

Examining Adopted Conflict Management Approaches On Organizational Development In Machakos Co-Operative Union.

Peter Elizabeth Nzilani¹; Wanjugu Wachira²; Redempta Kiilu³

¹²³ St. Paul's University, Kenya

Email address: nzilanip@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the adopted conflict management approach on organizational development in coffee cooperatives. The research was conducted in Machakos Co-operative Union in the Lower Eastern part of Kenya. Descriptive research survey was used. The target population was drawn from 1500 employees of Machakos Co-operative Union who took part in the study. The sample size was 305 employees drawn from different levels of management selected through cluster sampling technique. Systematic sampling was used to give each individual a chance to be chosen. Data collection was carried out through the use of Semi-structured questionnaire and interview guide. Both qualitative and quantitative technique was used to analyse data. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics through content analysis and findings were analysed and presented quantitatively and qualitatively in frequency tables, graphs pie charts and percentage while qualitative data was analysed using thematic techniques and data presented in narrative forms. From the study, it was established that different conflict management approaches were employed in Machakos Coffee Cooperative, 22% of the respondents reported that accommodation strategy was used and 23% the Collaboration strategy which led to improved productivity in the organization and enhanced inter personal relations while 54% of the respondents indicated that the contending approach which was mostly used influenced conflict management in the organization. The study recommends that organizations need to embrace the strategy in order to maximize productivity and encourage retention of human resource.

Key Terms: Conflict Management Strategies, Organizational Development, Co-Operative Union

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Introduction

Machakos Cooperative Union has been experiencing numerous conflicts affecting the organizational development. According to Machakos Co-operative Union (MCU) report (2016) the Union was put under receivership in 1982 and most of the employees laid off and others willingly resigned after the downfall, this was an indication of organizational underperformance. Perhaps, this may be attributed to conflict management approaches that the organization has been using over the years. It is against this context that the study seeks to examine the influence of conflict management approaches on organizational development in coffee cooperative unions, with special reference to Machakos Co-operative Union Ltd.

Scholars in conflict management have identified various conflict management approaches, which comprise of the internal systems used by the various authorities in resolving conflict. Some of the conflict management approaches include but not limited to competing, collaboration, compromising, avoiding and accommodation. As a result, implementation of conflict management approaches within the organisations helps the organization gains its strategic advantage and hence increase the stages of organization development. Additionally, conflict management strategies are the key factors that managers should adopt when making decisions in their organizations (Buckley, & Monks 2004). In an organization, there are five strategies of conflict management which play a major role in conflict resolution, which in reality determines the relationship, and stages of organization development. In most cases, people are inclined to choose avoiding and accommodation leaving out, contending and yielding styles (Jeong, 2010). This prompted the researcher to select the two styles and examine them further concerning their influence on conflict management. Organizational development assists organizations to improve individuals and systems by use of applied behavioral science as seen in Richard Beckhard's

models and strategies of conventional organization development. Significantly, the main objective is to bring purposeful and meaningful change and help people function better within an organization using research, assessment and improved interventions (Beckhard, 2017).

Therefore, organization development is geared at improving effectiveness through management from top while adhering to values, culture of organization maximizing employees' potential at the same time helping them increase their contributions to the accomplishments of the organization. It evaluates the organization by creating an assessment which aligns human behavior to structures, processes objectives, strategies through promotion of values in the organization to create change. Conflicts in organizations are inevitable and can be associated with a strong form of competition in development of the organization in the business world (Rahim, 2014). Equally, it can be compared to fundamental laws practiced in the natural world as it enhances control of scarce resources in the surrounding environment.

According to Johnson and Johnson (2013), organizational conflict occurs when there is a state of discord or disagreement resulting from conflicting goals, interests, values and needs of the people working together. In any organization, conflicts comes as a result of opposing views between either those in authority and the workers or inter personal conflicts involving the workers. They range from division of revenue, salaries to inter departmental conflicts. How these conflicts are managed therefore is vital to the development of the organization. Conflicts could be either at inter or intra level and should be addressed at these levels to improve organizational development (Eslami, & Gharakhani, 2012).

Adopting the approaches of conflict management leads to improved relationship and positive environment between managers and staff increasing organization outcome (De

Dreu, Van Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004). However, in order to bring peace in the organization, the adoptions of styles of conflict management are key and there is need to develop the managers' skills on the same. Additionally, the collaboration style of managing conflicts plays a positive role in improving of organizational culture. The adoption of this approach shows how managers handle their responsibilities and organization affairs. Thus, managers need to pay attention to the surrounding environment in order to carry their affairs, relationships and development at all levels. If conflicts are not addressed effectively, this might lead to interpersonal conflicts and negatively affect organizational development. Similar research shows that while managing conflict the weaker side may use non-violent confrontation like sabotage and hunger strike, which may eventually encourage the eruption of violent resistance and should be avoided at all cost (Jeong, 2008).

In the 1950s African smallholder farmers in cash crops such as coffee were allowed to promote and register co-operatives after they fought for the right to organize. Back in 1964, Machakos Co-operative Union was established and registered in 1972 under the Co-operative Societies Act as an umbrella organization for primary co-operatives in the former Machakos District. Marketing coffee for the producers was its main objective for producers within the larger Machakos District.

Machakos Co-operative union (MCU) is thus today an umbrella organization for 108 affiliated primary organizations serving over 60,000 individuals in the Machakos and Makueni Counties (comprised of 15 Sub Counties). It supports workers through the production, processing and global marketing of their diverse, high quality agricultural and handicraft products. These include coffee, cotton, dairy, horticulture, handicrafts and multi-purpose organizations, Housing Cooperatives and Savings and Credit Co-operative Society (SACCOs). The area of operation of MCU covers then the larger Machakos District,

which today comprises of Machakos and Makueni Counties, which is currently comprised of fifteen (15) Sub-Counties born out of curving/sub-division of the district into smaller administrative units. These new are; Machakos, Kangundo, Mwala, Yatta, Kathiani, Matungulu, Masinga, AthiRiver, Makueni, Mbooni East, Mbooni West, Kaiti, Kibwezi East, Kibwezi West and Kilome Sub-Counties (MCU, 2016). It is against this background that the researcher saw the need to carry out the study on influence of conflict management approach on organizational behaviour in coffee cooperatives.

Over the years, the coffee sector in Kenya has experienced great challenges. These challenges range from a decline in production to never-ending inter group conflict and intra group conflicts within co-operative unions, the sector has been a victim of both demand and supply side constraints. Machakos County which has one cooperative union (MCU, 2017) that is an umbrella body of 34 primary coffee co-operative gives a good case of conflicts within coffee cooperative unions in the country. Over the years, there have been reports in both the press and print media on how coffee sector is deteriorating in Machakos County. This might have attributed to some farmers quit coffee for bananas, which also do well in the area (MCU, 2017). The government of Kenya has attempted to restore the coffee cooperative union back to its old glory, as they are backbone of our economy (Co-operative Societies in Kenya, 2000). Despite the efforts made in conflict management, significant changes have hardly been realized. Few studies have been conducted addressing the effects of conflict management approach on organizational development and most of those studies are based in other countries.

In Kenya, some studies on conflict management approach and employee satisfaction have been done in the banking sector but minimal research has been carried out in the coffee industry. Similarly, research has been carried out on interpersonal conflict management on organization

performance in the hospitality industry and other studies on conflict management strategies on job satisfaction. However, literature reviewed indicates that there is little research carried out concerning the influence of conflict management approach on Organizational Development in Coffee Co-operative Union in Machakos County. Therefore, based on the background of the study and literature reviewed, the study on conflict management approaches on organizational development was carried out in Machakos Co-operative Union in Machakos County to address the knowledge gaps therein.

Literature Review

Conflict is an essential part of the fabric of a postmodern society that is increasingly competitive, complex, litigious, and alienating. They are generally considered a normal part of human relations and therefore not necessarily destructive. However, it is how conflict is managed that determines whether its results will either be negative or positive (Deutsch, 2006). Managing of conflicts is a significant process that can produce reasonable or unreasonable outcomes. This chapter would therefore, examine the influence of conflict management approaches on organisation development. Conflicts in organisations can have short and long-term consequences that are likely to affect organization development. This research took a broad view to the conflict management approaches employed in the coffee cooperative and its influence on organizational development over time.

Conflicts Management Approaches

The conflict management approaches are the practices that are used to overcome conflict. When the conflict management strategies are not utilised effectively they influence organization development, growth of the organization and its performance. According to Rahim (2014), different styles like avoidance, collaboration, compromising and competition can be applied to resolve conflict and this can be achieved through negotiation,

arbitration and resolution of the conflict. Conflict can be avoided if resolution starts early and can diffuse anger and facilitate communication through negotiation, arbitration and resolution of the conflict. The peace-making process is delicate and if the parties have an option to revert to the use of argument it may easily break down. According to Rahim (2014), effectiveness of conflict management practices should be able to build relationships among employees, meet organization goals, stakeholders' needs and have ethics. Research shows that strained relationships between executives and employees may contribute to organization development or may significantly lead to 60 to 80 per cent of all workplace conflict (Momanyi, & Juma, 2016). On the other hand, corporate commitment, clear structures, internal capacity building and ethical values observed in daily practices leads to effectiveness in conflict management. Furthermore, delay in problem solving can lead to tension hence conflicts within organizations.

Barash and Webel (2016) states that the greatest challenge in adopting conflict management approaches in organizations is by developing a guidelines or structures to identify the sources of conflicts within an organization. Generally, conflict management strategies are critical when an organization has goals and objectives it wants to achieve. According to Rahim (2014), application of a variety of conflict management approaches such as avoidance, collaboration, compromise and competition influences organizational development.

In the avoidance style, the organization avoids the issue instead of solving the conflict at hand. It does this as a way of not creating more conflict. The avoidance strategy is aimed resolving the problem without confrontation through delay and ignoring the resolution although, research shows that those who actively avoid conflict hold a low position in power or have low esteem. Morris et al. (2011) found out that the avoidance style was mostly used

by Managers in China due to their large degree of reliance on conformity and tradition. In avoidance, ignorance or delay can be used as a strategy to solve the problem without a confrontation, which is aimed at putting off the conflict completely. However, this approach of resolving conflicts may have negative effects on the organization such as holding of crucial information leading to lack of peace (Jeong, 2010). Collaboration, on the other hand, works by assimilating ideas set out by all the parties involved in management of conflicts with the main objective of creating a solution acceptable to everyone. Previous studies indicate that the collaboration strategy, calls for a significant commitment to time and is not appropriate to all conflicts although its useful (Mehrad, 2015; Adeyemi, & Ademilua, 2012).

On the other hand, the confrontation strategy both parties involved in the conflict put their interests first without considering what the other party will feel. This can influence the organization development as it may end up into dispute or create relationships. Further, confrontation can end up demotivating the employees and affecting organizational development (Rahim, 2014). The compromise strategy employed in the work place to manage conflicts demands giving up elements of position by parties in a conflict in order to establish a suitable, if not pleasant, solution and it can immensely affect organization performance. The organization decides to engage in this approach as a way of achieving its goals and objectives as opposed to being antagonistic. This strategy succeeds mostly where the parties involved hold equivalent power. Dontigney (2018) indicates that business owners frequently employ a compromise strategy when negotiating with a customer, offering necessary customer service, during contract negotiations with other organizations or in an event when each party stands to lose something valuable. The compromising style establishes an acceptable solution by prompting the two parties to give up their position in order to focus where there is equal power between

parties. Hence, in the compromising style of conflict management, neither party totally wins or loses because of the decision in favour of what each party considers the most important. In reality, however, all parties are unable to get exactly everything they want so some are left feeling that they got less than what they deserved. Significantly, the management styles may be utilised in a given conflict depends on the complexity of the issue.

Competition strategy normally used by highly assertive persons as it operates on a wins and loose strategy to manage conflict. It is a strategy where the confident person wins by focusing on win – lose strategy. According to Rahim (2014), the strategy works best in emergencies in order to solve crises and decisions such layoffs and pay cuts which might result to disputes. Research shows that organizations benefit from using the competitive strategy in resolving crises and making decisions. The accommodating strategy is achieved by putting the interest of opposing parties forward giving them what it desires. According to Dontigney (2017), the strategy can be used when one of the parties wishes to keep the peace or perceives to solve the issue. However, the use of the strategy may result to developing bitterness and keeping track of the issues and may lead to interpersonal conflict.

Accommodating style in conflict management fulfils mutual goals when all sides search for common interests (Hocker, & Wilmot, 2011). Through accommodation, all sides put away their differences and concerns in order to please each other and cater for each other's interest. Steps to accommodating each other's interest are ideal as it assists in avoiding violent confrontations and for building healthy relationships among members in an organisation. The accommodating style of conflict management therefore, stresses a win-win outcome by dwelling on each other's priorities. In this situation may not leave those whose vital needs have not been met. Jeong (2008) in his argument portends that accommodation and negotiation should not

exclude corrective behaviour for peace to be achieved. The compromising style of conflict management does not focus on winning or losing but focuses on the result or decision made in favour of what each party considers most important. In reality, however, because all parties are unable to get exactly everything they want, some parties may feel that they got less than deserved. Significantly, one or all the management styles may be utilised in a given conflict depending on its complexity. The contending style focuses on winning and defeating the other party by proving that they are wrong. By winning, the party proves they are stronger and they take a lead position. On the other party may decide to take up coercive tactic, which may lead to competition and affect relationships (Jeong, 2008). The yielding style is achieved when one party offers independent concerns without thinking of their own to solve conflict quickly like in relationships. The main goal is happiness and success of others, which makes issues easier to solve. In other settings, one might end up putting their own interests first. Success of yielding depends on an accurate assessment of an opponent's motives and attitudes.

Types of Organizational Conflict

According to Beru, Kilelo and Rotich (2015), mutual dislike, personality clash, leadership, management, budget, and disagreement about core values between two or more people cause intrapersonal conflict. It can also be because of differences among group members on personal issues and relationships that are not related to the organization (Barling, & Cooper, 2008). The conflicts can help managers in solving issues, as they understand personal attributes. Social conflict includes intergroup, intragroup and interpersonal differences. Organizational conflict at the personal level includes disputes between friends as well as colleagues. These are caused by multiple roles assigned to people in organizations and can lead to conflict as they share interdependent tasks. Equally, it can be influenced by the expectations of others or by their own personality and

expectations, which extended to the external environment (Daniel, & Robert, 2014).

Inconsistent demands by others may also lead to conflict especially when assigned to accomplish different tasks at the same with high production expectations. It can also arise when one is expected to meet the contrasting demands of different members of the organization and more so when an employee finds himself stressed by their senior on quality improvement and increase in production for the organization growth. However, it can increase anxiety and frustration at the same time trying to work on the conflicting roles. On the other hand, they may lead to motivation, productivity leading to frustration and inefficiency in the organization (Knowles, & Saxberg, 2017).

Interpersonal conflict arises due to lack of freedom, position, and resources and may occur between two parties in an organization. When people value freedom they tend to resist decision made by others by following organizations rules. Those who seek for position, status and power tend to struggle with others within the organization. In most cases they perceive rewards and recognition as insufficient and improperly distributed resulting to unwanted competition. Intra group conflict can be intensified when winning is more acceptable than losing, and competition is more prevalent than cooperation. In most organizations meetings are often conducted in a win-lose strategy and individual or subgroup engagement is conducted for determining a winner and a loser rather than for achieving mutual problem solving. In any organization, conflict may lead to negative results such as wastage of time concerning how they can be managed and meet the organizations objectives. In addition, when one party is not ready to cooperate this can result to more problems in the end. There is need for creative solutions which can be achieved when the group is able to deal with the issues when they arise particularly when organization fully involve its members in decision making it may

automatically lead to conflict resolution. Conflict can be helpful in organizations when they listen, accept ideas from its members, value openness and share a common problem-solving attitude. They should ensure that there is investigation of all sides of a problem facing the organization. Intergroup conflict can be useful and destructive as the events occur across all levels and functions in an organization. They may assist in generation of creative tension, which can lead to effective contributions to the organization's goals (Daniel, & Robert, 2014). Intergroup conflict separate teams working together and can be destructive especially when it results to the use of the win loose strategy. This can take place through competition and compromises and in the end it can affect the overall result and organization development.

Intergroup conflict occurs in two general forms; the horizontal strain, which involves competition between roles, and the vertical strain, which involves competition between hierarchical levels (Daniel, & Robert, 2014). The vertical stresses the relationship between a group of employees and management and the horizontal stresses are the relationship between different departments. Certain attitudes and activities are well represented in an organization focusing on win-lose strategy as each party prepares itself to win and individuals show increased loyalty and support to their own groups solving slight and compound differences are sternly dealt with. Significantly, this increases organization morale when everyone is filled with a competitive spirit. The management of the conflict defines structure and power as the organization change embraces thinking and talking of the ideas.

In addition, each party assimilates its own opinion and those of the competing party stressing on what is perceived to be good and ignoring what is perceived to be bad by using the decision made with fairness. When organizations meet to solve issues their differences, constructive, rational behaviour is severely reserved. Each

party phrases its questions and answers in a way that strengthens its own position and criticizes the other by increasing hostility and negativity between the two parties. Joint solutions help to solve the problems as a result the parties possessing greater power wins and the other one loses, in other cases the conflict may go unresolved, and affect the organization negatively.

Disputes settled on the base of power, such as lockout, strike in most case bear a resentment by the loser as resolution may be influenced by secretive ways that are difficult to detect and to counter leading to resistance and defeat. In an event the conflict is not solved, it can hinder cooperation and effectiveness between both parties, which in turn seriously affect organization development. This occurs when the higher authority causing resentment resolves the disputes. Such settlements are carried out mostly based on partial information supported by inadequate data to solve the conflict, thus the solution is seen not to be favourable and complete. Conflict and it can be used as a source of motivation in the organization however; when it is destructive, the root cause of the problem should be addressed before it affects organizational development. A balanced conflict management process should be implemented with a planned action response involving the manager or the organization by adopting the suitable conflict approach that will lead to organization development (Johnson, & Johnson, 2005).

Causes of Organizational Conflict

According to Beru et al. (2015), organizational conflict can be set up or contributed by many factors and this may affect organizational development. Significantly, the so-called growth school by Maslow, Argyris, McGregor, Rogers, and other writers state that human development inclines towards self-fulfilment, personality and self-actualization. This indicates that as a person develops, there is increased desire for more responsibility as they

broaden their horizon and opportunity to develop their personal potential. On the other hand, this can be interrupted when the internal environment does not encourage and help them achieve their needs. Organizations formed on rational structures divert their focus to institutional control instead of individual control making decision pegged on feelings, sentiments and unreasonable behaviour on human weaknesses. Thus, the principle of task specialization is seen as devices that make tasks simpler and grow the organization efficiency using the available skills although it can lead to escalation of conflict.

The chain of command makes individuals more dependent on their managers as they integrate authority. However, assigning a maximum of six or seven employees to report to the chief executive reduces the number of individuals reporting to the head of the organization or to the manager of any subunit, which creates the normal span of control. Significantly, it simplifies the managers' task although as a result it leads to increase of scrutiny of the employee depriving them freedom, which can result to escalation of conflict among employees and eventually affects the organizational development (Johnson, & Johnson, 2005). The change narrows the hierarchy and the jobs get fewer leading to competition for the remaining opportunities. To curb this, the organization restructures itself and implements task specialization, which leads to employees narrowing and diverting their focus and their way of thinking eventually increasing the need for the managers to spend more time coordination hence leading to defence mechanism, and conflict that may affect organizational development.

Organization change might be supported when employees end up forming informal groups, which might compete with the organization goals, affect their norms and behaviour causing conflict. Embracing order, control and having different organizational structure may cause

conflict in the organization. According to (Johnson, & Johnson, 2005), order and control is major cause of conflict, as people tend to find it hard to concede their personal freedoms to organizational control. However, in most cases employees might strive to advance to positions of higher authority and escape the controlling or decide to leave the organization when they are not able to adhere to the conditions and when the situation becomes intolerable.

Organizational conflicts can occur in individuals, between individuals, and between groups within the work environment and are caused by struggles over control, status, and scarce resources between groups in organizations that have similar origins. A rational process of problem solving, coupled with a willingness to look at issues in depth and alternatives and to listen to each other can lead to constructive resolution of the conflict (Johnson, & Johnson, 2005). In general, causes of conflicts in organizations are numerous and they range from interpersonal sources such as behaviour, attitude, contrasting tastes, lifestyles and competition for scarce organizational resources among others. They can also emanate from structural sources such as disputes over resources, power struggles, salary disputes, leadership styles, management processes and disagreements over working conditions among others. On the other hand, the effects of organizational conflict take various forms including but not limited to the following; delayed decisions, wastage of time, creation of deadlocks, regression e.g. withdrawal of expertise, experience, opinion etc go slows, strikes, lockouts, defensiveness and sabotage (Rahim, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

The research used two theories: the Jeong's theory of peace and conflict management and Max Weber bureaucratic theory. The Jeong theory of peace and conflict management combines both structural and behavioural analysis of the changing aspects of the conflict

to bring about peace and the bureaucratic theory focuses on use of behavioural science for organizational development. Jeong's theory was important in relation to this study because it sheds light on the different conflict management approaches and how they can be adopted. Equally, it also shows the importance of resolving conflict for peace building as it is normal in organizational development by emphasizing on dynamics of behavioural and structural dynamics as they measure the level of conflict management, and in this case at the Coffee Co-operative in Machakos County. Max Weber's Bureaucratic Approach demonstrates that the use of different conflict management styles and change organization culture through organization learning, utilizing their skills and competencies to improve the organizational performance. The theory was important in relation to organization development as development is measured through performance and productivity, and in this case at the Coffee Co-operative in Machakos County.

Methodology

The study used descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in Machakos Coffee Cooperative union in Machakos County. In this study, the target population would be 1500 employees drawn from employees of six primary coffee co-operative who would take part in the study. The study used cluster sampling technique and systematic sampling which gave each individual an equal chance to be selected. The sample size of 305 was obtained through cluster sampling which was achieved by sampling the cluster from the population through listing the population according to the different sub-groups then select using random numbers an appropriate sample from each cluster. The sample population of the study was determined by use of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Qualitative data was collected by use of interview guide while Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires and content analysis was done on relevant information. The researcher used both primary and secondary data. The

researcher used semi-structured questionnaires to collect the required data. A drop and pick approach method were used when administering the questionnaires. The questionnaires had open ended and closed ended questions to allow the respondents to give relevant answers. All data collection instruments are piloted by pretesting the questionnaire with a small number of respondents. Proportionate sampling was used to get the ten respondents by dividing the population into clusters then picking a sample from each cluster through random sampling. The study used the Split Half method approach, which entails subjecting the data collection instrument to two different groups and comparing the results. In this study, data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25.0). All the questionnaires received were referenced, coded to facilitate data entry. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages for all the quantitative variables and information presented in form of tables and figures. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic techniques and data presented in narrative forms. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions was analysed by the researcher with the aim of measuring emerging characteristics and concepts using conceptual content analysis and presented in text.

Findings and Data Analysis

Types of Conflict Management Approaches adopted in the Organization

The respondents were asked to indicate the type of conflict resolution method that was used in their organization. This was based on the knowledge that there were conflicts in an organizational setting and as such, there has to be resolution methods. The results were as follows:

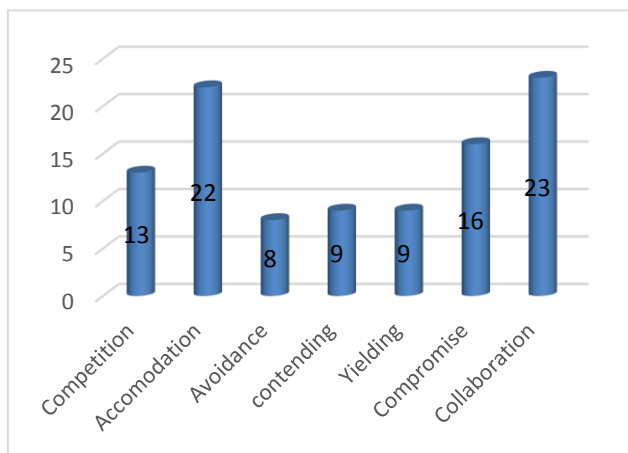


Figure 1: Type of conflict management approach
Source: Field Data (2019)

From the figure 1 above, it was established that the organization employed a wide range of approaches to resolve conflicts. The most commonly used method as per the responses was accommodation, which was at 22%. It was followed by collaboration at 23%. Furthermore, the respondents cited competition as one of the strategies at 13%. The rest were avoidance, at 8%, contending at 9%, yielding at 9% and compromising at 13%. These responses were a clear indication that the organization has conflict resolution mechanisms in place and that it did not utilize only one approach but complimented these approaches. The respondents each explained how these strategies helped in resolving conflicts. The respondents were also asked about whether they let others take responsibility for their problems. This was aimed at assessing how each of the members contributes to a conflict or resolving it. 57% answered in the affirmative while 42% in the negative and 1% did not respond on the question. This response was an indication that there was mutual awareness of either contributing or avoiding conflicts. Conflict management strategies when used effectively would have adverse effect on organization development (Jeong, 2010). He posits that there is need for inclusion in decision-making and through

enhanced organization learning and effectiveness. The peace scholar builds on the Kilmann's theory, which includes the five conflict management styles by adding two more styles, which are the yielding and contending style. The two styles give the opponents a chance to be included in decision-making

These strategies were used interchangeably depending on the situation (Zafara, Ashfaqb, & Imrand, 2018). Competition created win lose situation and the parties took a firm stand on what they wanted by use of power drawn position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. The strategy was used when making a quick decision in defence, trying to address the situation selfishly or when decision is unpopular. On the other hand, it left people hurt, discontented and angry when decision is not urgent. Collaborative strategy on the other hand creates win-win situation by trying to meet the need of both parties. They are self-confident, cooperative and acknowledge that everyone is important unlike their competitor ending up to achieving the best solution in an event of unresolved conflicts in the organization to achieve a particular goal.

Similarly, the compromising strategy created a Lose-lose situation by looking for a solution that would at least partially satisfy everyone or both parties giving up something (Zafara et al., 2018). The approach was suitable when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, equal strength of adversaries and when there is a forthcoming deadline. Besides, the accommodating strategy creates a win-win situation by willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs (Zafara et al., 2018). The parties were ready to give in and can be convinced to surrender a position even when it is not warranted and can be assertive but highly cooperative. The approach would be appropriate when it benefits the other party focusing more on peace other than winning. Similarly, it may lead to negative outcome

when the other party does not pay back and may want to benefit from the issue.

The theory of the Avoidance strategy creates a lose-lose situation and is used to evade conflict by avoiding debateable decisions without hurting the other party. It is used where there are no chances of winning or when someone else is in a better position to solve the issue. However, this is a weak and ineffective approach to adopt as it helps to choose the most appropriate approach depending on the situation at hand. Moreover, each conflict approach can help an organization to be more effective and led to organizational development when used in appropriately (Zafara et al., 2018). The avoidance strategy could resolve personality issues as they allow organization to collect information for decision-making although if not well practiced it can lead to escalation of the issue by withholding information and sabotage. In competition, the parties may dominate a discussion, ignore others, amplify, attack others, or avoid a decision that is going against them. In Collaboration, the parties may take a lot of time to analyse situations leading to waste of time in making decisions and finding consensus.

Similar to the current study, previous studies have also demonstrated that collaboration and accommodation strategy are key for organizational development and could be used effectively through inclusion in decision-making and organization learning and effectiveness. Similarly, the use of descriptive research design was used to assess the conflict management approaches adopted on organization development as well as describe the situation as it was.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Concerning the conflict strategy in Machakos Cooperative Union, it was reported that the organization has in place a conflict management strategy, which combines Yielding, Accommodation, Collaborating, and Contending depending on the circumstances at hand. The approach was applied

depending on the situation at hand; for example, in cases where the management did not want confrontations with the stakeholders, they adopted the Accommodation and collaborating strategy; however, in cases where there was need for involvement of the stakeholders on particular issues, they adopted the contending strategy. In fact, studies on conflict state that these strategies are not mutually exclusive; rather they are circumstantial and depend on the issue at hand.

From the above findings, the study concludes that indeed, conflict management approach plays a great role on organization development in cooperatives. The Cooperative Union has the potential to improve its performance, which has been declining over the years through adopting the right conflict management approach. This can be achieved through organizational learning and effectiveness at different levels and more so on organizational conflict management. Encouraging participation in decision-making is also key as it will either reduce or increase the escalation of the conflict affecting the growth of the Cooperative Union and in the end the organization development. The aim of conflict management is to accomplish the ideal level of conflicts in an organization on which the level of organizational performance is at the highest. Conflict management has a strategic advantage for an organization as it improves production, retention and decision-making. Finally, all these advantages are positive pointers to an organizational performance. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that the organization should adopt an inclusive conflict management approach that would help in organizational development, as conflicts are inevitable in any organization.

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