

EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AT HABARI MAALUM GROUP IN TANZANIA

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Abstract: The study investigated the effectiveness of conflict management strategies at Habari Maalum, Group Arusha Tanzania. The study employed descriptive survey research design and quantitative research approach. Data were collected using structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that employee's perception on the conflict management strategies at the study area was positive. The study indicated that there is an existence of proper management at Habari Maalum Group that value conflict management among employees thus creating conducive working environment. It was recommended that Habari Maalum Group Management should make sure that there are proper policies for conflict management, the management should also improve the existing conflict management strategies by adopting the proposed alternatives, special sub - conflict management committee that includes employees should be formed to ensure just and fair conflict management in the organization, capacity building among management and employees should be given priority especially on how to avoid conflicts and proper ways to address conflicts at work place and conducive working environment should be created to prevent employees from getting stress that influence the occurrence of conflicts.

Key Words: Conflict, Conflict Management, Management Strategies.

1.1 Background to the Study

Ever since, conflict has developed to be a key challenge to the administration in organizations for reasons of its faintness and unescapable nature (Samwel, 2018). Worldwide studies depict that the way and manner through which conflict is being handled in an organization will determine the level of coherence within that organization (Abioro et al, 2019). In a dissertation, Chukwuemezie (2008) found comparatively organizations in Nigeria have definite strategies for dealing with conflicts. Again, in one study done pointed out that the socio-economic and cultural conditions of countries may affect the conflict management strategies which managers use in organizations. Thus, proving the inability to implement outlined strategies due to a number of social-economic and cultural deficiencies. In other worlds a flourishing social-economic and culture there are possibilities of laying and implementing conflict management strategies accordingly. But also, whatever strategy taken, it has its implications and significant advantages and disadvantages that restructure strengths and weakness. Hence, none of them is the most beneficial for every situation, and each person has got one or one more conflict management strategy (Özyildirim & Kayikçi, 2017).

Worldwide reports are widespread on conflict and conflict management strategies (Tumwebaze, et al, 2020; Abioro et al, 2019; Thakore, 2013). Likewise, in Tanzania, various studies have been conducted about conflict and organizational performance (Ngirwa et al, 2020; Samwel, 2018) Nevertheless, there are rudiment studies on the effectiveness over conflict management strategies in organizations so far. Under such circumstances, strategies have not tested for any good use in conflict management in organizations. This study investigated the effectiveness of conflict management strategies in organizations, and used Habari Maalum Group in Arusha City as a case of study

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There have been many reported conflicts in organizations in Arusha City. For instance, a recent study by Masanja and Chambi (2020) indicated that team building activities in private and public entities located in Arusha has been challenged by the existence of conflicts. As expressed in the background, there is a steadfast for the search on effective conflict management strategies in organizations. Despite the fact that the sources of conflicts in organizations are almost the same as concurred by Löhr, et al (2017), their management strategies differ from one organization to the other. It is from this context this study investigated the effectiveness of conflict management strategies at Habari Maalum Group in Arusha City

1.3 Research Aim

The general objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of conflict management strategies at Habari Maalum Group. This objective prompted a use of the main question that was "What is the employee's perception on the conflict management strategies used at Habari Maalum Media?"

2.0 Theoretical Review

This was guided by two theories which are System Theory of Conflict Management and the Contingency Theory. *The System Theory of Conflict Management* addressed that, the damaging potential experience of conflict happens as a major aspect of organizational life which offer access for improvement, change and progress. These conflict results are vital to theory conflict management method in arriving to a conclusion. Management assumes a willingness to desist or disengage so that the energy produced by the conflict can be appropriately dissipated (Reese & McCorkle, 2015).

The Contingency Theory addressed that, there are three remarkable peace promotion that come nearer from which an intervener can attract to plan a methodology fitting for settling a debate (Steinbach, et al, 2017). According to Steinbach, et al, (2017) the debate normally involves joint effort, dealing and strategic maneuver. The suitable utilization of these strategies relies upon the individual and authoritative state. Joint efforts include individuals developing their disparities and afterward chip away at the issues until they have achieved commonly attractive arrangements. Through mutual agreement, conflict management strategies become easy and effective.

2.1 Empirical Reviews

A study done by Beitler, et al (2016) on conflict management and age in service professions realized that employee’s like to see conflicts being solved on time. This proposes for effectiveness strategies that can combat conflicts in organizations. Normally, conflicts fall under functional and dysfunctional conflicts (John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2020). Functional conflict is those induce us to be creative problem solvers to maintain a healthy workplace, and come up with a structure that will enable the organization benefit from diversified employees while creating opportunity for redevelopment and acquiring of new skills can be classified as functional conflicts.

Lu and Wang (2017) in China revealed that employees waste their maximum time and energy in fighting and find it very difficult to concentrate on work. The time which should be utilized in doing productive work goes in finding faults in others and fighting with each other. Always remember that your office is not paying you for fighting, instead it expects good and productive work from an employee. Conflict Management prevents the eruptions of fights and also allows the employees to be serious about their work. Conflicts also lead to unnecessary tensions and disagreements among the individuals. Every day in an organization is a new day and employees have to give their best daily. In today’s fierce competitive scenario, an employee has to prove himself each day.

Momanyi and Juma (2016) examined the influence of conflict management strategies on employee satisfaction in Kenya. The study revealed that in many societies that are both heterogeneous and change-oriented, conflict is seen as a normal element of social interaction. In some it is seen as a positive and necessary force, desirable because individuals and groups are naturally seen as having different needs and interests, valued because it is realized that conflict often serves as an important impetus for positive change. In others, while its potential for creating change is acknowledged, dominance patterns in the society are such that conflict can be very destructive. More homogeneous and tradition-oriented societies often do not place a positive value on conflict.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework for this study is a representation of the researcher’s synthesis of literature on how to explain a phenomenon related to the topic. This is a conceptual plan of the way particular variables in this study connect with each other. Thus, it identifies the variables required in the research investigating the effectiveness of conflict management strategies in organizations. As propounded by Patrick (2015) it is the researcher’s map in pursuing the investigation about this topic.



3.0 Research Methodology

Survey research design helped the researcher to achieve the main objective of the study. Quantitative approach helped the researcher as it required little time in the data collection process as well as covers large groups of respondents in a short period of time. The study was conducted at Habari Maalumu Group, located at Ngaramtoni, Arusha District whereby the target population of this study includes all the employees of the Habari Maalum Group in which 110 total population and 71 workers who varied in terms of age, gender and education regarded as the study sample size obtained through stratified random sampling techniques.

In gathering information from respondents, a closed ended questionnaire was used because it was easy and quick to answer, improved consistency of responses, reduced biases, easy to compare with other methods and less costly to analyzed quantitatively as dummy variables through coding. Pilot study was conducted, the reliability of the questionnaires was tested through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and results yielded the Cronbach’s Alpha of .793 for employee’s perception on the conflict management strategies, .821 for overall effectiveness of the strategies used for conflict management and .856 for alternative conflict management strategies to be used for addressing conflicts. Also, ethical issues were observed; the researcher got data collection permit from Institute of accountancy Arusha and the respective government authorities.

4.0 Findings on Conflict Aspects

This part presents the findings from the research questions. Findings for questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive analysis of research questions was meant for determination of perception of respondents regarding the effectiveness of conflict management strategies at Habari Maalum Group This was guided by three research questions which had corresponding questionnaire items to which respondents were to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement.

4.1 Employee’s Perception on the Conflict Management Strategies Used at Habari Maalum Group

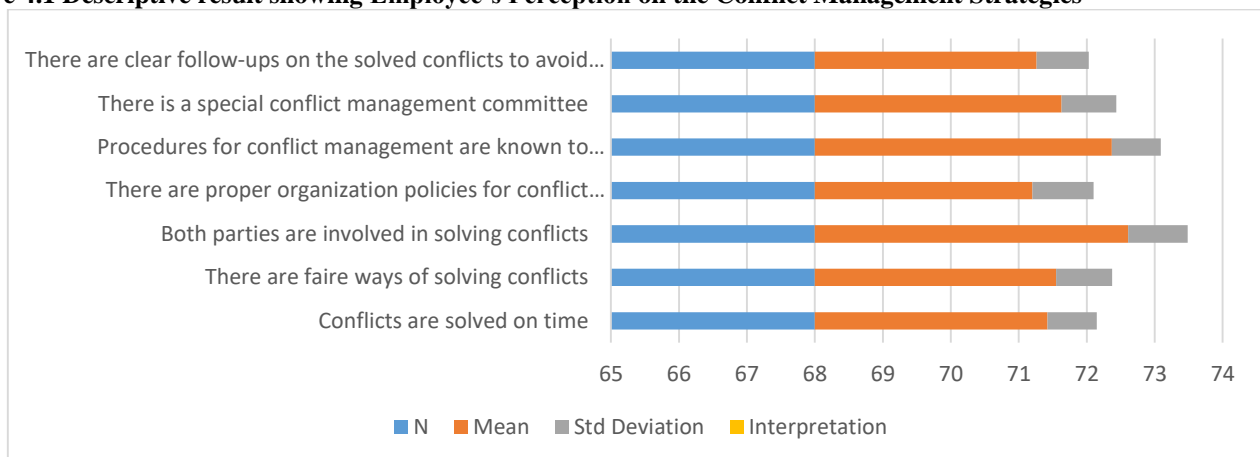
Table 4.1 Employee’s Perception on the Conflict Management Strategies

Item	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpretation
Conflicts are solved on time	68	3.42	.72549	Agree
There are faire ways of solving conflicts	68	3.55	.82184	Agree
Both parties are involved in solving conflicts	68	4.61	.87621	Strongly Agree
There are proper organization policies for conflict management	68	3.20	.90183	Neutral
Procedures for conflict management are known to employees	68	4.37	.71835	Strongly Agree
There is a special conflict management committee	68	3.63	.80418	Agree
There are clear follow-ups on the solved conflicts to avoid re-occurrence	68	3.26	.76926	Neutral
Total	68			

Source: Research, 2022

The researcher sought to examine the employee's perception on the conflict management strategies used at Habari Maalum Group. Respondents were to respond by ticking most appropriate option ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Scale of mean score interpretation was as follows: Mean scores from 1 to 1.80 were interpreted as strongly disagree. Mean scores from 1.81 to 2.60 were interpreted as disagree. Mean scores from 2.61 to 3.40 were interpreted as Neutral/Undecided. Mean scores from 3.41 to 4.20 were interpreted as agree and mean scores from 4.21 to 5.00 were interpreted as strongly agree. The results of analysis are shown in Table 4.6 above.

Figure 4.1 Descriptive result showing Employee's Perception on the Conflict Management Strategies



Source: Research, 2022

As reflected in Table 4.1 the mean score differed from one item to another. Specifically, respondents strongly agreed that procedures for conflict management are known to employees and that both parties are involved in solving conflicts with the mean score of 4.37 and 4.61 respectively. The findings give an expression that Habari Maalum Group makes sure that employees are aware of the conflict management procedures and that they consider involving both parties in management of the conflicts

Findings further indicated that respondents agreed that conflicts are solved on time, there are fair ways of solving conflicts and that there is a special conflict management committee with the mean score of 3.42, 3.55 and 3.63 respectively. The findings imply the existence of proper management at Habari Maalum Group that value conflict management among employees thus creating conducive working environment.

Moreover, findings in table 4.1 indicated that respondents were neutral on whether or not there are proper organization policies for conflict management and there are clear follow-ups on the solved conflicts to avoid re-occurrence with the mean score of 3.20 and 3.26 respectively. The findings give a picture that some polices including the one for conflict management were not shared among employees rather among the management team. Similarly, it was difficult to know whether or not there are clear follow-ups on the solved conflicts to avoid re-occurrence because only those who have been involved in the conflicts can be sure of that. Generally, employee's perception on the conflict management strategies at the study area were positive.

The positivity of respondents on the conflict management strategies at the study area imply that employees were happy and satisfied with the stapes taken by Habari Maalum Group in conflict management strategies. This situation promotes commitment and interests of work among employees thus productivity is assured. These findings related to those of Beitler, et al (2016) who examine conflict management and age in service professions realized that employee's like to see conflicts being solved on time. This proposes for effectiveness strategies that can combat conflicts in organizations. Normally, conflicts fall under functional and dysfunctional conflicts. The study further indicated that when the procedures for conflict management are open to all parties, the conflict is solved so easily.

Furthermore, Mahvar et al (2018) examined conflict management strategies in Tehran, Iran. The study found that the strategies to solve any conflict depend on the nature of the conflicts itself. Some conflict requires the organization's disciplinary committee to solve it while other conflicts are solved by employees' immediate supervisors. The study found that the conflicts management

through special committees increases the possibility to positively solve the conflict. It was suggested that the management should be clear on the conflict management policies and their procedures to create a just and fair working conditions.

4.2 Regression Results

Table 4.2: Regression Results from the Sample

Source	Ss	Df	Number of observations = 68		
			MS	F (1, 17) = 360.01	Prob > F = 0.0000
Model	2.64E+15	1	2.64E+15	R-squared = 0.8869	
Residual	1.25E+14	17	7.34E+12	Adj R-squared = 0.8432	
Total	2.77E+15	18	1.54E+14	Root MSE = 2.7e+06	
					Conf. Interval]
Effective conflict management	Coef	Coef. Std.	T	P>t	[95% conf. interval
employee's perception	3.8867	2.607579	2.672	0	48.38519 59.38821
effective strategies	2.062534	1.076885	3.956	0.001	0.2094937 4.334562
alternative conflict management strategies	1.430792	0.874321	2.513	0.0006	0.1320576 4.610847

Based on the table of coefficient of the variable as analysed under multiple regression analysis using Stata software, since the variable was organized in the following function ECM that is effective conflict management = f (employee's perception, effective strategies and alternative conflict management strategies). The researcher used the above function and run a model as shown below

$$ECM = 11.79 + 3.8867 Ep + 2.062534Es + 1.430792Acms + \zeta$$

Whereby

ECM = effective conflict management, Ep = employee's perception, Es = effective strategies and Acms = alternative conflict management strategies) as indicated on the table 5.4 above

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that there are various strategies being conducted as conflict management strategies at Habari Maalum Group such as forming a sub - conflict management committee, inter/intra personal conflict management, conflict management through employees' mentors, colleague's platform conflict management, inviting an employee from the other department. The existence of alternatives in conflict management strategies created a working environment where by employees feel cared and respected since their conflicts were managed use many strategies.

Hence, study recommended that Habari Maalum Group Management should make sure that there are proper policies for conflict management. Those policies should be communicated explicitly to all employees to make sure that they are aware about all procedures related to conflict management at work. The availability of conflict management policies and other directives among employees is key to make sure that employees are well informed on the steps and procedures in conflict management in the organization.

Also, it was moreover recommended that conducive working environment should be created to prevent employees from getting stress that influence the occurrence of conflicts. This should go hand in hand with ensuring that there is an open communication and involvement of employees in decision making. An open communication within an organization improves employee's commitment and working morale.

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