

**INFLUENCE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES ON PROJECT
IMPLEMENTATION A CASE OF TITANIUM BASE LIMITED KWALE
COUNTY KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own original work and that no part of it has been taken from another research project or presented to any group of scholars in this university or elsewhere for the purpose of examination or otherwise.

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Date -----

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my dearest and most cherished parents: mum Jane Nduku Mutinga'u and dad Joseph Kituku Mutinga'u, who helped shape my character, showed me the importance of education and the fulfilment found in personal achievement and academic excellence. I also dedicate it to my lovely sister Doreen Mbithe for her tremendous support and constant encouragement during my period of study. Not forgetting my loving husband Gideon Mutiso, who made huge sacrifices for me and was very understanding when I needed time to work on my project.

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May God bless you all abundantly.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
PM	Project Manager
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IV	Independent Variable
DV	Dependent Variable
TBL	Titanium Base Limited

ABSTRACT

Conflict resolution strategies have become essential in the running of projects irrespective of the size of the project. Acquisition of these strategies is vital as conflict in a project or organization can have detrimental effects from low productivity to lack of motivation in the employees. The objective of this study was to identify the influence of conflict resolution strategies on a project's implementation. Titanium Base Limited is one of the Kenyan government's flagship projects projected to have a life of thirteen years and expected to generate huge revenue boosting the country's economy. This therefore necessitated the need for the study. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the extent to which leadership styles influence the conflict resolution strategy in a project, determine the extent to which organizational structure influences the conflict resolution strategies, examine the extent to which cross-cultural factors influence the conflict resolution strategies and finally, how gender issues influence the conflict resolution strategies in a project's implementation. The study aimed to identify the causes and consequences of conflicts in projects and how these conflicts can be resolved. This study will therefore be beneficial to project managers, researchers, scholars, investors and even the government as it will seek to identify conflict resolution strategies that can be used to ensure projects implementation is a success. The study adopted descriptive survey design with a target population of one hundred and eleven employees of Titanium Base Limited in Kwale County out of which a sample of thirty one respondents were identified. The sample used purposive sampling for selecting the managers while the middle level and low level staff were chosen using proportionate sampling. Questionnaires were the main data collection instrument and it had both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research in its data analysis. Data was presented in tabular form and hypothesis drawn. The study found out that conflict resolution strategies influenced the implementation of a project. Joint problem solving was found to be the most preferred strategy of conflict resolution that enables a project realize its goals. Therefore project managers have the onus of steering their projects to success by ensuring they choose the best strategies that suit the type of project and ensuring that there are clear policies on how conflict ought to be handled. Only through this would projects be properly implemented.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Globally, the 20th century was an era of unprecedented metal availability due to geological and economic circumstances. The settlement of Australia, Canada and the western United States led to the discovery of an enormous supply of mineral deposits that provided abundant, high quality minerals throughout the 20th century. This was further reinforced by these countries colonizing African countries rich in minerals such as Nigeria, Ghana, Namibia, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania among others. In addition, innovations in mining have reduced the cost of producing metals and availability of large amounts of minerals that can be very profitable. This period was characterized by accelerated mineral consumption (Simpson, Toman, & Ayres,1999).

According to Rostow (1960), mass consumption of minerals in North America didn't begin until 1950s and consumer societies did not develop in Europe and Japan until a decade later when they recovered from world war II. By the late 1960s, rapid increases in consumption of minerals in these developed countries were leading some observers to question the adequacy of mineral resources to support continued growth.

As the 21st century opened, rapid economic development in Asia increased the consumption of mineral commodities. During the 1980s and 1990s, new deposits of

minerals were developed in Chile and Indonesia leading to reduction of their costs (Tilton 2002). In the post-independent period in Kenya, extensive efforts were put in place in all the sectors to ensure economic growth. According to Jeni, Bilin and Frances (1999), the Mining and Geology sector is one of the sectors seeing gradual growth. This has been expedited by the liberalization in the mining sector in Africa from the beginning of the 1990s, resulting to an influx of foreign mining companies. Therefore, by 1997 most African countries developed new mining codes to facilitate exploration and investment (Bannon, & Collier, 2003).

This move has seen many international companies move to Africa and Asian countries to apply their new technologies in the mining sector resulting to its expansion. (Bannon & Collier, 2003). This has seen many farmers in sub-Saharan Africa quit farming and become miners to supplement their incomes (Barrett et al., 2001). Kenya is one such country that has experienced this resulting to growth of its mining and quarrying sector. From 1996-2001 it contributed a consistent 0.2% to the GDP which grew to 2% in 2009 and by 2012 picked up by 1.8% (Jervern, 2014). In East Africa, the Tanzanian government saw its revenue increase from 2 million in 1998 to 36 million in 2002 and by 2012 the mining sector expanded by 1.2%. However, stakeholders in Tanzania argued that the foreign investors had been given very generous conditions. In South Africa, the mining sector contributed 0.7% in 2013 which had been preceded by two quarters of negative growth. Ghana was no exception as its mining and quarrying sector grew by 5.0% in 2012 (Jervern, 2014). In 1995, Tiomin Resources Inc., a Canadian Corporation, through a wholly owned subsidiary, Titanium Base Limited sought to invest in Kenyan mining industry to

mine titanium (Runge, & Shikwati, 2011). In Tanzania AngloGold Ashanti, operates Geita Gold Mine, the third largest goldmine in sub-Saharan Africa; Tanzanite One, operates Mererani and there is also North Mara Gold Mine situated in the north-western Tanzania. In Papua New Guinea, there is Ok Tedi Mine.

The managements of these mining projects experience many conflicts with the local communities, the environmentalists and the hosting African countries. A survey by Price Water House Coopers for the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) project in early 2001 found that 78% of the 32 major mining companies surveyed in Africa had refrained from investing or withdrawn from an investment because of conflicts (Price Water House Coopers 2001). The management in these mining companies deal with people of different genders from diverse cultures and with varied expectations, goals and desires therefore conflicts arise (Kenzer, 2013). For example, there is conflict around the North Mara Gold Mine situated in the north-western Tanzania with the local artisanal miners (Vibe & Daniel, 2013). Another good example is in Papua New Guinea, where there is Ok Tedi Mine that was marred with a lot of conflicts between the government, the local community and environmentalists as the government refused to shut down the environmentally unsustainable mine in 1990. It is worth mentioning that the local communities are absorbed by these mining companies because of its low barrier to entry and so many mining companies have absorbed millions of rural Africans over the past two decades (Dreschler, 2001; Heensker, 2003; Hilson, 2008; Snyder 2006). These companies therefore require conflict resolution strategies to handle conflicts that arise as they are inevitable in companies and projects (Miner, 1992).

According to (Heldman, 2011), effective application of conflict resolution strategies is attributed to increased productivity and more positive working relationships. This shows that once conflicts have been resolved in the project environment, they result to acquisition of the project's goals. Despite this some projects have been unable to effectively apply conflict resolution strategies resulting to low productivity, lack of trust, tension and stress in the project environment (Maley, 2012).

1.2 Statement of the problem

The mining sector is gaining global interest and the ability to employ conflict resolution strategies to deal with these conflicts. This is paramount as most of these companies in developing countries often have to operate against a background of conflicts (Bannon & Collier, 2003). These conflicts are inevitable as stated by Miner (1992). According to (Maley, 2012) conflicts can be defined as a state of opposition between ideas, interests and desires. They are viewed as a divergence of interests, a belief that parties' current aspirations are incompatible (Rahim, 2015). Therefore project managers in these companies have a responsibility of treating their workforce with fairness (Bannon & Collier, 2003). They can only do so by using effective conflict resolution strategies. Conflict resolution strategies require use of certain human skills and knowledge to be effective (Wilson, 2014). There are those project managers that use domination while others feel that modern project managers should use negotiation or arbitration. Other companies' project managers follow the company's rules and regulations to resolve conflicts (Meredith, Samuel & Mantel 2011). There are those that use problem solving that begins with brainstorming possibilities for the conflict and ends with focusing on the approaches that can work

best (Kendrick, 2010). Yet there are those project managers that will appoint an arbitrator to resolve the conflict if they are part of it (Binder, 2012). According to Fenn and Gameson (2003) compromise and integrative bargaining are also means of resolving conflicts.

Binder (2012) shows that using conflict resolution techniques like communication and collaboration also reduce the occurrence of conflicts. Despite these conflict resolution strategies, some project managers lack the skills to bargain and resolve conflicts (Deutsch et al., 2001). Others fail to understand the conditions that can lead to constructive and destructive conflicts and the consequences thereof. Still, there are many unanswered questions on what determines the nature of an agreement if the parties involved in a conflict reaches an agreement.

Projects can fail to achieve their goals if the project managers do not apply conflict resolution strategies. However, according to literature, various conflict resolution strategies influence the implementation of a project. The choice of these techniques depends on the leadership style of the project manager, the organizational structure of the company, cross-cultural factors and gender issues. Therefore, the study examined how the conflict resolution strategies influence the implementation of a project with reference to Titanium Base Limited Kwale, Coast region.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine how conflict resolution strategies influence the implementation of a project with reference to Titanium Base Limited in Kwale County, Coast region, Kenya

1.4 Objectives of the study

This study was guided by the following research objectives:

- a. To establish the extent to which leadership style influences the conflict resolution strategies on the project's implementation.
- b. To determine the extent to which organizational structure influences the conflict resolution strategies on the project's implementation.
- c. To examine the extent to which cross-cultural factors influence the conflict resolution strategies on the project's implementation.
- d. To find out the extent to which gender issues influence the conflict resolution strategies on the project's implementation.

1.5 Research questions

The study answered the following research questions:

- a. How does the project leadership style influence the conflict resolution strategies on the project's implementation?
- b. How does the project organizational structure influence the conflict resolution strategies on the project's implementation?
- c. To what extent do project cross-cultural factors influence the conflict resolution strategies on the project's implementation?
- d. How does project gender influence the conflict resolution strategies on the project's success?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The research tested the following four alternative hypotheses:

Ha₁: There is a significant relationship between leadership style and conflict resolution strategies in a project's implementation.

Ha₂: There is a significant relationship between organizational structure and conflict resolution strategies in a project's implementation.

Ha₃: There is a significant relationship between cross-cultural factors and conflict resolution strategies in a project's implementation.

Ha₄: There is a significant relationship between gender issues and conflict resolution strategies in a project's implementation.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that the respondents will be cooperative and give information required truthfully. However some respondents were uncooperative and mean with information, causing the researcher to replace them with others. The study also assumed that the respondents were knowledgeable in the area of research, be available and that they would furnish her with any necessary documents for the information provided. This assumption was upheld.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Some respondents were not willing to provide correct information for fear of victimization by those in management. This was dealt with by assuring the respondents that the contents of the questionnaires would be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. At the same time, other respondents allocated

a limited period of time to fill the questionnaire therefore failing to give exhaustive answers.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The researcher focused on influence of conflict resolution strategies on project implementation, a case study of Titanium Base Limited in Kwale County, one of the country's biggest mining project. The researcher examined a sample size of one hundred and eleven employees and identified the extent to which leadership style, organizational structure, cross-cultural factors and gender issues influenced the choice of the following conflict resolution strategies: joint problem solving, compromise, negotiation and domination.

1.10 Significance of the Study

The information from this study will be beneficial to various stakeholders. Firstly, project managers, who are experts in the field of planning and implementation of projects, will acquire the best approaches to conflict resolution leading to effectiveness and therefore success in their projects. The Ministry of Mining and Geology will also benefit greatly by learning how to strengthen their relationship with this flagship project. They will therefore tailor policies and procedures that are realistic and fair to ensure speedy implementation of this mining project. Scholars in search of knowledge in this field will also get an opening for further research to fill the existing gaps on the evolving field of conflict resolution strategies. Investors will also have an opportunity to do business as the activities of this mining project are not limited to mining, but also extent to infrastructure development. The investors can therefore get contracts from the consortium to partner in the infrastructure

developments. Finally, local leaders, who are key opinion leaders, will understand the importance of using conflict resolution strategies in areas where misunderstandings may arise as they are in positions of leadership.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Conflict: It refers to the widest set of circumstances in which conflict parties perceive that they have mutually incompatible goals.

Conflict resolution: It's a term used for dealing with conflicts by the parties involved in the conflict. Each party uses its power to influence the other to achieve its goals.

Culture: This is a people's way of life, their norms, beliefs and values accepted in their society.

Gender: These are the socially constructed roles assigned to men and women in their families, culture, workplace and society in general.

Leadership style: This is the way a leader chooses to run the affairs of their organization to attain their set objectives.

Organization: It's a group of people who have a particular shared purpose or interest and work towards attaining it.

Organizational structure: This is the system in which management in an organization arranges the people according to their duties and responsibilities.

Resolution: A state in which parties engaged in a conflict find a way of achieving their goals through constructive processes like discussions, negotiations and solving their problems. This ensures both parties achieve their goals. It ends up as a win-win situation

Strategies: These are means through which an individual or group uses to achieve their goals.

1.12 Organization of the Study

This research project is divided into five chapters. Chapter one contains introduction and discusses the following: background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, research hypothesis, assumptions of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, significance of the study, definition of significance terms and organization of the study.

Chapter two contains the literature review which consists of: introduction, causes of conflicts in projects, consequences of conflict in projects, conflict resolution strategies, theories of conflict, leadership style in relation to conflict resolution in projects, organizational structure in relation to conflict resolution in projects, cross cultural factors and their connection to conflict resolution in projects, gender issues and their relation to conflict resolution in projects, the conceptual framework and summary of the literature review.

Chapter three includes research design, target population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection methods, validity and reliability of research instruments, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations and operational definition of variables. Chapter four focuses on data collection, analysis and its presentation while chapter five gives a summary of research findings, discussions, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review aims at discussing information from other researchers who have carried out research on the field of conflict in projects, the causes of the conflict, its consequences and the conflict resolution strategies that can be used in a project's implementation. These strategies have been assessed through leadership style, organizational structure, cross cultural factors and gender issues in projects.

2.2 An overview of causes of conflict in projects

According to Kendrick (2010), when people work together, there is potential for them to be in conflict. These conflicts can arise as a result of overlapping responsibility. This is when the project manager fails to give a clear definition of an activity or unambiguously delegates responsibility. Conflicts can also be caused by differing cultures, viewpoints, perspectives and backgrounds and so one of the parties may feel undermined or belittled. These studies are similar to Heldman (2011) who notes that in a project environment, the work is done by a team and where there is a team, there is conflict. His studies show that conflicts arise when the goals, aspirations, needs and desires of one party are incompatible with those of the other. His studies further attributed conflicts in the project environment to schedule issues, unavailability of or competition for resources, personality incompatibility or differing working habits.

Kenzer (2013) and Mangano and Heldman (2009) studies also show that conflicts in projects occur because the members in the project team have different values, interests, feelings and goals. They also have different personalities which may result to personality clashes. They further note that project managers are brought into the project environment after the project teams have been formed and these managers impose the business case, time schedule, cost estimates and other constraints on the team, resulting to conflicts.

Maley (2012) studies show that conflict is caused by scarcity of human and financial resources, facilities and equipment in the project environment. Differing opinions, needs, goals and priorities also result to conflicts as each party wants to dominate. The studies also show that poor or inadequate organizational structure, lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities lead to conflicts. In projects, conflicts can also result from the goals of the project if certain members in the team feel that these goals are over ambitious.

According to Binder (2012), conflicts in projects arise from resource unavailability and different priorities on costs, time, scope and quality, which are the most important constraints in a project. Global projects and differences in culture can also lead to conflicts as diverse cultures may have diverse views on customer satisfaction, different reactions to change and various approaches to risk management and standards.

2.3 Consequences of Conflict in Projects

All conflicts have their consequences in the project environment. Maley (2012) categorizes conflict as either functional or dysfunctional each of which has its own consequences. In his studies, functional conflict is also called constructive conflict as its consequences are viewed to lead to the growth of an organization or success of a project. It can also result to the growth of a member in a project team or an organization. Functional conflict also supports the realization of a project's goals and improves its performance as it increases sharing of information and ideas which are then implemented. It also motivates the team as they know their contribution to the conflict will be considered and not ignored. This encourages innovative thinking and adoption of different ideas. Functional conflict also reduces the stagnation of the team members and therefore efficiency and high productivity is realized.

Dysfunctional conflict on the other hand is referred to as destructive conflict as failure to resolve this conflict may be detrimental to the project or an organization (Maley, 2012). This conflict can result to stagnation in a group thus hindering its performance; it can also reduce trust among the project team members creating tensions and stress. This can result to poor decision making as there is excess focus on the conflict and few new ideas are generated. This worsens the already tense atmosphere.

2.4 Conflict Resolution Strategies

Conflict resolution as a defined field of study came of age in the 20th century (Ramsbotham, Miall & Voodhouse, 2011). This was after scholars felt the need to study conflict as a general phenomenon as it occurred not only in business relations but also in families and even between individuals. The conflict resolution strategies are discussed below as viewed by different researchers.

2.4.1 Active Strategies

According to Zikmann (2003), active responses include use of domination and compromise. Active responses are normally either aggressive or creative in nature. The aggressive responses involve use of domination which occurs when unreasonable demands are made or one-sided solutions are imposed on others. The undesired consequences of domination are: reduced creativity and creating an environment where poor future decisions are imposed unchallenged as it involves forcing the subordinates to accept the point of view of the managers. Domination also involves using power to deny or to withhold (Harding, 1991). Compromising is a win-lose strategy where the parties in the conflict partially satisfy their concerns (Maley, 2012). In the compromising style, neither party wins or loses as they give up something to arrive at a solution (Heldman, 2012).

2.4.2 Creative Strategies

According to Zikmann (2003), these creative responses are characterized by integrative bargaining where both parties are encouraged to cooperate in joint problem solving. Problem solving begins with brainstorming possibilities that may be the best to solve the conflict. It involves developing new and better ideas which will be generally acceptable to the parties involved in the conflict (Kendrick, 2010). These studies complement those of (Ramsbotham et al., 2011), whose studies discuss problem solving as a strong assertion of one's own interests but equal awareness of the aspirations and needs of the other, generating a search for creative ideas. This approach focuses on what one can make work and expand on it. The aim is to identify creative and workable solutions which satisfy the needs of the parties involved in the conflict and dispel their fears. On the onset of problem solving, all members are encouraged to think objectively without any preconceived notions. They should look at all possibilities of ending their conflict then focus on what seems to work and expand on it. According to Kendrick (2010), they should then develop partial answers and work them to full solutions to their conflict.

2.4.3 Negotiation Strategies

According to Maley (2012) negotiation occurs when parties to a conflict consider a number of possible workable solutions to arrive on an agreement. This is usually done as both parties seek to arrive at a win-win situation and so each party applies its assertiveness in the negotiation process. Ury (2000) defines negotiation as the process whereby parties seek to settle and resolve their conflicts. At the end of the negotiation process, some parties may arrive at a BATNA (Best Alternative to a

Negotiated Agreement) or a WATNA (Worst Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement). However, most parties on a negotiating table desire to arrive at a BATNA. Muigua (2014) also defines negotiation as the process involving two or more parties of either equal or unequal power; meeting to discuss shared and or opposed interests in relation to a particular area of mutual concern. These parties attempt to settle their differences using a range of techniques from concession and compromise to coercion and confrontation. Therefore it allows the parties involved to have autonomy in the process and over the outcome. According to Muigua (2014), negotiation is non-coercive thus allowing the parties involved to come up with creative solutions. The focus on negotiation is the common interest of the parties rather than their relative power or position. In negotiations, the goal is to avoid over-emphasis on how the dispute arose but to create options that satisfy both the mutual and individual interests. His studies further note that negotiations usually depend on their perceptions of distributive and procedural fairness in making offers and demands, reacting to offers and demands of others and deciding whether to reach an agreement or not. Muigua (2014) also categorizes negotiations as follows: interest-based, rights-based and finally power-based. However, the most common form depends upon successfully taking and giving up a sequence of positions.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

A theory is an organized system of accepted knowledge that applies in a variety of circumstances to explain a specific set of phenomenon. There are a number of theories that are related to conflict and its resolution. This study takes a look at some of these theories. These are Game Theory and Games, Theory of Cooperation and Competition and finally, Conflict Resolution Theory.

2.5.1 Game Theory and Games

This theory has made a great contribution to the work of social scientists by formulating in mathematical terms the problem of conflict of interests. It emphasizes on the fact that the two groups involved in a conflict have interdependent interests and their fates are tied together. Game theory recognizes that the cooperative as well as competitive interests may be intertwined in conflict. The theory is well explained by Schelling's (1960) phrase: the mixed-motive nature of conflict. The cooperative aspect emphasizes on bargaining and negotiation where the conflicting parties arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement that improves the outcome of each party. On the other hand, the competitive aspect focuses on how one party can use bargaining tactics so as to win or at least do better than the other (Deutsch, 1990).

According to Rapoport (2005), this theory is therefore taken as a theory of rational decision making in conflict situations. Models of such situations as conceived in game theory involve: a set of decision makers called players, asset of strategies available to each player, a set of outcomes which results from the choice of particular

choices of strategies made by the players on a given play of the game and a set of payoffs accorded to each player in each of the possible outcomes. The theory assumes that each player is rational and his choices are ordered according to the outcomes and magnitude of the expected returns. Since each player is viewed as rational, he utilizes the knowledge of the other player's payoff in guiding his choice of strategy because it gives him information about how the other player's choices are guided. Since the payoffs for each party are different, this becomes a game of strategy where the situation involves conflict of interests. When a player chooses his strategies through probability, they are called mixed strategies. They determine a probability distribution of the outcomes, hence influencing the payoffs accruing to a player. Therefore, a player's decisions are guided by an attempt to maximize his expected payoff (Rapoport, 2005).

2.5.2 Cooperation and Competition Theory

This theory was initially developed by Deutsch (1949) and elaborated by Johnson (1989). This theory has two basic ideas. The first is the interdependence among goals of the people involved in a conflict. The other is the type of action taken by the two people involved. He identifies two types of goal interdependence. The first is positive and the other negative. The positive is where the probability of a person's goal attainment is positively correlated with the amount of another attaining his goal. The negative is where the goal is linked in such a way that the amount of the goal attainment is negatively correlated with the amount of the other's goal attainment. This means, if you are positively linked with another person, then you sink or swim together. Therefore, if the other sinks, you swim and if the other swims, you sink. In

this theory, there are two basic types of action by a person. These are effective actions which improve a person's chances of attaining a goal and bungling actions, which worsens a person's chances of obtaining a goal. The findings in this theory are similar to those by Morton, Coleman and Marcus (2006) who concluded that either the cooperative or the competitive nature of the participants in a conflict determines the course of the outcome. They further noted that people have an inborn tendency to act positively to the beneficial and negatively to the harmful and these act as the foundation for human potentials for cooperation and love as well as competition and hate. According to Johnson and Johnson (1989) studies indicate that cooperation process leads to greater group productivity, more favourable interpersonal relationships, better psychological health and higher self esteem. His research has further proven that more constructive resolution of conflict results from cooperation as opposed to competitive processes. The studies further suggest that constructive processes of conflict resolution are similar to cooperative processes of problem solving and destructive processes of conflict resolution are similar to competitive processes. Therefore, cooperative-constructive processes of conflict resolution leads to outcomes like mutual benefit and satisfaction, strengthening relationships, positive psychological effects while competitive –destructive process leads to material losses and dissatisfaction, worsening relationships and negative psychological effects in at least one party.(Johnson & Johnson 1989).According to Alper, Tjosvold and Law (2000) cooperative instead of a competitive approach to conflict resolution leads to conflict efficacy that in turn results in effective performance. This conclusion was reached after a research was conducted in a team of four hundred and eighty nine

employees recruited for a production department in a leading electronic manufacturing firm.

2.5.3 Conflict Resolution Theory

According to Deutsch (2011), this theory suggests that the constructive process of conflict resolution is through effective cooperative problem-solving process. It also equates the process of conflict resolution with a competitive process in which the competing parties are involved in a competition to determine the person who wins and the one who loses. Usually, the outcome of the struggle is a loss for both parties. The norms of cooperative behaviour are similar to those of respect, responsibility, honesty, empowerment and caring behaviour towards friends or fellow group members. This theory notes that good cooperative relations facilitate constructive management of inevitable conflicts. The norms in this theory are: placing the disagreements in perspective by identifying common ground and common interests, addressing only the issues when there are disagreements and refrain from making personal attacks. Also, in disagreements, seek to understand the other's views from their perspective and build on the ideas of the other fully, acknowledging their value. Emphasize on the positive on the other party and the possibilities of constructive resolution of the conflict, limit and control expressions of your negative feelings so that they are primarily directed at the other's violation of cooperative norms or at the other's defeatism, take responsibility for the harmful consequences (intended or unintended) of what you do and say and seek to undo the harm and make sincere apology. Also, if the other harms you, be willing to forgive, seek reconciliation

rather than nurturing an injury or grudge. Be responsive to the other's legitimate needs. Empower the other to contribute effectively to the cooperative effort, solicit the other's views, listen responsively, share information and help the other, where necessary, to be an active effective participant in the cooperative problem solving process. Be appropriately open and honest as dishonesty violates the cooperative norms. Avoid communicating every suspicion, fear, doubt or sense of weakness as it could be damaging to the relationship. Finally, remain a moral person throughout the conflict by showing concern, care and love as the other party is a member of one's moral community. Schellenberg (1996) studies reveal that sometimes conflict resolution may end in victory of one party who is superior than the other while in other cases, conflict resolution may end in compromise. Schellenberg's theory of conflict resolution also suggests that there are many forms of conflict resolution among them coercion, negotiation, arbitration and conciliation. Sandole (1993) notes that conflict resolution requires a problem solving approach, direct participation by the parties in the conflict in jointly shaping the solution and facilitation by a third party trained in the process of conflict resolution. He further notes that there is cultural and structural conflict. In cultural conflict, parties bring to their relationship important differences in values while structural conflict deals with power deficiencies of one or both parties within an organization, community, state or region that hinders them from satisfying their needs. Burton (1993) is concerned with transforming structurally violent structures which impact people's lives to the extent that they are quite prepared to explode their way into their consciousness if not their lives. In modern era, human conflict has been biologized most famously by Lorenz

(1966) as “aggression”. His view supports that conflict is deeply internalized, instinctual and part of the animal nature of homo sapiens.

2.6 Leadership style and conflict resolution in project’s success

Different organizations use different leadership styles. According to Rahim (2002) organizations can choose between transactional, transformational and laissez-faire styles of leadership. Additionally, the Full Range Leadership model, operationalized by Bass (1985), includes laissez-faire, transactional and transformational as the leadership styles. (Rahim, 2002) reveals that those managers that use transformational leadership style adopt creative responses like integrating and obliging style to conflict management. Those that are transactional opt for active responses like compromising style while those that use laissez-faire adopt avoiding style to manage conflict with subordinates. This is supported by Forsyth (2009) who points that transformational leaders have charismatic qualities and they seek to inspire, motivate and appeal to their followers. Therefore, they are likely to use creative responses like problem solving and obliging to resolve conflicts. Transactional leaders on the other hand, prefer use of compromising and collaborative approaches to conflict resolution as both the leader and his followers must cooperate in pursuit of a shared goal as their relationship is based on exchange of valuable resources (Forsyth, 2009).

2.7 Organizational structure and conflict resolution in project’s success

Conflicts are inevitable among humans. It is a natural outcome of human interaction that begins with two or more social entities like individuals, groups, organizations and even nations, when they come into contact in pursuit of their goals (Rahim,

2015). According to Cyert, March and Cliffs (1963), disagreements are inevitable in organizations. Therefore conflict needs to be resolved. Their research points out that majority organizational management prefer using the problem-solving strategy and persuasions in resolving their conflicts as they put less strain on the status of the managers and in the organizational power systems. The more power the managers have, the more severely they punish their subordinates. This is because they work under the psychological influence of power (Pitesa & Thau, 2012). This is an indicator that they use domination in resolving conflicts. Cheung and Chuach's (1999) study reveal that the use of domination as a conflict resolution approach results to dysfunctional conflict in the project team. Gladstein, Wall and Nolan (1984) found out that dysfunctional conflicts in organizations are associated with reduced productivity and dissatisfaction while absence of conflicts within top management teams and decision making groups is related to increased performance (Bourgeois, 1980; Schwenk & Cosier, 1993). Balkundi and Harrison's (2006) study reveals that in organizations where the managers are close to their team members, problem-solving strategy is applied which results to strong inter-personal ties between the team members and they attain their goals faster and more efficiently. Their team task performance and viability are both higher. Recent studies by Sanders, Schyns and Reuver (2006) argue that a managers' choice of a conflict resolution approach depends on the position of the individual concerned in the organization. Therefore, if a manager has conflict with a fellow manager, problem solving will be used. If the conflict involves a dominant superior, they would be submissive; if the conflict involves a subordinate, they would be more reciprocal.

2.8 Cross-cultural Factors and Conflict Resolution in a Project's Success

Scholars of conflict resolution and practitioners of the art of international negotiation, agree that culture matters in the way affairs are run in organizations and also in projects. According to Avruch (2000), the culture of the two parties in the conflict has to be considered for negotiators to facilitate a solution to a disagreement. This enables the negotiator understand what each of the party wants and what they are prepared to do to achieve their goal.

Avruch (2000) views culture as dynamic and derivative of an individual's experiences. It's therefore important for parties involved in a conflict to realize that their cultures are different and this difference will influence how they tackle the task of reaching an agreement.

Toomey (1991) in his research involving five groups from different cultures namely Chinese, US, Korean, Japanese and Taiwan, found that cultural variability influenced the conflict resolution strategy. In his studies, US members were found to use high degree of dominating conflict resolution style, than their Japanese and Korean groups and the Chinese and Taiwanese members used a higher degree of obliging and avoiding conflict resolution approach than their US counterparts. Similarly, Wang, Lin, Chan and Shin (2005) have the same view as Toomey in their studies, where they discuss that western managers use domination and problem solving styles of conflict resolution more than Asian and Chinese managers who prefer the compromising style. Yi-Feng (2007) proposes use of the co-operative strategy, as this will strengthen the relationship between the two parties as opposed to

competitive and avoidance styles as these may strain the relationship between the foreign managers and Chinese counterparts. Fostering a good relationship further results to trust and job satisfaction.

According to Avruch (2007) culture matters a lot in solving conflicts as understanding it enables the parties involved in the project to easily navigate through it and come up with a solution. He further notes that the parties trying to resolve their differences must appreciate that they have different cultures that influence the kind of decision they support. Tse (1999) in his studies found that Canadian and Chinese executives rarely alter their decisions when negotiating across cultures. Chinese managers were more likely to avoid conflicts but recommended more negative strategies like discontinuing the negotiations or withdrawing, when conflicts arose. The study further revealed that person-related conflicts were found to generate more negative responses than task-related conflicts especially for Chinese executives. Both Chinese and Canadian executives preferred to negotiate with Canadians than with Chinese. Furthermore, studies of (Fisher 1980; Tung 1984) conclude that people of different cultures use significantly different negotiation approaches. These different strategies include: communication styles used, persuasion strategies employed and protocols followed. This is as a result of the different ways in which different cultures view and manage conflict.

2.9 Gender and Conflict Resolution in a Project's Success

In most conflicts, research has it that men develop coercion. Therefore, men tend to dominate during conflicts (Schellenberg, 1996). Research further shows that men

and women express conflicts differently. Men dealt with conflicts more directly and physically while women were more indirect and verbal in their conflict resolution. Berryman, Claire and Brunner (1987) investigated the effects of solving conflicts between different sexes and found out that men were more likely than women to use competing style while women used compromising style. The study further notes that regardless of their own gender, all subjects were more likely to report using an accommodating style if their target was female. Valentine (2008) carried studies on women in the health sector and discovered that majority women used compromise and avoidance with competition used the least. Most nurse managers used compromise while the staff nurses used avoidance. Walters, Stuhlmacher and Meyer (1998) carried out sixty two researches on women which showed that women appeared to behave more cooperatively in negotiations than men. Eagly and Johnson (1990) conducted a meta-analysis of gender and leadership based on one hundred and sixty two reports that included data on leadership styles of both men and women. They found significant gender differences in reported use of democratic and participatory styles of leadership in three types of organizational setting namely laboratory studies, informal and formal setting. Men were found to use domination as their conflict resolution style. Women were found to use more interpersonal styles in lab studies and informal setting but were found to be dominating just like men in formal setting (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

Men attributed their use of power and direct style of conflict resolution to transformational leadership whereas women attributed their use of relational styles to the same (Komives, 1991). Hackmann, Furniss, Hills and Paterson (1992) found a

significant, positive correlation between perceived gender characteristics and some transformational leader behaviours. They showed that leaders who displayed both high masculine and high feminine characteristics scored higher on transformational leadership. Other experimental studies of cooperation and competition suggest that women are just as competitive as men (Sell, 1997) while others depict women reactions during conflicts as nuanced than men and that being the reason why they cooperate. Men on the other hand simply compete (Kahn, Hottes & Davis, 1971).

2.10 Conceptual framework

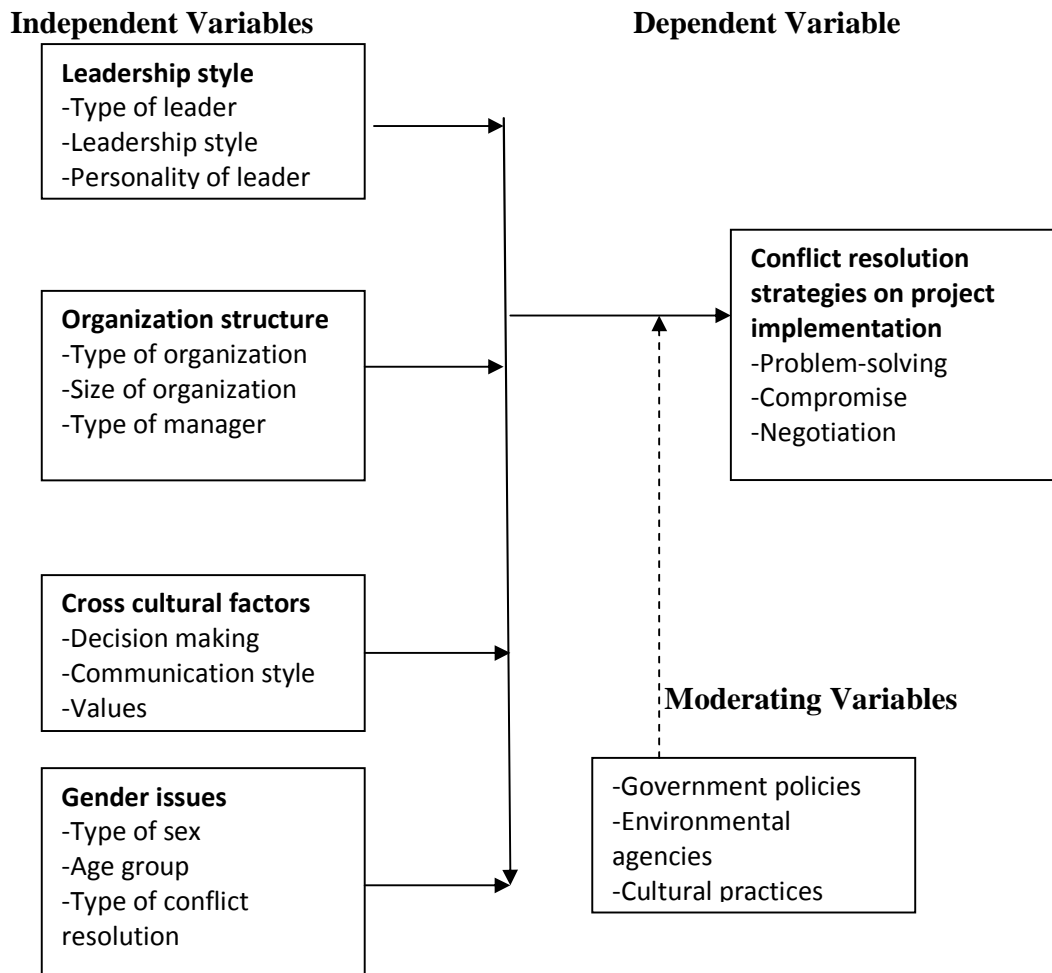


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between the variables: leadership style, organizational structure, cross-cultural factors and gender issues. The research argues that there is a relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable conflict resolution strategies. This study verifies this argument.

2.11 Summary of the literature review and research gaps

This chapter begins with a brief introduction, then the causes of conflicts, consequences of conflict, conflict resolution strategies, theories of conflict namely Game theory and games, cooperation and competition theory and conflict resolution theory. The conceptual framework follows where the four independent variables have been shown to influence conflict resolution strategy which is the dependent variable.

The researcher also identified some research gaps. This is because for proper implementation of projects, organizations should speedily diagnose conflicts and solve them. However, there is no diagnostic tool for the identification, typology or taxonomy of conflicts occurring within an organization or the project participants (Rahim & Bonoma 1979). Organizations also strive to maintain a moderate amount of conflict and help the project participants learn various conflict resolution strategies for handling different conflict situations but there is no clear set of rules to suggest when conflicts ought to be maintained at a certain level, when they are reduced and when conflict should be ignored (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). Furthermore, there is no clear set of guidelines to suggest how interpersonal conflicts ought to be handled in different situations (Rahim & Bonoma 1979). According to studies by Fisher (1980) and Tung (1984) little attention has been given on the area of cross-cultural conflicts in negotiations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the various stages that were followed in carrying out the research. This section identified the procedures and techniques that were used in the collection, processing and analyzing data. The areas that were covered include: research design, target population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection methods, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection and analysis techniques, ethical considerations and operational definition of variables.

3.2 Research Design

This study sought to employ the use of the descriptive survey research designs This is because descriptive survey enables a researcher to gather and summarize information, then present and interpret it for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2009). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) the purpose of descriptive research is to determine and report the way things are and it helps in establishing the current status of the population under study. Cooper and Schindler (2003), note that survey research is often used to study the general condition of people and organizations as it investigates the behaviour and the views of people usually through questioning them. Kombo and Tromp (2007) further observe that descriptive approach is designed to obtain information concerning the current phenomenon and

wherever possible, to draw valid conclusions from facts discussed. The study was therefore conducted under this basis.

3.3 Target Population

The target population is the specific population about which information is desired. According to Kombo and Tromp (2009) a population is well defined set of people, services, elements, events, group of things or households that are being investigated. The population of interest in this study are the over 300 workers of the Titanium Base Limited in Kwale, Coast region. The researcher intends to target one hundred and eleven respondents which include the top level management, the middle level managers and lower level workers. Therefore, target population is the people a researcher selects as respondents in the study and they are important in achieving the objectives (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The target population was presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Target population

Category	Population	Percentage
Top level staff	22	20
Middle level staff	38	34
Lower level staff	51	46
Total	111	100

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size and sampling procedure was determined as follows:

3.4.1 Sample Size

The sampling plan describes how the sampling unit, sampling frame, sampling procedures and the sample size for the study was carried out. The sample frame describes the list of all the population units from which the sample was selected (Kombo & Tromp 2009). Sample of the responding staff was drawn from 111 staff working at Titanium Base Limited in Kwale County where stratified random sampling technique was used. A sample of 32 respondents was selected for the study. The sample size was presented in table 3.2

Table 3.2 Sample size

Category	Population	Ratio	Sample size
Top level staff	22	0.3	2
Middle level staff	38	0.3	11
Lower level staff	51	0.3	19
Total	100	0.3	32

3.4.2 Sampling Procedure

According to Cooper and Schindler (2009), samples of 10% of a population can give good and reliable results if properly selected. Stratified random sampling technique was used since the population of interest is not homogenous and could be subdivided into strata to obtain a representative sample. The population was divided into managerial staff, middle level staff and lower level staff. Purposive sampling was used to select two managers on the basis of gender. Proportionate sampling was then

used so that the proportion of middle and lower level staff was equal as in the population.

3.5 Data collection instruments

The study mainly used questionnaires involving both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The study aimed at gathering detailed information from using open-ended questions while the closed ended question aimed at keeping respondents focused on the variables.

3.5.1 Pilot study

The pilot study aimed at checking the validity and reliability of the data by pre-testing the data collection instrument. A pre-test is a trial run to determine whether the instrument is clearly worded and free from biases and whether it gets the desired information (Mugenda, 2008). The test established that some questions were too detailed and therefore, the researcher rephrased them. It also established that the sample size constituted educated people who could fill in the questionnaire.

3.6 Data collection procedure

The administered a questionnaire to each member of the sample population. The questionnaire had both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were intended to provide more structured responses while the open-ended questions captured information that may not have been provided in the closed-ended questions. A self completion questionnaire was convenient as respondents could fill them during their free time and besides, they were cheaper to administer (Cooper & Emory 2008).

3.7 Reliability and validity of research instruments

Reliability is the extent to which similar results can be replicated from the same population over time. (Mugenda & Mugenda 2008). In this study, Test-retest was used for measuring reliability. A cronbach alpha of 0.68 was found between the two tests and was found good enough for this study. Validity shows whether the items measure what they are designed to measure (Borg & Gall, 2009). The researcher used content validity to examine whether the instruments answered the research questions (Borg & Gall, 2009). Additions and rectifications to the research instruments, consultations and discussions with the supervisor were done to establish content validity. According to Wiersma (2009) reliability refers to the consistency of the research findings and the extent to which the studies can be replicated.

3.8 Data analysis technique

Before analysis, the researcher checked the questionnaires for consistency, and coded them for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer software. The researcher analyzed the quantitative data using descriptive statistics and presented it through percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies. This was done by tallying the responses, computing the percentages of variations in the responses as well as describing and interpreting the data in line with the objectives and assumptions through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was presented in tabular form.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics constitute: A system of moral principles, by which human actions and proposals may be judged good or bad, right or wrong. The rules of conduct recognize a particular class of human actions (Delbridge, 2000). This study examined one's moral standards in society and asked how these standards applied to our lives and whether these standards were acceptable or not. Ethics promote people getting their rights and doing what will promote the most good (Cohen & Grace, 2008). According to Johnson (2010) ethics cannot be arbitrary created but discovered through arguments and persuasion. Project managers should exercise ethics and social responsibility (Willoughby, 2009). In this study, the researcher did not encounter any ethical issues as the respondents and management of the company clearly followed the laid down policies, rules and regulations.

Operationalization table

Research objective	Type of variable	Indicator	Measure	Level of scale	Research design	Data collection method	Level and tools of analysis
To determine influence of conflict resolution strategies on project implementation	Independent	Leadership style	-Type of leader - Leadership style - Personality of leader	- Individual involvement -Self assessment	Nominal	descriptive	Questionnaires Variance, mean & standard deviation

Research objective	Type of variable		Indicator	Measure	Level of scale	Research design	Data collection method	Level and tools of analysis
To determine influence of conflict resolution strategies on project implementation	Independent	Cross-cultural factors	-Decision making - Communication style -Values	- Company policy -Self assessment	Nominal	Descriptive	Questionnaires	Variance, mean & standard deviation
		Gender	-Type of sex -Age group -Type of conflict resolution	-Self assessment - Summary report - Company policy	Nominal	Descriptive	Questionnaires	Variance, mean & standard deviation
	Dependent variable	Influence of conflict resolution strategies on project implementation	- Leadership style - Organizational structure -Cross-cultural factors -Gender issues	-Self assessment - Company policy	Ordinal	Descriptive	Questionnaires	Variance, mean & standard deviation

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the response rate, demographic characteristics of the respondents and findings in the order of research questions. Data were collected from 32 employees of Base Titanium Limited. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences and presented in tabular form.

4.2 Response Rate

The study targeted 32 respondents in investigating the influence of conflict resolution strategies on project implementation. This constituted 10% of the population and is sufficient for generalizing of the results. Data analysis was done on 31 of 32 respondents as one manager was not available for administration of the instrument. This response rate was sufficient to allow generalizing the results to the target population. Table 4.1 shows the response rate of the sample size in percentage.

Table 4.1 *Response rate*

Category	Population	Respondents	Percentage
Top level staff	22	2	20
Middle level staff	38	11	34
Lower level staff	51	19	46
Total	111	32	100

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Findings of the study are based on a sample of 31 respondents comprising 20 males and 11 females aged 20-50. Study findings indicate that majority of the sample felt that they experienced work-related conflicts in the Company. The main source of conflict was differing opinions. The most favoured conflict resolution strategy was joint problem solving and negotiation. A minority of the respondents identified compromise as the most preferred strategy. Two thirds of the sample was of the opinion that conflicts did not affect project implementation in the Company. Respondents also varied in gender. Male respondents were the majority with a number of 20 making 64.5% of the sample size while female respondents were 11 constituting 35.5% of the sample size. The respondents were required to indicate their age and according to the findings, 58.1% of the respondents were aged between 20-30 years, 32.3% were aged between 31-40 years, 9.7% were aged between 41-50. There were no respondents aged above 50 years. According to findings, marital status shows that 48.4% of the respondents are married, 45.2% are single, 3.2% are widowed and 3.2% divorced. The level of education of the respondents indicated that 71% of the respondents had worked for the company between 1-2 years, 16.1% between 3-5 years while 12.9% had worked for over 5 years. Findings also show that 16.1% of the respondents have a secondary certificate, 38.7% are diploma holders, and 41.9% have bachelor degrees while 3.3% have master degrees. In the level of management, 3.2% of the respondents were managers, 35.5% supervisors while 61.3% of the respondents were the majority at 61.3%. These findings are illustrated in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	F	%
Gender		
Male	20	64.5
Female	11	35.5
Age (years)		
20-30	18	58.1
31-40	10	32.3
41-50	3	9.7
50 and above	0	0
Marital status		
Married	15	48.4
Single	14	45.2
Widowed	1	3.2
Divorced	1	3.2
Length of employment (years)		
1-2	22	71.0
3-5	5	16.1
Over 5	4	12.9
Level of education		
Secondary Certificate	5	16.1
Diploma	12	38.7
Bachelors	13	41.9
Master's	1	3.2
Level of management		
Manager	1	3.2
Supervisor	11	35.5
Subordinate	19	61.3

4.4 Findings of the Study

The findings of the study discuss the influence of conflict resolution strategies on project implementation at Titanium Base Company. The findings also discuss the extent to which leadership style, organizational structure, cross-cultural factors and gender issues influence the conflict resolution styles in implementation of the project.

4.5 Conflict Resolution Strategies

The study sought respondents' opinions regarding whether there were conflicts at the workplace, how they are resolved and the extent to which they affected the implementation of company's goals.

Findings of the study indicate that majority of the respondents (83.9%) agreed that they had conflicts at the workplace while 5 (16.1%) disagreed. More than half the respondents 17 (54.8%) reported that the most favoured conflict resolution strategy was joint problem solving while 12 (38.7%) reported that negotiation was preferred. A minority 2 (6.5%) said that compromise was the preferred option. The findings were presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Preferred conflict resolution strategy

Strategy	F	%
Joint problem solving	17	54.8
Compromise	2	6.5
Negotiation	12	38.7
Total	31	100.0

Finally, the study sought to establish the extent to which conflicts affect the implementation of the company's goals. Findings indicate that almost two thirds of the respondents 19 (61.3%) felt that conflicts did not affect goal implementation in the Company. The findings were presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 *Extent to which conflicts affect goal implementation*

Extent	F	%
Little	9	29.0
Moderate	10	32.3
Great	10	32.3
Very great	2	6.5

4.6 Extent to which Leadership Style Influences Conflict Resolution on Project Implementation

The study then sought to establish the extent to which leadership style influences conflict resolution strategies and its effects on project implementation. Towards that end, respondents' opinions concerning the relationship between leaders' management styles and the extent to which they achieve results were sought. The findings were presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Respondents' opinions on relationship between leadership style and project implementation

Leadership style		SD	D	N	A	SA
Leaders who motivate subordinates use problem solving strategy in conflict resolution and create a conducive working environment	f	0	0	1	17	13
	%	0	0	3.2	54.8	41.9
Leaders use compromise to achieve organisation's goals	f	5	3	6	14	3
	%	16.1	9.7	19.4	45.2	9.7
Leaders who use domination achieve goals faster	f	13	14	3	0	1
	%	41.9	45.2	9.7	0	3.2

Note: SD - Strongly agree; D - Disagree, N - Neutral, A - Agree, SA - Strongly agree

Findings from Table 4.5 indicate that majority of respondents 30 (96.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed that leaders who motivated subordinates adopt the problem-solving strategy in resolving conflict and hence create a good working environment. Similarly, over half the respondents 17 (54.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that compromise helped to achieve organisation's goals. Similar responses show an overwhelming number 27 (87.1%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that domination as a method of conflict resolution helped to achieve organisation's goals faster. Qualitative analysis show that appropriate leadership style is associated with increased productivity because it determines how well people will coordinate in project implementation.

The study then sought to find the extent to which leadership style influenced conflict resolution strategies used in the Company. Findings were presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 *Extent to which leadership style influences conflict resolution strategy*

Extent	F	%
Little	2	6.5
Moderate	5	16.1
Great	14	45.2
Very great	10	32.3

Findings show that on average, more than two thirds of the sample 24 (77. 5%) believed that leadership style influenced conflict resolution style adopted by the Company. A minority 2 (6.5%) disagreed. Qualitative analysis indicated that leaders have to know their subjects so as to adopt the right style.

b. Hypothesis testing

To test whether leadership style influences conflict resolution strategies, the following hypothesis was stated:

H₀₁: There is a no significant relationship between leadership style and conflict resolution strategies in a project's implementation.

To test the hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used. Findings of the study show that leadership style was a significant predictor of the type of conflict resolution strategy used $F(3, 27) = 5.36, p = 0.005$. The hypothesis that there was no significant relationship between leadership style and conflict resolution strategies

was therefore rejected. Of the three leadership styles, problem solving and domination were found to significantly predict the achievement of organisation's goals. The findings were presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Regression analysis of the relationship between leadership style and conflict resolution strategy

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Stand coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Constant	1.24	1.32		.93	.36
Problem solving in conflict resolution motivates	.73	.25	.47	2.89	.007
Compromise leads to achieving organisation's goals	.05	.11	.07	.47	.65
Domination achieves organisation's goals faster	-.33	.16	-.33	-2.09	.05

4.7 Extent to which Organisation's Structure Influences Conflict Resolution

Strategies and Effect on Project Implementation

The study sought to determine the extent to which organisational structure influenced conflict resolution strategy adopted and its effect on project implementation. To that effect, respondents' opinions concerning the role of self and management in conflict resolution were sought.

First, the study sought respondents' opinions on whether the Company structure influenced the choice of conflict resolution strategy. Majority 22 (71.0%) reported that organisation's structure affected choice of strategy while 9 (29.0%) disagreed.

The study then sought their opinion on the relationship between an individual's position in the Company and their choice of conflict resolution strategy. Findings show that two thirds 21 (67.7%) concurred while 10 (32.3%) disagreed. Qualitative findings indicate that the Company has clear levels of conflict resolution and clear policies to work within. All conflicts are therefore channelled to the right boss and acted upon. It was found out that the Company structure advocates for delegation of duty and hence enables subordinates to resolve conflicts without the intervention of management.

Findings also confirm that an individual's position in the Company influenced conflict resolution strategies adopted. The argument was that an individual's position equals power and power influences relationships at the workplace. It was therefore shown that managers may influence by directing, commanding or engaging. This is the reason why respondents reported that intervention by a supervisor or manager has great impact on conflict resolution.

The study then sought to establish respondents' opinions concerning the role of management in conflict resolution. Findings were presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Role of organisation's structure in conflict resolution

View on management		SD	D	N	A	SA
Management should ensure that organisations structure allows for conflict resolution	f	0	0	2	13	16
	%	8	0	6.5	41.9	51.6
More power makes managers to punish subordinates	f	8	10	5	4	4
	%	25.8	32.3	16.1	12.9	12.9
Close relationship between managers and subordinates results in faster goal realisation	f	1	2	0	13	15
	%	3.2	6.5	0	14.9	48.4

Note: SD - Strongly agree; D - Disagree, N - Neutral, A - Agree, SA - Strongly agree

Findings show that 29 (93.5%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that management should ensure that organisation's structure allows for faster conflict resolution. (58.1%) of the respondents did not agree that the more powers managers have, the more they punished subordinates. It was also the majority opinion 28 (90.3%) that closer cooperation between managers and subordinates led to increased efficiency and faster achievement of organisation's goals. Qualitative analysis indicates that when a manager acts as a role model, productivity increases.

Finally, the study sought to establish the extent to which organisation's structure influenced conflict resolution strategies in the Company. Findings were presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9 *Extent to which organisation's structure influences conflict resolution strategy*

Extent	F	%
No extent	1	3.2
Little	3	9.7
Moderate	10	32.3
Great	12	38.7
Very great	5	16.1

Findings from Table 4.9 indicate that more respondents 17 (54.8%) held the opinion that organisation's structure influenced choice of conflict resolution strategy. Almost a third 10 (32.3%) reported that organisation's structure had moderate extent on choice of conflict resolution strategy while a minority 4 (12.9%) reported that structure had no effect.

b. Hypothesis testing

To test the whether organisational structure influenced choice of conflict resolution strategy used, the following hypothesis was stated:

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between organizational structure and conflict resolution strategies in a project's implementation.

To find out whether organisation's structure significantly predicted choice of conflict resolution strategy, multiple linear regression analysis was used. The ANOVA model was not significant, $F(3, 27) = 2.44, p = 0.84$. The null hypothesis therefore failed to be rejected.

Of the three items of organisation's structure that were measured, organisation's structure allowing for conflict resolution achieved significance in the model. The findings were presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 *Regression analysis of the relationship between organisation's structure and choice of conflict resolution strategy*

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-1.58	1.66		-0.09	.93
Organisation's structure should allow for conflict resolution	.59	.28	.37	2.11	.04
Managers powers used to punish subordinates	-.07	.13	-0.17	-0.59	.55
Managers close to subordinates attain goals faster	.29	.23	-.22	1.31	.20

Though the entire model was insignificant, findings from Table 4.9 indicate that organisation's structure allowing for conflict resolution and managers being close to subordinates to achieve organisation's goals were positively related to choice of conflict resolution strategy adopted. Findings also show that managers punishing subordinates was negatively correlated with achievement of organisation's objectives and conflict resolution.

4.8 Extent to which Cross-cultural Factors Influence Conflict Resolution

Strategies and Effect on Project Implementation

The study sought to examine the extent to which cross-cultural factors influenced conflict resolution strategies and the effect on project implementation. Respondents' opinions concerning cultural differences in management strategies and the extent to which cultural differences influenced choice of conflict resolution strategy were explored.

First, respondents' opinions concerning whether cross-cultural factors influence conflict resolution strategies were sought. Almost equal numbers of respondents 16 (51.6%) and 15 (48.4%) agreed and disagreed respectively. Further, the study sought respondents' opinions on whether cross-cultural factors should be considered in the choice of conflict resolution strategies. Over half the respondents 18 (58.1%) agreed while 13 (41.9%) disagreed.

The study sought respondents' opinions concerning cross-cultural differences in management with regard to conflict resolution. The findings were presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Cross-cultural differences and choice of conflict resolution strategy

Cultural influence on management style		SD	D	N	A	SA
Culture influences conflict resolution strategy	f	3	5	5	11	7
	%	9.7	16.1	16.1	35.5	22.6
Western managers use domination and problem solving	f	8	12	4	5	2
	%	25.8	38.7	12.9	16.1	6.5
More negative responses on personal conflict for Chinese	f	1	9	15	3	3
	%	3.2	29.0	48.4	9.7	9.7

Note: SD - Strongly agree; D - Disagree, N - Neutral, A - Agree, SA - Strongly agree

Findings from Table 4.11 confirm the opinion that cultural differences influence conflict resolution strategy. More than half the respondents 18 (58.1%) were of the opinion that due to differences in culture, conflict resolution strategies among managers were different. However, up to two thirds 20 (64.5%) disagreed that Western managers preferred domination and problem solving as conflict resolution strategies. Marginally higher numbers 10 (32.2%) similarly disagreed with the view that Chinese managers had more negative responses on personal than task-related conflicts.

Finally, the study sought to establish the extent to which cross-cultural factors influenced choice of conflict resolution strategy used in the Company. The findings were presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 *Cross-cultural factors and choice of conflict resolution strategy*

Extent	F	%
No extent	6	19.4
Little	3	9.7
Moderate	13	41.9
Great	4	12.9
Very great	5	16.1

Findings from Table 4.12 suggest that equal numbers of respondents 9 (29.0%) had contradictory opinions concerning whether cross-cultural factors influenced choice of conflict resolution strategy in the Company.

4.9 Extent to which Gender Influences Conflict Resolution Strategies and Effect on Project Implementation

The final objective of the study sought to find out the extent to which gender influenced conflict resolution strategies and its effect on project implementation. Respondents' opinions concerning typical gender-shaped reactions to conflict resolution were sought.

First, respondents were asked whether gender influences the conflict resolution method adopted by the Company. Slightly over half of the respondents 17 (54.8%) agreed while 14 (45.2%) disagreed.

The study then sought respondents' opinions on "typical" gender reactions to conflict resolution situations. Findings were presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Relationship between gender and conflict resolution

Cultural influence on management style		SD	D	N	A	SA
Men prefer coercion while women prefer compromise	f	4	6	9	11	1
	%	12.9	19.4	29.0	35.5	3.2
Women are more cooperative in negotiations	f	2	8	12	4	5
	%	6.5	25.8	38.7	12.9	16.1
Women are as competitive as men in conflict resolution	f	1	7	6	13	4
	%	3.2	22.6	19.4	41.9	12.9

Note: SD - Strongly agree; D - Disagree, N - Neutral, A - Agree, SA - Strongly agree

Findings in Table 4.13 indicate that a slightly higher number 12 (38.7%) agreed that men preferred coercion in conflict resolution while women preferred compromise. However, more respondents 10 (32.3%) disagreed that women were more cooperative during conflict resolution. Additionally, and to confirm previous opinion, more than half of the respondents 17 (54.8%) agreed that women were just as competitive during conflict resolution. Qualitative analysis presented two dimensions to the argument. While one group determined that there were no gender differences in conflict resolution because men and women have the same level of authority and power, another group reported that women were more likely to be conciliatory during conflict resolution. The latter viewpoint was supported by the view that women are more sensitive and patient. These qualities put women in a

better position to be measured in their responses and consequently affect the conflict resolution method they adopt. Another interesting finding was that gender affects conflict resolution because unlike men, women keep grudges and therefore choose the method that best perpetuates them.

Finally, the study sought respondents' opinions concerning the extent to which gender influences conflict resolution in the Company. Findings were presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Gender influence on conflict resolution

Extent	F	%
No extent	6	19.4
Little	8	25.8
Moderate	8	25.8
Great	8	25.8
Very great	1	3.2

Findings from Table 4.14 indicate that almost half the number of respondents 14 (45.2%) felt that gender played no or little role in conflict resolution compared to 9 (29.0%) who felt that gender played a great or very great role.

Table 4.15

Regression analysis of the relationship between gender and conflict resolution strategy

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.97	1.09		1.81	.81
Men use coercion; women use compromise	.51	.18	.48	2.80	.009
Women more cooperative	-0.07	.17	-.07	-0.42	.68
Women just as competitive	-0.17	.19	-.16	-0.90	.37

Finally, T-test carried out on the relationship between gender and the extent to which gender influenced conflict resolution returned non-significant findings, $t(29) = 1.82$, $p = .07$. The 95% confidence interval for the test mean ranged from -.09 to 1.63. However, an examination of group means indicate that male employees ($M = 2.95$, $SE = 1.14$) believed significantly that gender influenced choice of conflict resolution strategy than females ($M = 2.18$, $SE = 1.07$).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a summary of the research findings, their discussion, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The findings of the study were summarized based on research questions.

5.3 Discussion of the Findings

It was found out that conflicts arose out of differing opinion, a finding that finds support in the literature (Heldman, 2011; Kenzer, 2013; Mangano & Heldman, 2009). It was also found out that the conflict resolution strategy most preferred was joint problem solving and negotiation. This finding also finds support from other studies in the area (Maley, 2012; Zikmann, 2003). Both studies found out that when both parties to a conflict engage in active strategies like negotiation, both seek to arrive at a win-win situation and such strategy satisfies both mutual and individual interests.

Majority of respondents agreed that leaders who motivated subordinates adopt the problem-solving strategy in resolving conflict and hence create a good working environment and that compromise as opposed to domination helped to achieve the organisation's goals. This finding provides support for the Full Range Leadership Model (Bass, 1985). According to the findings and the model, transactional and transformational leadership styles are at play in the Company where management prefers compromise as opposed to domination.

The finding that one's position in the Company influenced conflict resolution strategy supports the assertion by Sanders et al., (2006) that a manager's choice of conflict resolution strategy depends on the individual's position in the organisation.

The finding that management style was positively related to achievement of organisation's goals corroborate Gladstein et al., (1984) who argue that dysfunctional conflicts in organisations are associated with reduced productivity and job dissatisfaction. Contrastingly, absence of conflict was associated with increased performance. The finding also supports Balkundi and Harrison (2006) who found out that in organisations where managers were close to team members, problem-solving strategy is applied which results to strong inter-personal ties between team members leading to increased efficiency and goal achievement.

The study found out that cross-cultural factors influence conflict resolution strategies and should be considered in the choice of conflict resolution strategies. The finding parallels Avruch (2000) who argues that the culture of two parties to any conflict has to be considered for a solution to be found. The finding that Western managers did not prefer domination and problem solving as conflict resolution strategies contradicts Toomey (1991) and Wang et al., (2005) who found out in their studies that Western managers preferred dominating conflict resolution style. This study found out that Chinese managers did not have more negative responses on personal than task-related conflicts. This finding contradicts Tse (1999) who found out that person-related conflicts generated more negative responses than task-related conflicts especially for Chinese executives. It is possible that employees at the Company have positive attitudes towards Chinese managers because of cross-

cultural understanding. It is also likely that Western managers have created a conducive working environment and hence prefer using better conflict resolution approaches.

The finding that gender influences the choice of conflict resolution method adopted by the Company corroborates findings by Berryman et al., (1987) who found out that men and women express conflicts differently with men being more direct while women were indirect and more verbal in conflict resolution. Findings of this study point to the fact that men preferred coercion while women preferred compromise. This concurs with Berryman et al. However, the finding that women were not cooperative during conflict resolution and that they were just as competitive contradicts Valentine (2008) and Walters et al., (1998) who found out that women appeared to behave more cooperatively in negotiations. The finding corroborates Eagly and Johnson (1990) who found out that women were just as dominating as men in formal settings. These findings could point to women's attempts to be assertive at the workplace. It is important to note that women comprised 35.5% of this sample and it is possible that their "typical" reactions are down to competition for places with men.

5.4 Conclusion

The first conclusion of the study was that conflict is part and parcel of workplace relationships. The study therefore concluded that companies need to have conflict resolution mechanisms that are embedded in their own fabric. It is imperative that conflicts are resolved by different cadre at their own level without undue interference by management.

Management should aspire to inculcate conducive relationships with subordinates so that communication channels remain open. It was also concluded that multiculturalism is a new reality that companies have to contend with, with expansion of multinational corporations from Europe, America and China. This will ensure that managers and subordinates from different cultures work smoothly.

It was concluded that gender stereotypes concerning conflict resolution are part of workplace relationships. The more men and women work together at various positions in the Company, the easier it will be to deal with this stereotype.

5.5 Recommendations

The study made both policy recommendations and suggestions in areas of further research in order to determine the effect of conflict resolution strategies at the workplace.

- i. The Government of Kenya, through the ministry in charge of labour should put in place training mechanisms targetting personnel and human resource managers to deal with conflict resolution at the workplace.
- ii. Companies should establish in-house mechanisms to deal with conflicts at the workplace. Such may comprise employees at all levels, both in and out of management.
- iii. Universities should partner with companies to provide training and attachment to staff employed in companies in the area of conflict resolution
- iv. The policy of equal opportunities at the workplace between men and women should be strengthened. This will help in dealing with gender stereotypes.
- v. Bonding sessions between managers and subordinates should be prioritised.

- vi. Management should comprise individuals of various cultural persuasions. This will inculcate a sense of understanding and appreciation of each other's culture among all employees. Additionally, managers who share culture with subordinates will be the bridge with managers from other cultures.

5.6. Suggestions for Further Research

- i) There is need for a broader study to determine the conflict resolution strategies at play in companies of various scales.
- ii) A needs assessment study to be carried out in companies to find out gaps in provision of conflict resolution.
- iii) A bottoms-up approach to conflict resolution is required to understand how employees in lower levels can be useful in conflict resolution.
- iv) A multicultural approach to conflict resolution requires urgent study.

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APPENDICES

**Appendix I: Letter of Transmittal
University of Nairobi,**

School of Continuing and distance education,

P.O. BOX 30197,

NAIROBI.

April, 2015.

Dear Respondent,

RE: FILLING OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a post graduate student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a Masters degree in Project Planning and Management. I am carrying out research as a partial fulfilment of the requirements of attaining my degree. The aim of this study is to identify the conflict resolution strategies used in Titanium Base Limited and their effects on the project's implementation. I write to request you to fill the attached questionnaire genuinely as your sincere responses are important for the success of this study.

The information gathered will be used only for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. At no time will any of your personal details appear in this report. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and under no circumstances will they be disclosed. The findings of this report can be availed to you upon request.

I look forward to your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Magdalene Ngali Kituku

L50/71495/2014

Appendix II: Questionnaire

My name is Magdalene Ngali Kituku. I am a MPPM student at University of Nairobi. I am doing a study on the conflict resolution strategies and their effects on implementation of a project with reference to Titanium Base Limited Kwale. I therefore kindly ask you to spare some time to fill this questionnaire. It is my sincere hope that you will assist me in my studies by giving truthful responses.

PART 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. What is your gender? (Tick one)

Male ()

Female ()

2. What is your age? (Tick one)

20-30 ()

31-40 ()

41-50 ()

50 and above ()

3. What is your status? Tick one

Married ()

Single ()

Widowed ()

Separated/divorced ()

4. How long have you worked for this company?

1- 2 yrs ()

3- 5 yrs ()

Over 5 years ()

5. What is your level of education?

Secondary Certificate ()

Diploma level ()

Bachelor degree ()

Master level ()

6. What level of management do you serve?

Manager ()

Supervisor ()

Subordinate ()

PART 2: CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

6. Do conflicts arise during the course of work? (Tick one)

Yes ()

No ()

7. In your opinion, to what extent do you feel they affect implementation of the goals in your company? (Tick one)

No extent ()

Little extent ()

Moderate extent ()

Great extent ()

Very great extent ()

8. a) How are the conflicts resolved? (Tick one)

Domination ()

Joint problem solving ()

Compromise ()

Negotiation ()

Other ()

b) If other in 8. a) give the conflict resolution technique.

c) What are the consequences of the strategy picked in 8 a) above on

i) Work productivity

ii) Motivation of workers

9. What is the level of agreement on the following statements relating to conflict resolution strategies in your firm?

(1.Strongly disagree, 2.Disagree, 3.Neutral, 4.Agree, 5.Strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
Conflicts arise as a result of differing opinions, views or goals.					
Domination is the most commonly used conflict resolution strategy.					
Culture determines the way conflict is resolved.					

PART THREE: LEADERSHIP STYLE

10. a) From the table below, what is your level of agreement on the following statements relating to leadership style adopted and how it influences conflict resolution strategies? (1.Strongly disagree, 2.Disagree, 3.Neutral, 4.Agree, 5.Strongly agree). (Tick once for each statement).

	1	2	3	4	5
Those leaders who motivate their subordinates adopt the problem-solving strategy in resolving conflict creating a conducive working environment.					
Leaders that compromise with their subordinates do so to					

achieve the organizational goals.					
Leaders who use domination to resolve conflicts achieve the organizational goals faster.					

b). In your opinion, do you think the leadership style that a leader chooses can influence the implementation of a project?

If no, explain.

If yes, explain.

11. To what extent do you think the leadership style influences the conflict resolution strategies used in your company?

No extent ()

Little extent ()

Moderate extent ()

Great extent ()

Very great extent ()

PART FOUR: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

12. Does the organizational structure in your organization influence the choice of conflict resolution strategy? (Tick one)

No ()

Yes ()

If no, explain why?

If yes, explain why?

13. To what extent do you think the organizational structure influences the conflict resolution strategies used in your company?

No extent ()

Little extent ()

Moderate extent ()

Great extent ()

Very great extent ()

14. What is your level of agreement with the following statements relating to organizational structure influencing the conflict resolution strategies in your company? (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree). (Tick once for each statement).

	1	2	3	4	5
Management should ensure that the organizational structure allows for fast resolution of conflict.					
The more powers managers have, the more severely they punish their subordinates.					
Organizations where subordinates are close to their managers attain goals faster and are more efficient.					

15.a) In your opinion, do you think the position of an individual in an organization influences their conflict resolution strategy? (Tick one)

No ()

Yes ()

b) If no, explain.

If yes, explain.

PART FIVE: CROSS-CULTURAL FACTORS

16. Do you think cross-cultural factors influence the conflict resolution strategies in your organization? (Tick one)

No ()

Yes ()

If no, explain

If yes, explain

17. To what extent do you think cross cultural factors influence the conflict resolution strategies used in your company?

No extent ()

Little extent ()

Moderate extent ()

Great extent ()

Very great extent ()

18. What is your level of agreement with the following statements relating to cross cultural factors influencing the conflict resolution strategies in your company?

(1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
Cultures are different and this difference influences the conflict resolution strategy.					
Western managers use domination and problem solving as their conflict resolution strategy.					
Personal conflicts generate more negative responses than task-related conflicts for Chinese managers.					

19. In your view, do you think cross-cultural factors should be considered in the choice of the conflict resolution strategy? (Tick one)

No ()

Yes ()

PART SIX: GENDER ISSUES

20. In your view, do you think gender influences the conflict resolution method used in your organization?(Tick one)

No ()

Yes ()

If no, explain.

If yes, explain.

21. To what extent do you think gender influences the conflict resolution strategies used in your company?

No extent ()

Little extent ()

Moderate extent ()

Great extent ()

Very great extent ()

22. What is your level of agreement with the following statements relating to gender issues influencing the conflict resolution strategies in your company? (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree). (Tick once for each statement).

	1	2	3	4	5
Men develop coercion during conflicts while women prefer compromising in conflict resolution.					
Women are more co-operative in negotiations than men.					
Women are just as competitive as men during conflict resolution.					

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