conflicts between workers and their employers mentally disorient domestic workers. The study further concluded that domestic workers experience depression and development of anxiety which in turn lead to changes in behavior and the way they perform their work. Workplace conflict related psychological disorders result in workers psychologically withdrawing from their work places and developing a feeling of inferiority complex. Workers become psychologically absent from their work, a situation which is perilous and makes them prone to accidents. The study further concluded that conflict between domestic workers and their employers causes drug abuses, sexual disorders and alcoholism among domestic workers; which consequently lead to low motivation and low job satisfaction. The practical implications of this study are that the government through its labour regulations enforcement agencies should compel domestic workers and their employers to adhere to the provisions of labour regulations on domestic employment. Policy makers are advised to close all policy gaps that make domestic workers vulnerable and exposed to various forms of ill-treatments and abuse. Both domestic workers and employers are advised to formalize all the key human resource management functions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, and development of formal contracts of employment, so as to reduce dysfunctional conflict. Furthermore, domestic workers should form unions which represent domestic workers in rural areas. The theoretical implication of this study is that there is need to do further studies that cover a wider geographical area on the subject and also do a comparative study on the causes and psycho-social consequences of conflict on domestic workers in urban and rural areas.

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