

Effects Of Conflict Management Strategies On Organizational Performance Of Public Technical And Vocational Education And Training Institutions In Makueni County, Kenya

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Abstract :

This paper examines the role that the compromising strategy played in relation to the organizational performance of the public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions within the province of Makueni County, Kenya. Using the mixed-methods study design based on the convergent parallel research strategy, the study combines quantitative results of closed questionnaire data analysis with the qualitative analyses of the opinions of the studied group, based on the semi-structured interviews. In the study, 328 participants were involved and these were principals, trainers, support staff as well as final-year students in David Mbiti Wambuli Technical and Vocational College and Kibwezi West Technical and Vocational College. Yamane formula was used to determine that, a sample size of 181 would be used with purposive, census and simple random sampling techniques. The Cronbach Alpha was 0.812 and this indicated high reliability of the questionnaire. The quantitative concentrated, such as Z-scores, Chi-Square tests, T-tests as well as Multiple linear regression showed that there was a weak statistical association between compromising strategy and performance of the company based on external examination pass rates and student enrollment trends ($R^2 = 0.067$; $p = 0.762$). Of the references, the compromising strategy was noted as most common (31%), with the use of collaboration (46%), accommodation (15%) and avoidance (7%) being common resolutions to be found in the qualitative finding, thus having a tendency of being a balanced response that is agreeable to both parties. The shortages of resources became a pivotal element that affected the conflict layout and the effectiveness of resolving the conflicts. These findings concur with the previous studies on the issue of compromise as an agent of getting stakeholders around the consensus and enhancing the stability of the operations whose effectiveness was conditioned by the local contexts, in particular, by the scarcity of resources and institutional regulations. This investigates a research gap by addressing and studying TVET institutions, which provides evidence-based information that educational administrators and policymakers can use to improve their conflict management practice to maximize organizational performance.

Keywords: *Compromising Strategy, Organizational Performance, Conflict Management, TVET Institutions, Mixed-Methods Research, Resource Constraints.*

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I. Introduction

In the complex world of organizational dynamics, performance is the key measure of success. Achieving and maintaining high performance within an organization is challenging, as various internal and external factors influence it. From leadership strategies to operational efficiency, a high-performing organization reflects effective management across different areas (Wonah, Oluo, Ake, & Benjamin, 2020). However, as organizations aim for excellence, conflicts are inevitable, creating both challenges and opportunities (Shabani, Behluli, & Qerimi, 2022). How organizations handle and navigate these conflicts is crucial in shaping their overall performance and success (Ofobruku, 2022). Conflict is an unavoidable reality in the constantly changing environment of modern organizations (Martins, Trindade, Vandresen, Amestoy, Prata, & Vilela, 2020). Conflicts may arise from differing opinions, competition for resources, or personality clashes. Depending on how they are managed, conflict can either disrupt productivity and cause harm or serve as a catalyst for positive change and growth (Min, Iqbal, Khan, Akhtar, Anwar, & Qalati, 2020). The outcome depends on how the organization manages the conflict situation (Chaudhary & Arora, 2023).

II. Literature Review

This mode is characterized by a moderate balance of assertiveness and cooperativeness, aiming to achieve a compromise where both parties gain and lose to some extent. It creates a situation where neither side fully wins or loses but instead arrives at a mutually acceptable resolution. This may involve striking a balance between opposing positions, exchanging concerns, or finding a middle ground (Igbinoba et al., 2023). However, compromising can sometimes result in suboptimal outcomes, as it requires comparatively less effort and may not fully address the root of the conflict (Chaudhary & Arora, 2023; Alotaibi, 2020).

This approach is efficient in scenarios where a temporary or quick resolution to a complex issue is needed, the organization's overall welfare benefits from mutual compromise, both parties have equal power and status, other conflict-handling strategies have failed, or when the goals involved are moderately important but not worth significant time and effort (Alotaibi, 2020; Shariq et al., 2022). When competing or collaborating strategies are ineffective, and the goals of the involved parties are of medium importance, compromising becomes a preferred approach. However, this mode should be avoided in situations where partial satisfaction of each party's concerns may perpetuate the issue, or when a leader observes that their team is exploiting their tendency to compromise (Valente & Lorenc, 2020). Kagwiria & Obere (2019) conducted a study to assess how compromising strategy affects the performance of the telecommunication industry in Kenya.

The study employed a descriptive design and used cluster sampling to select 120 participants, including human resource managers and support staff. Data was gathered through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression techniques. The results revealed a significant link between compromise strategy and organizational performance. The study concluded that using compromise strategies enables organizations to resolve employee disputes efficiently, preventing them from escalating and promoting a more tolerant and positive workplace culture. The study recommended the use of a compromising strategy when both parties are willing to find a mutual agreement. The study focused on one conflict management strategy, whereas the current study encompasses four strategies and targets TVET institutions.

Alabu (2020) investigated the effect of principals' conflict management strategies on teacher job satisfaction in public secondary schools within Uriri and Nyatike sub-counties in Kenya. The study utilized a descriptive survey methodology. It targeted a population comprising 1960 teachers and 87 principals across 87 secondary schools in the specified sub-counties. Through stratified simple random sampling, a sample consisting of 29 principals and 319 teachers was selected. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The findings revealed a strong positive link between the use of integrative and obliging conflict management approaches and teacher satisfaction. In contrast, the use of dominating and avoiding strategies did not show a statistically significant impact, with $p > 0.05$. This study targeted secondary schools, and the dependent variable was teacher job satisfaction. The current study aimed to address this gap by focusing on TVET. Ameshi et al. (2021) explored the relationship between conflict management and organizational performance in Nigeria. The study surveyed 166 academic faculty members using a questionnaire, and statistical analysis, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, was used to test the hypotheses.

Descriptive statistics were applied to the collected data. The findings showed that conflict management strategies such as collective bargaining, compromise, and accommodation positively influenced organizational performance. The study concluded that factors like power dynamics, communication styles, organizational culture, and goals play crucial roles in resolving conflicts within organizations.

Nwokedi et al. (2022) conducted a study on conflict management and its impact on organizational performance, focusing on selected breweries in South-East Nigeria. The study aimed to evaluate how different conflict management strategies: Collaboration, Compromising, Mediation, Arbitration, and Negotiation influence overall organizational performance. A survey research design was adopted, utilizing primary data collected from five brewery companies. Data analysis involved the use of frequency tables, percentage analysis, and regression analysis to test the study hypotheses. The findings revealed that all the examined conflict management strategies had a significant and positive impact on organizational performance. This study targeted breweries in South East Nigeria. The current study targeted TVET institutions in Kenya.

III. Material And Methods

In this research, a convergent parallel mixed-methods design was used to analyse collaboration strategies and organisational performance in public Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions in Makueni county, Kenya. The study was done using quantitative data where structured questionnaires were used in conjunction with qualitative data received by use of semi-structured interviews to give the researcher a holistic understanding regarding collaboration practices and performance effects. A total of 328 people were targeted which were 2 principals, 56 trainers, 20 support staff and 250 final-year students in the 2 institutions. A margin of error of 5 percent using the Yamane formula gave a sample size of 181 respondents who were sampled using purposive sampling of principals, census sampling of all trainers and support staff, and simple random sampling of students. Two main data collection instruments were used; i.e.,

structured questionnaires with Likert-scale closed-ended questions and open-ended responses, and semi-structured interview schedules to be completed by the principals. The questionnaires were used to evaluate the collaboration strategies used and organizational performance measures which focus on outside analysis pass rates as well as enrolment tendencies. The detailed experiences and perceptions associated with the collaboration approaches in the institutions were studied through the interviews. The process of investigating instrument validity was achieved by expert review and pilot testing at Katine Technical Training Institute, Machakos County. Its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha which was 0.812 showing strong internal consistency. The results of analyses of quantitative data were revealed using SPSS software to do a descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, Chi-square test, T-test, and multiple linear regression. Interview data in qualitative format were subjected to a thematic content analysis to obtain commonalities and lessons connected to the implementation of collaboration. The combination of mixed-methods allowed triangulation of the results and the all-around explanation of the collaborative strategy efficacy within the TVET institutional setting.

IV. Results And Discussion

The researcher distributed one hundred and seventy nine (179) questionnaires to the sampled respondents that includes fifty six (56) trainers, twenty (20) support staff, and one hundred and three (103) students to both David Mbiti Wambuli TVC and Kibwezi West TVC. The table below summarizes the response rate. A bar chart and histogram's frequency diagram displays the data's frequency distribution. To assist in understanding the outcomes of a test of a certain hypothesis, the statistical data is presented on a frequency table. The distribution of the field data used in this investigation is vividly determined by this research.

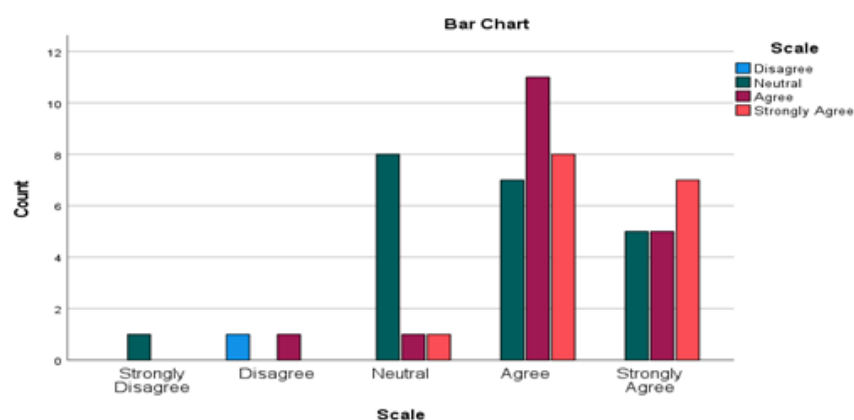


Figure 4.1 Distribution of the data

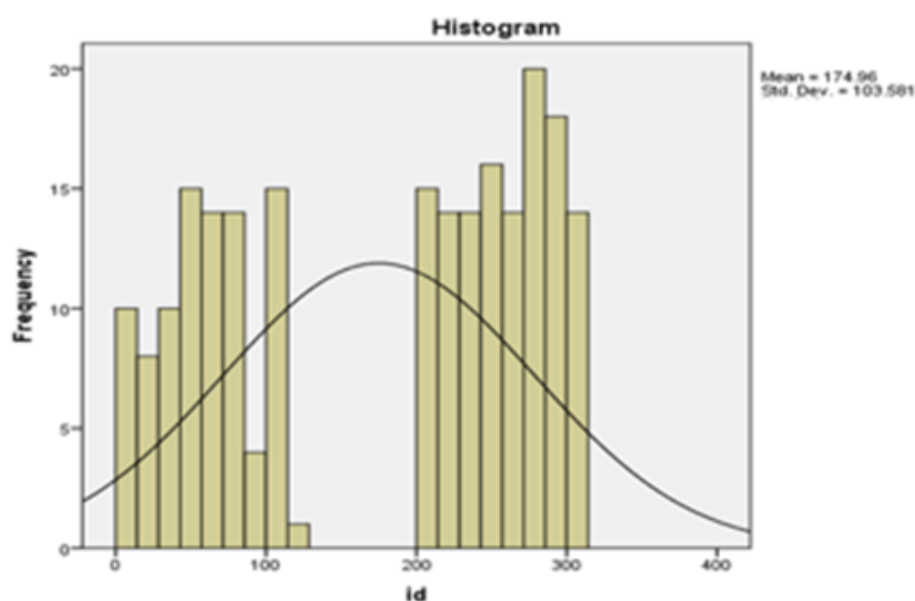


Figure 4. 2 Histogram for the data population

The frequency diagrams shows how the data collected from the sampled population was distributed based on the bar chart and the histogram. These gives the frequency of how the respondents were during the analysis to test the hypothesis of this research. The figure below displays the correlation of the data collected for this study following analysis with SPSS version 27 software.

Table 4. 1 Correlation of the conflict management strategy variables

Correlations			
Control Variables			Compromising Strategy
Conflict management strategies & Organizational performance	Organizational Policy	Correlation	.114
		Significance (2-tailed)	.412
		Df	52
	Leadership style	Correlation	.243
		Significance (2-tailed)	.077
		Df	52
	External examination pass rate	Correlation	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.
		Df	0
	Students enrollment	Correlation	-.108
		Significance (2-tailed)	.437
		Df	52

The Pearson correlation for collaborative strategy was initially 1 and thereafter decreases to 0.042. This shows that the relationship between conflict resolution techniques and organizational effectiveness in public technical and vocational education and training institutions has changed. The compromise strategy received 31 percent of the responses during the qualitative analysis. Such high level of usage rate represents the fact that compromise is one of the main instruments of operational activity in conflict resolution within TVET organizations and it provides mutually manageable solutions by means of adjusting different interests and needs. The compromise usage rate is high which indicates a complicated environment of stakes that the educational establishments must endure due to the need of administrators to find a balance between the demands of the staff and students, their regulatory prescriptions, and their limitations of resources in order to make their institution implementable on a sustainable level. Kagwiria and Obere (2019) are among the proposed side of dispute resolution which is compromise as it was discovered that in the Kenyan organizations compromise works well in the transportation of conflicts and also brings up tolerant cultures in organizations. This way the pattern of distribution of the application of the strategy was the same in the two institutions as Bosire and Gichana (2024) identified in the norms of TVET institutions.

V. Conclusion

Compromising has become the second most often used conflict management approach occupying 31 percent of all the qualitative references with 22 coded references in the observed institutions. The large utilization is an indication of the complex stakeholder context in TVET institutions where the administrators have to gain between conflicting needs of the staff, learners, regulatory and resource allocation agencies. The popularity of the compromising strategy suggests that TVET institutions often consider mutually agreeable solutions that revolve around various interests and needs and that constitute a practical method to conflict management in educational settings that are limited in resources.

The aggregate work revealed that the compromise ranked to the poor positive correlation to be incorporated in the organizational performance ($R = 0.259$). The regression coefficient of compromise was 0.269 with a significance level of 0.059 in the same way as collaboration. The outcomes of the Chi-Square test (Pearson Chi-Square = 40.655, $p = 0.762$) showed that there is no association between conflict management strategies and organizational performance, implying that although compromising has temporary effect on conflict resolution, it can only generate a small effect on supposedly quantifiable areas due to contextual factors inside the organization and not the strategy itself.

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