\\Factors influencing the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts among staff in organizations: A Case of the Immigration Department at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport/
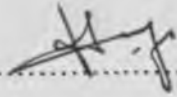
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A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Project Planning and Management of the University of Nairobi.

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DECLARATION

This research report is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other university.

Signature: .... Date......06 |05| 2011......

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Reg. number: L50/77427/2009

This Research report has been submitted with my approval as a University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

To my dad Mr. Namalenya and my late mum Elinah Nakhanu for laying the foundation, my wife Esther for walking with me in my academic endeavors as in life generally, and my children Steve, Laura and Elsie for whom I shall always strive to achieve.

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My supervisors at work were so understanding and supportive when I had to take valuable working time off to attend classes for this program and to work on this project. To them am sincerely grateful. Am also grateful to my co-workers who always stood in for me at work over the entire period of my studies.

I must also thank all the respondents in my study for taking their time off to fill out the questionnaires and for their valuable information. Am also indebted to the many colleagues and friends who offered ideas and encouragement in the process of working on this project.

To all I say thank you very much and may God bless you.

ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of factors influencing prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in organizations- a case of the Immigration department at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Chapter one is the introduction of the study and includes background to the study, the research problem, justification, purpose and objectives of the study as well as the research questions, significance and basic assumptions of the study. It also highlights the limitations and delimitations of the study and also definitions of significant terms.

Chapter two is the literature review which basically recognizes the works of others on the subject. It approaches the presentation along themes derived from the objectives of the study. It closes by discussing the theory of workplace conflicts and finally presents the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter three is a discussion of the research methodology and includes the research design, the target population, the sampling procedure, a statement on validity and reliability, and the operational definition of variables and how they are measured. It finally highlights the methods of data analysis employed in this study.

Chapter four is the data analysis, presentation and interpretation. Here, findings are presented mainly in tables and percentages. Analysis is done along themes derived from the research objectives.

Chapter five provides a summary of the findings, discuses them and draws conclusions of the study. Here, the researcher also makes recommendations, suggests areas of further research and states the contribution of this study to the body of knowledge on the subject.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the study

As human beings interact in organizations, differing values and situations create tension (Ozkalp et al, 2008). This is more so because people spend at least one-third of their adult lives in the workplace, and in close interaction with different kinds of people ranging from co-workers of various levels and types; bosses and subordinates of various ranks and who have some influence over them; and also interact with many types of clients such as customers, suppliers and government agents. It is possibly due to this fact that the work place has been claimed to be a very fertile ground for conflict

The conflicts that arise in workplaces may be shaped by the unique aspects of this environment, including the long hours many people spend at their workplace, the hierarchical structure of the organization, and the difficulties that may be involved in finding another job and attendant financial implications associated with this.

Different individuals have different perceptions, values, beliefs, interests, goals and aims that sometimes might come into conflict. Thus, conflicts are inevitable, natural and might be harmful and damaging to organizations (Cowling et al., 1988). It is argued that conflicts are of high importance because managers spend about 30- 42% percent of their time dealing with them. (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976; Watson & Hoffman, 1996). However, conflict by itself is neither good nor bad; the way in which they are handled determines whether they are constructive or destructive (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000).

The effects of conflict in the workplace are widespread and costly to the firm and to

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individuals in it. According to Blackard (2001), counterproductive conflict takes time and energy away from constructive business endeavors. Those involved in a dispute think about it, worry about it, and spend time trying to do something about it. Supervisors and managers become involved when disputes are with management or when employees need help in resolving disputes among themselves. This involvement diverts management time, energy, and attention from leadership activities that should leverage the efforts of all employees, and therefore tends to multiply the cost of a dispute (Blackard, 2001).

As stated, managers are believed to spend a significant amount of their time dealing with some form of conflict in organizations at the expense of more productive engagements of strategic importance.

From the perspective of employees, inability to effectively deal with conflict in the workplace could be very expensive. This will usually manifest in decreased productivity, increased stress among employees, hampered performance, high turnover rate, absenteeism, and at its worst, violence and even death. Therefore, failing to address such conflicts usually has implications far beyond the office and into our lives away from the work place. However, in order to effectively deal with interpersonal conflicts at work and minimize their negative impacts in the long run, it's essential to endeavor to understand the factors that influence their occurrence.

The Kenya Immigration Department is one of the departments in the Ministry of State for Immigration and Registration of Persons (the others being the National Registration Bureau, Department of Civil Registration and Department of Refugee Affairs). The Immigration unit at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) is arguably the largest, busiest and most sensitive single border control in the country with a staff of two hundred officers. The mandate of the

department is to regulate entry and presence of foreigners in the country as well as controlling movement of both foreigners and citizens across the country's international borders (Immigration Act cap 172 laws of Kenya, 1967). This mandate is such that nothing, much less interpersonal conflicts among staff, can be allowed to compromise service delivery which impacts on national security.

As expected, the Department is made up of persons from diverse cultures, interests and value systems. This inevitably provides a fertile ground for conflicts to occur as the varying interests seek to find expression in an environment of scarcity. Employee relations in the Department (as in the case of the entire Civil Service) are regulated by the Civil Service Code of Regulations (COR). However, this has not been adequate and effective enough in preventing and/or managing interpersonal conflicts between staff.

This study was therefore intended to establish the main factors that are likely to influence the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in organizations with the Immigration Department at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport as a case.

1.2   Statement of the problem

A study made by the American Management Association has revealed the fact that the superior and middle managers use at least two hours of their daily time in solving confliction situations (Nistorescu, and Caprariu, 2009). It has also been widely recognized that workplace conflicts can greatly compromise an organization's ability to realize its goals and objectives. According to Jeffery, Blitman, Maes and Shearer (2010), workplace conflict is increasing. Between 1976 and 1996, the amount of time that a "typical" manager spent in conflict situations rose from 30% to42% (Thomas & Schmidt, 1976; Watson & Hoffman, 1996). Aside from the time factor, additional costs to organizations include turnover, absenteeism, and litigation

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(Jeffery, Blitman, Maes and Shearer, 2010). However, the most obvious consequence of workplace conflicts is that service delivery suffers.

For the Immigration Department, information indicates that incidences of interpersonal conflicts are prevalent just like in many other organizations. For instance, over the last one year, no less than six incidences required the intervention of management especially through reshuffles and transfers. However, it must be observed that majority of such conflicts may not be formally documented and therefore the incidences may be higher than reported. Moreover, the mandate of the Kenya Immigration Department is so crucial that the situation has to be addressed to ensure that service delivery does not suffer. This study was therefore intended to find out factors that influence the prevalence of such conflicts at Immigration Department and other organizations at large.

1.3   Justification

Due to the negative impacts of interpersonal conflicts at the workplace, it is important that the factors influencing such conflicts are understood so that managers can know how best to prevent and/or best manage them when they occur. This will go a long way in reducing the cost and other negative consequences of workplace conflicts.

While many studies have been done in the general area of workplace conflicts, the researcher found it necessary to study the interplay of various factors that influence the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the unique work environment that Immigration Department Staff at JKIA find themselves in. Moreover, no known previous studies have specifically targeted this department

It is expected that findings of this study will help in understanding factors that influence

prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in organizations in general and in the Immigration Department at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in particular. It is hoped that this will enable stakeholders devise ways of preventing conflicts (if possible), and best managing them when they occur.

1.4   Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing interpersonal conflicts in organizations: A case of the Kenya Immigration Department at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.

1.5   Objectives of the study

The following are the main objectives of this study:-

1) To establish the communication structures and processes that influence the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration Department at JKIA.

2) To find out how resource utilization contributes to the emergence of interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA.

3) To establish how job roles fuel interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA.

4) To assess the influence of personal values of Immigration Department staff on the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

1.6 Research Questions

1) How do communication structures and processes influence the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA?

2) How does resource utilization in the workplace contribute to prevalence of interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA?

3) How do job roles help fuel interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA?

4) To what extent do personal values contribute to prevalence of interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA?

1.7 Significance of the study

It is expected that findings of this study will enable the department's leadership (and other organizations in general), to better understand sources of interpersonal conflicts among their staff. This will then enable them design policies and strategies to reduce and best manage interpersonal conflicts in order to minimize their negative consequences.

In addition, it's expected that findings of this study may enable staff to better cope with workplace conflicts in their organizations and the Immigration department in particular..

It is also expected that findings of this study can form a basis for further studies by other researchers on the subject.

Finally, the government can use the findings to implement a conflict management program across the entire civil service which can then translate into better service delivery.

1.8   Basic assumptions of the study

This study was done with the following assumptions:-

1) It was assumed that interpersonal conflicts were indeed prevalent among staff of the Immigration Department.

2) That the respondents would provide the required information.

3) That time and cost constraints notwithstanding, the researcher would be able to carry through the research process successfully.

1.9   Limitations

Some respondents viewed the study as being intrusive and were hesitant in providing accurate information. To overcome this, the researcher personally reassured respondents that the information provided would be treated in high confidence and that it would not be used in any manner that may affect them negatively.

Time was a limited resource because of deadlines dictated by the desire to meet the requirements for graduating later in the year. This led to limited scope of the study but without compromising the quality of the study and its findings.

Finally, being an academic research project being funded privately, financial resources were quite limited. To overcome this, the researcher had to personally carry out most of the data collection activities to avoid having to engage research assistants at extra cost.

It must be noted however, that these limitations have not in any way compromised the quality of the findings of this study whatsoever.

1.10 Delimitations of the study.

Among other functions, the Immigration Department is responsible for managing gazetted border controls that are widely located around the country's international borders. Given the purpose for which the study was done and the limited resources, the researcher chose to conduct the study at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport owing to its centrality and the fact that it is arguably the most busy and most sensitive station.

1.11 Definition of significant terms.

Interpersonal conflicts: Conflicts occurring between individuals in the workplace

Workplace: Organization.

1.12 Organization of the study.

Chapter one is the introduction of the study and includes background to the study, the research problem, justification, purpose and objectives of the study as well as the research questions, justification, significance and basic assumptions of the study. It also provides limitations and delimitations of the study and also definition of significant.

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methods of data analysis employed in this study.

Chapter four is the data analysis, presentation and interpretation. Here, findings are presented and analyzed along themes derived from the research objectives.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction.

In this chapter, the Researcher seeks to appreciate the works of others on this subject. The chapter will basically dwell on a review of both primary and secondary sources of information on the subject and offer a discussion of the same. This is done following thematic areas based on the research objectives. It also provides the theoretical grounding and the conceptual framework of my study.

2.2.   Workplace conflict.

Although there is no universally accepted definition of conflict (Albanese, 1981), Fisher (1990) defined conflict as an incompatibility of values and goals combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other between two or more parties in a relationship. According to Thomas (1992), conflict is "the process that begins when one party perceives that the other party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affects something that he or she cares about". It is a form of competitive behavior between people or groups. It occurs when two or more people compete over perceived or actual incompatible goals or limited resources (Boulding, 1962). Putnam and Poole (1987) define conflict as "the interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims, and values, and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals..." (Easterbrook et al., 1993).

According to Talmaciu, et al (2010), conflict comprises a series of human affective states such as: anxiety, hostility, resistance, open aggression, as well the types of opposition and antagonistic interaction, including competition. Where at least two persons interact, there is an

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adequate environment for the emergence and development of conflicts. Conflict represents an opposition and confrontation process between different individuals or groups when each of them pursues their own interests.

Conflict can also be said to be an expressed struggle between at least two parties, both of whom perceive interference from the other towards achieving their goals. It must be noted at this point that in some cases conflict may be latent and simmering rather than expressed. However, the same may be discernible from atmosphere around those concerned.

Webster's Dictionary (1983) defines conflict as sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas. In other words, what I want does not match what you want. When conflict occurs in the workplace, it can reduce morale, lower work productivity, increase absenteeism, and cause large-scale confrontations that can lead to serious and violent crimes (Kisamore, 2010).

However, 'conflict has the potential for either a great deal of destruction or much creativity and positive social change' (Kriesberg, 1998). This is possibly the reason why Weeks (1994) avers that Conflict is an outgrowth of the diversity that characterizes our thoughts, our attitudes, our beliefs, our perceptions and our social systems and structures. It's as much a part of our existence as is evolution.

Coan (2010) identified the following as the kinds of conflicts that happen in the workplace:-

i)   Disagreements over turf, (who should do what).

ii)   Disagreements over policy (how things should be done).

iii)   Conflicts of personality and style.

To him, the workplace is a system of relationships which have many different aspects that

include trust, teamwork, quality, morale, self-esteem, loyalty and respect for boss. Conflicts therefore express a dysfunction in these relationships.

Usually, in persistent conflict situations, most employees will usually opt to leave but others choose to repress their feelings of frustration. When an experienced employee leaves an organization, the cost is significant. Turnover hurts productivity and the cost of replacing employees is quite high. Experienced workers are more productive than fresh ones with some studies showing that they are more than 40% more productive (Conbere, 2001). Conbere (2001) further states that "perhaps worse, most frustrated employees don't leave; instead they stay and poison the organization's climate with dissatisfaction."

Such employees may also resort to sabotage which may be extremely difficult to detect. The most difficult form of sabotage to detect is "noncooperation with respect to organizational rules and procedures and/or superiors" (Morill et al., 2003,). Sabotage by circumvention also includes an important subtle type called "working to rule" in which workers meet official procedures to the letter without exercising necessary discretion (Morill et al., 2003). This is why Conbere (2001) further adds that sometimes the cost of conflicts can be measured in terms of quality of service which suffers as a result. In addition, employee retention suffers in the face of conflicts thereby occasioning high costs in replacement and training.

From the foregoing, it's apparent that studies on this subject point to inherent negative effects of workplace conflicts which far outweigh any positive impacts thereof. Consequently, it's incumbent upon organizations (both private and public) to design effective conflict management systems that help minimize the negative effects of conflicts while helping in harnessing the positive aspects thereof. However, in order to effectively do this, it is necessary to understand under what circumstances conflicts occur at the workplace and what factors influence them.

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2.2.1 Communication and workplace conflicts.

Putnam and Poole (1987) regard conflict from the communicational perspective. Communication is treated as one of the five components of "conflict situations"; the others being actor attributes (e.g. beliefs, skills, cognitive style), conflict issues, relationship variables (trust, power, interdependency), and contextual factors (organizational norms, history of conflict) (Easterbrook et al., 1993).

According to Ayoko (2007), difficulties in organizational communication emanates from the demographic composition in organizations which are most often heterogeneous. According to Pelled et al. (1999), demographic diversity is linked with increased difficulties in communication, co-ordination, conflict and poor group consequences. For example, individuals in culturally homogenous groups are likely to feel attracted to each other because they feel similar (Ayoko 2007). However, in diverse groups, individuals feel less attracted to each other as they have less in common (William and O'Reilly, 1998; Milliken and Martins, 1996).

Communication can therefore be both a source of conflict and a means to avoiding and /or resolving conflicts. Lack of communication is often a source of conflict between individuals in an organization. In situations where no effective communication systems exist, conflicts are bound to arise. It may be argued that organizations which have well functioning, open and inclusive communication system experience fewer incidences of interpersonal conflicts and when such conflicts do happen; it's easier to manage them- why?

ACCORD (2005) states that good communication eases tension, builds trust, strengthens relationships and makes people feel at ease because they are mutually understood...and good communication skills are the foundation of any negotiation and mediation approach to resolving conflicts.

Communication enables decision making, conveying instructions from the top and in transmitting feedback upwards. Information so conveyed has to be accurate, precise and timely. The importance of this is that information exchange allows each party to access the other party's thinking and knowledge thereby minimizing cases of mistrust, confusion and misunderstanding. In situations where official communication is inadequate, there is always a chance for rumors and grapevine to take over which may lead to diminished morale and productivity.

However, according to Nistorescu and Caprariu, (2010) differences of personality are sometimes the cause of the communication problems. The barriers or disturbances make the messages to be wrongly transmitted or received, and from here the affect upon relationships between employees that see as a threat the purposes and the personal objectives.

2.2.2   Resources

Whenever workers compete for resources, recognition, and power in the organization's "pecking order", conflict can occur. Since everyone requires a share of the resources (office space, supplies, the boss's time, or the budget fund) to complete their jobs (Hart, 2002), it should come as no surprise when the "have-nots" gripe and plot against the "haves" (Bell, 2002).

The lack of logistical and material resources for executing job requirements in any organization is in most of the times a conflict factor or it can also be a strong accelerator of this kind of workplace conflict (Nistorescu and Capriaru, 2010). For example in a situation where only a limited number of equipment are available, it is obvious that all concerned staff members will want to have access to that equipment. In this circumstance, a conflict arises when it comes to deciding who has and who does not have access to that particular equipment (Nistorescu and Capriaru, 2010).

According to Coan (2010), the influence of scarce resources on the prevalence of workplace conflict may manifest itself in the following aspects:-

i)   Competition regarding insufficient resources – the limited character of organizational resources and the dependence to such resources may generate competitions that might turn into conflicts; the insufficiency of resources has the capacity to transform masked or slow conflicts into open and acute conflicts. Normally the more limited the resources, the higher the potential for conflict.

ii)   Competition for limited power and status- this will manifest itself in efforts by each one to outdo colleagues in exercising power and responsibility in organizations.

ii)   Competition for supremacy – is present when a person tries to compete or outshine another person, such as when two employees are in a fierce competition to get a promotion or an influential position within the same organization.

iv)   Turf wars and invasion of territory that is not limited to the physical space, but to all the other finite resources for which people get into competition in organizations including spaces, investments, personnel, equipments, rewards.

When the power of decision making is in such a way that one person has the power over the other, conflict may appear if the authorized person, in taking decisions, is unjust and doesn't take right decisions.

2.2.3   Job Roles

An organization must have for its best function a clear internal structure. As long as this fact is not accomplished, the company's manager will be very hard to appreciate or to criticize the responsible person with the success or with a failure. This injustice in taking decisions could

be an important factor in starting a conflict, because no one likes to be criticized for something he didn't do and in the same way there is no one that likes to see someone else taking credit for something he has done (Nistorescu and Capriaru, 2010)

Most work situations are so designed that various roles are interdependent upon each other for their well functioning (Hebdon, 2005). He further states that any ambiguity in the purposes and objectives, imprecision in establishing tasks, authority and responsibility of some jobs and compartments, and lack of clarity in transmitting decisions or the deformed presentation of reality are certain to cause conflicts.

Related to this is the issue of conflicting roles which are also known to cause conflicts at the workplace. According to Gatlin, Wysocki and Kepner (2010), this can occur when an associate is asked to perform a function that is outside his job requirements or expertise or another associate is assigned to perform the same job or when both staff members are assigned roles that include overlapping tasks. This situation can contribute to power struggles for territory. This causes intentional or unintentional aggressive or passive-aggressive (sabotage) behavior.

2.2.4 Personal values.

Values have long been viewed as an important determinant in guiding human behavior (Busacca et al, 2010). Schwartz (1992) defines values as "desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviors, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behavior." As a motivational construct, values play a major role in the establishment of personal goals and work-related motivations and have been empirically linked to organizational behavior, academic performance, career decision making, marital satisfaction, and various demographic variables (Busacca et al, 2010). At the workplace, one can distinguish between individual values that are specific to the individual and which may

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be influenced by a person's socio-cultural environment away from work, and group values that are organization-wide and are shaped by the organization's history and cultural evolution.

According to Busacca et al (2010), as a vocational construct, values play a major role in work-related motivations and the establishment of personal goals. Because work values represent goals that individuals would like to achieve, they can lead toward or away from a particular role. Looking for a job, taking part in training, performing in an organizational role, and balancing work and family depend more on work values.

The upshot of this is that the workplace is full of individuals from diverse value systems which inevitably lead to different goals and objectives. As each of these individuals seeks to realize their diverse goals and objectives, conflicts become a natural consequence of such conflicting goals.

Personal values have a very important influence on such aspects as time management, relationships with others and how to treat wrongdoers. For example, the ability and willingness to forgive is largely dependent on personal values of the concerned individual. Moreover, segregation (which is a product of certain value systems) in the workplace leads to gossiping, suspicion, and ultimately, conflict (Hart, 2002)

Differences in the way individuals perceive different situations and events may also be as a result of generational differences in the workplace. For instance, while the older generation may be more reserved, the younger generation may tend to be aggressive, flashy and showy which then affects the way they deal with various work situations (Di Rimualdo, 2006).

Nisrorescu and Caprariu (2010) further stress the influence of personality (Strong personalities, persons with problems or internal problems) in interpersonal conflicts. They point out that internal conflict is usually the cause of all other conflicts at a higher level, because those

concerned often understand in a wrong way the behaviour and objectives of those around them, or they express themselves in a wrong way and from this the conflict begins to turn to interpersonal level. The differences of personality are sometimes the cause of the communication problems. The barriers or disturbances make the messages to be wrongly transmitted or received, and from here they affect relationships between employees they see as a threat to their purposes and their personal objectives.

2.2.5 Organization and leadership

The influence of organizational structure on workplace conflicts was first suggested by Worth (1950) when, after a study of Sears and Company, he concluded that small organizations had better employee morale and productivity than large organizations. That the advantages of small organizations can be incorporated into large organizations by using fewer levels of administration; that is a flat organization structure with a wide span of supervision rather than a tall or multilevel organization with very narrow span of supervision.

Organization structure determines span of control and defines the job descriptions of the various positions in the structure thereby having an influence on the prevalence of (or absence of) job conflicts. It has been observed by some scholars that a tall structure increases levels of communication yet communication in an organization is subject to different interpretation at each level. The more levels there are in an organization, the greater the likelihood of distortion so that the final recipient of a communication may get the wrong message or wrong emphasis (Carso and Yanouzas, 1969).

On the other hand, organizations have recognized that dysfunctional leadership, policies, and relationships impact individuals, teams, and entire systems and may spread insidiously and

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undetected (Frost & Robinson. 1999; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Lubit, 2004). Dysfunctional behavior creates impairment and may be traced to individual leaders and employees or may be a function of detrimental company behavior as "organizations themselves create conditions for toxicity through policies and practices that fail to include the human factor in their execution" (Frost, 2003). Organizations search for explanations and relief from the demoralization, executive abuses, deliberate undermining, and toxic behaviors that demean, trivialize, subvert, mislead, ignore, and squash constructive criticism or dialog.

Leadership may be baffled as to whether organizational dysfunction is at root more individual or organization-wide in origin as complex systems do not typically lend themselves to clear-cut, simple cause-and-effect explanations. Organizations must therefore seek enhanced detection, assessment, and intervention strategies in response to disturbing workplace behavior, threats and volatility, troubled individuals, and dysfunctional systems. People conflicts, anger management issues, and emotional unintelligence result in escalating conflicts that adversely impact quality, productivity, teams, retention, and bottom lines. Further complicating detection is the perception shared by some managers that dysfunctional behavior frequently appears "off the radar screen" and may be invisible to all but the most experienced eye. Even minor emotional pain suffered from public embarrassments, face threats, and reprimands by superiors may turn increasingly dysfunctional as the contagiousness of negative emotions rubs off on coworkers and colleagues and escalates and permeates organizational culture (Goleman, 2000).

Of particular interest is the fact that in some instances common workplace problems are mismanaged and slip through the cracks, evade detection, and reach high toxicity level. There is need for organizations to increase the capacity to detect and maintain simmering conflicts at manageable levels. Quite often, inability to assess, lack of readiness, avoidance, resistance,

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denial, and failures in leadership results in an escalation of dysfunctional effects. Here, low toxicity turns high and mildly counterproductive behavior morphs into a dysfunctional team, division, and organization.

Related to this is the fact that whenever organizational policies are non-existent or if they do exist, are changed haphazardly or inconsistently applied, misunderstandings are likely to occur. Staff members are supposed to be made aware of organizational Rules, Regulations and policies. In other words, guesswork should not be given room. Otherwise, unpredictable things can occur such as associates dressing inappropriately or giving out wrong information (Gatlin, et al. 2010). The absence of clear policies or policies that are constantly changing can create an environment of uncertainty and conflict (Hart, 2002).

2.3   Theory of workplace conflicts

The purpose of conflict theory is not to replace the analysis of other social processes but to provide an "explanation of certain variables neglected in other theorizing" (Coser, 1967). While conflict theory may be seen as the predominant theory of social change, it nevertheless also provides a useful point of demarcation between various theories of social processes.

Existing conflict theory will be found to be deficient in a number of areas. The systems framework often used by pluralist industrial relations scholars emphasizes collective forms of conflict particularly strikes to the exclusion of such other collective forms such as job actions and such individual forms as grievances, absenteeism, sabotage, etc. (Dunlop, 1958). A radical critique of the pluralists is their tendency to 'reify' the institutions of industrial relations with the result that individual relationships and certain forms of conflict are ignored (Hyman, 1975; Edwards, 1986). Thus the systems framework provides little insight into expressions of conflict

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other than strikes and says little about conflict suppression. Similarly, labor process theory ignores dichotomies between collective and individual expressions and covert and overt conflict (Edwards, 1986).

A simple framework for understanding a more comprehensive view of conflict has developed based upon the exit-voice framework of Hirschman (1970). Under it people faced with dissatisfaction with an organization will either exit, that is leave the relationship, or attempt to change the relationship from within through some form of voice. This framework has been applied directly to the workplace in a variety of studies most notably, Freeman and Medoff (1984).

However, as much as the exit-voice framework provides greater insights into the relationships between individual expressions, it offers little about collective forms of conflict. (Hirschman, 1970). Conflict suppression causes conflict to shift from overt collective expressions (e.g., strikes) to more covert collective expressions (sick-outs, slowdowns, etc.), unfair labor practices, and to individual forms (grievances, grievance arbitrations, and absenteeism) Hebdon, (2003).

A unifying theme that runs through much of the research on covert conflict is the notion that conflict is inevitable. This is because the conditions expressed here provide fertile ground for conflicts to occur. It cannot therefore be completely eliminated or suppressed by structural control at the societal level or in organizations. This 'doctrine of inevitability' has taken on a renewed significance given the pressures generated by such changes in society and the workplace as globalization, changes in work organization, and the influx of women and visible minorities into the labor force (Kolb & Putnam, 1992).

The doctrine of inevitability is multi-disciplinary in nature, spans levels of analysis, and

would appear to be timeless. According to Morill et al. (2003) the current literature needs "a more coherent vision of covert political conflict with regards to its conceptual foundations, empirical findings, and linkages to overt political voice in organizations". Covert political conflict in organizations may include the following elements: contestation of institutionalized power and authority, perceptions of collective injury, social exclusion, and officially forbidden forms of dissent.

The most commonly studied form of covert conflict is "material" conflict i.e., the "subversion of organizational technologies and resources" (Morill et al., 2003). Theft and sabotage are typical examples in the literature and are not limited to the private sector. They are easily the most available avenues for expressing negative feelings across public as well as private organizations.

Researchers also report mental health workers defacing and debilitating property in mental wards to "protest" managerial practices (Spector, 1975), construction workers breaking tools on construction sites to express their discontent with their working conditions (Tucker, 1993), and civil servants in public bureaucracies who subvert various policies (Brehm & Gates, 1997; Morill et al., 2003).

In conclusion, it should be observed that the most appropriate theory of workplace conflicts is one that includes an analysis of both overt and covert expressions of workplace conflicts. It may be noted that most previous studies emphasized the overt expressions of conflicts such as strikes to the exclusion of more covert ones such as absenteeism, sabotage and pilferage.

In such situations, the only way of solving the conflict is represented by co-operation which allows each party to find the position and the other party's arguments if the people

involved in the conflict want to cooperate in order to find the most acceptable solution (Ozkalp, Zungur and Ozdemir, 2008).

2.4   Response to workplace conflicts

Nistorescu and Caprariu (2010) observe a number of reactions to conflict situations. These are:-

Avoidance- which means unassertive and uncooperative behaviour. People use this style in order to keep away from conflicts, to ignore the misunderstandings or to remain natural. When unsolved conflicts interfere in reaching the purpose, the avoidance style leads to negative results for the organization.

Compulsion- supposes an assertive and uncooperative behavior and shows a win-lose approach of interpersonal conflict. Those who are using this style are trying to reach their own goals without thinking of others. Often, compulsion means a coercive power.

Adaptability- represents cooperation behavior, but an unassertive one. Adaptability may represent an act of altruism, a long term strategy in the direction of encouragement in cooperation with the others, in acceptance of the others desires. In general, adaptability is well received by others, but it can be seen sometime as a weakness or as an act of submission.

Cooperation- represents an assertive and powerful behaviour of cooperation. It reflects a win-win approach to interpersonal conflicts. The cooperation appears when the involved sides in the conflict are both looking to fully satisfy all sides' needs and are looking for a positive result for everyone.

Compromise- is an intermediate behavior between cooperation and assertiveness which relies on "to offer and to receive" and supposes some concrescences. The compromise is often used as a conflict solving method. There is no evident winner or loser, but there is a desire to

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rationalize the object of the conflict and to accept the solution which offers an incomplete satisfaction of each side's needs.

Whatever conflict resolution methods one adopts, Bass and Sea (2010) provide six tips to resolving Workplace Conflict. These are:-

i) Let people tell their stories- when people are deeply upset about something, they need to get their stories out. Plus, as they tell their stories, new information may come to light that allows a solution to emerge.

ii) Be aware of your own cultural lens- the beliefs, values, and biases that shape how you view things.

iii) Identify the true impediment. In the event of a conflict, ask yourself; what is the motivating factor here? What is really keeping this person from agreeing to a solution?

iv) Learn to "read minds." You can learn a lot by paying attention to body language and the emotional tone behind the words.

v) Use non-judgmental language such as "I think" or "It seems to me."

vi) Focus on the problem or issue, not the person.

2.5 Summary of literature review.

Fisher (1990) defined conflict as an incompatibility of values and goals combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other between two or more parties in a relationship. According to Kriesberg (1998), 'conflict has the potential for either a great deal of destruction or much creativity and positive social change.' Coan (2010) identified disagreements over turf, (who should do what), disagreements over policy (how things should be done) and conflicts of personality and style as the main areas of conflicts in organizations.

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Communication is treated as one of the five components of "conflict situations"; the others being actor attributes (e.g. beliefs, skills, cognitive style), conflict issues, relationship variables (trust, power, interdependency), and contextual factors (organizational norms, history of conflict) (Easterbrook et al., 1993).

Resource utilization structures are another key factor in this review. It is noted that whenever workers compete for resources, recognition, and power in the organization's "pecking order", conflict can occur. Since everyone requires a share of the resources (office space, supplies, the boss's time, or the budget fund) to complete their jobs (Hart, 2002), it should come as no surprise when the "have-nots" gripe and plot against the "haves" (Bell, 2002).

It was noted that work situations are so designed that various roles are interdependent upon each other for their well functioning. Therefore any ambiguity in the purposes and objectives of some jobs lack of clarity in transmitting decisions or deformed presentation of reality are certain to cause conflicts.

The nature of organization and its leadership also has an influence on prevalence of interpersonal conflicts. Organization structure determines span of control and defines the job descriptions of the various positions in the structure thereby having an influence on the prevalence (or absence of) of job conflicts. Moreover, dysfunctional leadership, policies, and relationships impact individuals, teams, and entire systems and therefore have an influence on conflict.

A discussion of the theory of workplace conflicts emphasized the shift from overt collective expressions (e.g., strikes) to more covert collective expressions (sick-outs, slowdowns, etc.), unfair labor practices, and to individual forms (grievances, grievance arbitrations, and absenteeism) Hebdon (2003).

2.6 Conceptual framework of study

Fig. 1: Conceptual framework

Independent variables

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Communication:-     │ ─────►     Moderating variable      Intervening variable
│ Structures and      │
│ processes           │           ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐
│                     │           │ Organizational Rules │  │ Family background of │
│                     │           │ and Regulations i.e.  │  │ staff                │
└─────────────────────┘           │                      │  │                      │
                                  │ Civil service code of │  │                      │
┌─────────────────────┐           │ regulations.         │  │                      │
│ Resources:-         │           │                      │  │                      │
│                     │           │ National laws.       │  └──────────────────────┘
│ Financial resources │           └──────────────────────┘
│                     │ ─────►                                          Dependent
│ Tools and equipment │
│                     │                                                 variable
│ Power and status    │
│                     │                                     ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Territory and turf  │                                     │ Interpersonal        │
└─────────────────────┘                                     │ workplace            │
                                                            │ conflicts.           │
┌─────────────────────┐                                     │                      │
│ Job roles.          │ ─────►                              └──────────────────────┘
│ Tasks               │
│ Responsibilities    │
│                     │
└─────────────────────┘

                              Extraneous variable

┌─────────────────────┐       ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Personal values     │       │ Mental health status │
│                     │       │ of staffers e.g. stress│
│ Attitudes           │ ─────►│                      │
│                     │       │ Domestic conditions  │
│ Beliefs             │       │                      │
│                     │       └──────────────────────┘
│ Goals               │
└─────────────────────┘
```

Independent variables- these are those variables which are manipulated to cause changes in the dependent variable. In this case, communication, scarce resources, interdependence of roles and conflicting personal values are the independent variables whose manipulation causes changes in the dependent variable which is interpersonal workplace conflicts.

Dependent variable- this is the variable whose outcome depends on manipulation of the independent variables i.e. prevalence of interpersonal workplace conflicts depends on manipulation of the independent variables of communication, scarce resources, interdependence of roles and conflicting personal values.

Moderating variables- behaves like the independent variable in that it has a contributory effect on the relationship between dependent and independent variable. In this case, organizational rules and regulations i.e. the civil service code of regulations are likely to have a significant effect on the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts at the immigration department.

Intervening variable- the variable that might affect the relationship of dependent and independent variables but is difficult to measure. In this case, while family background is believed to have a bearing on one's attitude/aptitude and therefore predisposition to conflict, it's extremely difficult to measure this phenomenon.

Extraneous variable- this is a variable with the capacity to affect a given relationship but is assumed not to have a significant effect. The mental health status of staffers at the immigration department has the potential to influence the prevalence of conflicts but not very significantly.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology which was used to carry out the study in order to meet its objectives. It highlights the research design, population of interest, the sample and the various sampling techniques that were employed, the research instruments used and the data analysis methods applied in analyzing the findings of this study.

3.2   Research Design.

In undertaking this study, the descriptive survey method was employed. This method has made it possible to do an in-depth assessment and analysis of factors that influence the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Kenya Immigration Department.

3.3   Target population

The study targeted a population of two hundred staff members of the Immigration Department based at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.   Findings of the study are expected to be applicable to these and the rest of the members of staff of the entire Immigration Department and other organizations in general.

3.4   Sample size and selection

Due to the fact that the targeted population was relatively small, the researcher decided to use a fairly large sample of 35%. This was because larger samples provide a test that is more sensitive or has more power and larger sample sizes are better than smaller sample sizes because

one is more likely to draw the correct conclusion (Johnson, B and Christensen, L 2010). Therefore questionnaires were administered to 70 members of staff of the Immigration Department at the Airport.

Immigration staff at the JKIA is organized into four shifts with an almost equal number of officers. The researcher purposively selected the Officer in Charge and deputy, together with four Shift Heads as part of the sample. Purposive sampling is a technique in which the researcher decides based on the type of information needed and who to be included in the sample (Kathuri et al. 1993). According to Mulusa (1990), it is based on the assumption that the researcher can use intuition to select individuals that are presumed to represent the population. In this particular case, the officer-in-charge and the shift heads were expected to yield very valuable information owing to their positions of high responsibility.

Sixteen members were then selected from each of the four shifts by way of simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. In this regard, every staff member of the department had an equal chance of being selected.

3.5. Research instruments

Mainly primary data was collected using structured questionnaires that contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions. These questionnaires were self-administered whereby the researcher personally dropped them to the respondents and went back to pick later. Choice of this instrument had a number of advantages including the fact that it accorded the respondents

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ample time to fill out the questions away from the probing eye of the interviewer and the responses were gathered in a standardized way thereby making them more objective, certainly more so than interviews. Moreover, it was generally relatively quick to collect information from a large portion of the population using the questionnaires.

3.6. Reliability

Joppe (2000) defines reliability as '...the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.' Simply put, reliability denotes ability to replicate results. To ensure this, the research instruments were subjected to expert evaluation by the supervisor and were pre-tested on a small group of members of staff who were then excluded from the main sample.

3.7. Validity

Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research object? (Joppe, 2000). Validity denotes accuracy of measurement and whether it really measures what it sets out to measure. Pre-testing and expert evaluation by the supervisor helped ensure validity.

3.8. Data Collection Procedures.

After identifying the sample and armed with the selected data collection instruments, the researcher went to the field for actual data collection. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents. This allowed him to personally appeal to the respondents and

persuade them on the need to honestly provide the requested information. The respondents were then allowed ample time of up to one week to fill out the questionnaires before the researcher returned to collect them. By so doing, it was possible to realize a high questionnaire return rate of over 97%

3.9   Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis have been employed in this study. Qualitative data analysis has been done following the thematic sequence derived from the research objectives. This has been done to derive meaning from the qualitative data that was collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the issues under investigation. The entire process involved writing, coding, interpreting and organizing the information along themes derived from the objectives of the study.

Quantitative data analysis has been used to analyze numeric data. In this regard, frequencies and percentages have been used and generated using relevant Microsoft office packages.

3.10   Operationalization Table

The table below is a summary of the objectives of this study, variables of the study, how they will be measured and tools of analysis that will be used.

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Table 3.1:   *Operationalization Table*

Objectives	Research Questions	Independent Variable	Intervening variable	Dependent Variable	Indicators	Measurement Scales	Tools of analysis	Type of analysis
To establish the communication structures and processes that influence interpersonal conflicts at the Immigration department at JKIA	How do communication structures and processes influence interpersonal conflicts in the immigration department at JKIA?	Communication structures and processes	Family background	Interpersonal conflicts	Delayed decision-making. Distorted information.	Nominal	Frequency tables Percentages.	Descriptive
To find out how resource utilization influences interpersonal conflicts at the immigration department at JKIA.	How does resource utilization influence interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration department at JKIA?	Resource utilization	Family background	Interpersonal conflicts	Delays in task completion. Wastage	Nominal	Frequencies Percentages	Descriptive
To establish how job roles help fuel interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration department at JKIA.	How do job roles help fuel interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration department at JKIA?	Job roles	Family background	Interpersonal conflicts	Role conflict Apathy Absenteeism	Nominal	Frequencies Percentages.	Descriptive.
To assess the influence of personal values on the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration department at JKIA.	To what extent do personal values influence interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration department at JKIA?	Personal values	Family background Domestic environment.	Interpersonal conflicts	Attitudes Beliefs Interests	Nominal	Frequencies Percentages.	Descriptive.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the study which have been analyzed and discussed under the following thematic areas: questionnaire return rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, prevalence of interpersonal conflicts, influence of communication on workplace conflicts, resource utilization and workplace conflicts, job roles and workplace conflicts and influence of personal values on workplace conflicts.

4.2 Questionnaire return rate

Out of 70 questionnaires that were administered, 68 were returned representing a return rate of over 97%. This high return rate was realized due to the fact that the researcher personally carried out the exercise by requesting and persuading the respondents on the importance of the exercise and the need to fill out and return the questionnaires.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

The following is a summary of the demographic characteristics of respondents in this study. These include gender, age and marital status as well as years of service in the Immigration Department.

4.3.1 Gender of respondents

Out of the 68 respondents who returned their questionnaires, 46 were males representing 67.6% of respondents while 22 were female representing 22.4% of respondents as summarized in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: *Gender of respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Males	46	67.6
Females	22	22.4
TOTAL	68	100

4.3.2 Age of respondents

Table 4.2 shows a breakdown of the respondents by age bracket. It can be noted that the majority of respondents fall in the 31-40 years age bracket. This is indicative of the average age of staff in the department where majority fall in that age bracket. It can also be noted that only 10% and 8% of the respondents fall in the 30 and below and 41-50 age brackets respectively. None of the respondents was found to be above 50 years of age.

Table 4.2: Age of respondents

Age (yrs)	Frequency	Percentage %
30 and below	10	14.7
31-40	50	73.5
41-50	8	11.8
TOTAL	68	100

4.3.3 Marital status

Out of the 68 respondents, 55 said they were married representing about 81% of the total number of respondents while 13 were single representing about 19%.

Table 4.3: Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage %
Married	55	81
Single	13	19
TOTAL	68	100

4.3.4 Length of service

The table 4.4 shows the length of service in the Immigration Department of the 68 respondents. It may be noted that majority of the respondents (38 or 55.9%) have worked with the department for between 1 and 5 years while only 2 representing 2.9% have worked with the department for more than 15 years. 23 respondents representing 33.8% have worked with the department for between 6 and 10 years while 5 or 2.9% of the respondents have worked with the department for between 11 and 15 years.

Table 4.4: Length of service of respondents

Period worked in years	Frequency	Percentage %
1 to 5	38	55.9
6 to 10	23	33.8
11 to 15	5	7.4
15 and above	2	2.9
TOTAL	68	100

4.4   Prevalence of interpersonal conflicts

Asked to state whether or not they had been involved in a conflict situation with a colleague or colleagues at the workplace, 38 respondents representing 55.9% said yes while 30 respondents representing 44.1% of all respondents said no.

The researcher also sought the respondents' general rating of the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration Department at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and table 4.5 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 4.5: Prevalence of interpersonal conflicts.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Very low	5	7.4
Low	47	69.1
High	10	14.7
Very high	6	8.8
TOTAL	68	100

From these responses, the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts at the department is quite evident with 55.9% of the respondents confirming that they had been involved in a conflict situation at the workplace. However, majority of these(69.1%) rate the prevalence as being low, followed by 14.7% giving a rating of high while 8.8% give a rating of very high. Only 7.4% gave a rating of very low.

These ratings are quite significant because the prevalence of even a few incidents of conflict in the workplace is highly undesirable and should be avoided as much as possible.

The study was undertaken with the overall objective of finding out the factors that influence prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. Respondents were therefore required to provide their opinions and experiences on various themes which were expected to help answer the research questions thereby help realize the objectives of the study. These were communication structures and processes in the department, resource availability and utilization, job roles in the department, and personal values of members of staff of the department. Findings on these and other areas are summarized in the following section.

4.5.1 Communication structures and processes

Respondents were asked to state whether the Immigration Department has got formal modes of communication and all but two answered in the affirmative representing over 97% of the total number of 68 respondents. The respondents were then asked to name some of the means of communication mostly used in the department and letters, circulars and memos came out as the most commonly used. Others included oral communication through staff meetings, telephone conversations and two-way radio communication.

Respondents were then asked to rate the communication process in the department in terms of timeliness, accuracy and appropriateness. Findings on these are summarized in the tables in the next section.

4.5.2 Timeliness of communication process.

Table 4.6 below provides a summary of findings in response to the question as to whether or not the communication process in the department is timely.

Table 4.6: Timeliness of communication process.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Very prompt	5	7.4
Prompt	32	47
Slow	25	36.8
Very slow	6	8.8
TOTAL	68	100

It can be noted from the table that most respondents (47%) thought the communication process in the department is prompt or timely. This means that according to them, information travels in good time and is available when it's needed. However, it can also be noted that a significant number of respondents (45.6%) think that the process is either slow or too slow. To them, dissemination of directives, instructions and other information is not as prompt as it should be. Asked to offer reasons for this, most attributed the same to the multiple levels that communication must go through owing to the highly bureaucratic nature of the public service.

4.5.3 Accuracy of communication process

Table 4.7: Accuracy of communication process.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Very accurate	13	19
Fairly accurate	55	81
Inaccurate	-	-
Highly inaccurate	-	-
TOTAL	68	100

From table 4.7 above, it can be noted that most respondents think the communication process at the Immigration Department at the airport is either fairly accurate (81%) or very accurate (19%). None of the respondents gave the process a rating of either inaccurate or highly inaccurate.

4.5.4   Appropriateness of communication process

Similarly, from findings in table 4.8 below, majority of respondents thought the communication process is either appropriate (76.5%) or highly appropriate (17.6%). Only 5.9% thought the communication process was inappropriate.

Table 4.8: Appropriateness of communication process.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly appropriate	12	17.6
Appropriate	52	76.5
Inappropriate	4	5.9
Highly inappropriate	-	-
	68	100

4.5.5   Communication and relationship between co-workers

Respondents were further asked to state whether or not from their experience, communication structures and processes influences their relationship with co-workers and 88.2% said yes while only 11.8% said no. Specifically asked to state whether or not communication influences the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace, 73.5% said yes while 26.5% said no.

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Asked to explain their responses, most respondents stated that good communication enhances understanding, ensures timely execution of tasks and enables quick problem solving. This generally helps to minimize chances of interpersonal conflicts happening.

Respondents were then asked to give a general rating of communication structures and processes in the Immigration department and the findings are as summarized in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Overall rating of the communication process.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Very good	12	18
Good	43	63
Poor	13	19
Very poor	-	-
TOTAL	68	100

It can be noted that 63% of respondents thought that communication processes in the department are good while 18% thought it's very good. However, 19% thought it's poor.

Respondents were asked to proffer reasons why they thought communication influences prevalence of interpersonal conflicts at work, and responses were varied but included the following:-

i) That delays in communication leads to delays in completion of tasks. As a result, subordinates are blamed for failures that they were not in a position to control or avoid.

ii) That multiple levels of communication may lead to distortion of the message as it moves from one level to another thereby causing misunderstandings between seniors and subordinates.

iii) That some seniors employ a style of talking down on subordinates rather than passing on the message and this causes resentment which breeds conflicts.

iv) Poor communication may lead to delays in decision making and problem solving, and a situation of passing the blame may then ensue hence conflicts between co-workers.

4.6 Resource utilization

The study sought to find out the respondents' opinion in regard to availability of resources and their utilization and its influence on the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. They were first asked to identify some of the resources required and the following were mentioned: - furniture, vehicles, document examination equipment, computers, stationery and human resources.

In this regard, respondents were asked whether or not availability, adequacy, appropriateness and distribution of resources influences individual work performance and 62 respondents i.e. 92.1% said yes while only 6 or (7.9%) said no. Respondents were further asked whether availability of resources has an influence on personal relationships at work and 58 of them representing 85.3% said yes while only 14.7% said no.

Respondents were then required to rate availability of resources at the Immigration Department in terms of adequacy, appropriateness and distribution. Findings on these are summarized in the next section.

4.6.1 Adequacy of resources

Table 4.10: Adequacy of resources.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly adequate	-	-
Adequate	25	36.8
Inadequate	33	48.5
Highly inadequate	10	14.7
TOTAL	68	100

From the table 4.10, it's evident that majority of the respondents thought resources required for the execution of their functions are in short supply with 48.5% of respondents saying that they are inadequate and 14.7% saying they're highly inadequate. Only 36.8% thought that resources at the department were adequate.

4.6.2 Appropriateness of resources

While majority of the respondents thought that supply of resources was inadequate, a similarly large majority thought that available resources were appropriate for the purposes for which they are used with 69.1% saying they are appropriate or highly appropriate. Less than 31% of the respondents thought the resources were inappropriate or highly inappropriate. (See table 4.11 below).

Table 4.11: Appropriateness of resources.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly appropriate	10	14.7
Appropriate	37	54.4
Inappropriate	17	25
Highly inappropriate	4	5.9
TOTAL	68	100

4.6.3 Distribution of resources

Asked to state whether or not resources in the department are well distributed, 54.4% of respondents said they are poorly distributed while 33.8% said they are well distributed. A significant number of respondents (118%) said resources are very poorly distributed (see table 4.12 below)

Table 4.12: Distribution of resources.

Rating	Frequency	Percentage %
Very well distributed	-	-
Well distributed	23	33.8
Poorly distributed	37	54.4
Very poorly distributed	8	11.8
TOTAL	68	100

From the findings, it's evident that while resources identified and sourced are appropriate for the purpose for which they are intended, they are not in adequate supply and their distribution is poor. This was said to lead to competition between co-workers for use of these resources a situation that leads to strained relationships and therefore conflicts.

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4.7   Job Roles

The study also sought to find out whether job roles in the department have any influence on the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts. To help do this, respondents were asked if they thought job roles in the department are clearly defined and whether performance of one's role depended on other persons performing their own roles. Findings on this are presented in the following section.

4.7.1   Definition of roles

Table 4.13: Are roles clearly defined?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	51	75
No	17	25
TOTAL	68	100

From table 4.13 above, 75% of respondents thought roles in the department are clearly defined and only 25% thought they are not. It was observed by most respondents that clear definition of roles ensures that everyone knows what is expected of them and for which tasks they're answerable.

4.7.2   Interdependence of roles

It was also found that roles in the Immigration department (like in many other work situations), are dependent upon each other for their well functioning. In response to this question, an overwhelming majority of respondents (91.2%) said yes, performance of their roles is dependent on other people performing their own roles while only 8.8% said no. (See table 4.14 below).

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Table 4.14: Does performance of your job roles depend on others performing their own roles?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	62	91.2
No	6	8.8
TOTAL	68	100

Asked whether they thought interdependence of roles was a potential source of conflicts, 81% said yes while only 19% said no (table 4.15). Asked to give reasons, majority pointed out that the situation often leads to some individuals being blamed for other people's failures. An example was given of a situation where a supervisor fails to convey a stop order or arrest warrant for a prohibited immigrant, and the primary officer ends up being blamed for failure to apprehend yet it would only be for lack of information. This kind of scenario is certain to cause suspicion, ill feelings and conflict between the supervisors and subordinate.

Table 4.15: Do you consider interdependence of roles a potential source of conflicts?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	81
No	13	19
TOTAL	68	100

4.8.1 Personal values

It is generally agreed that individuals' personal values, goals and attitudes have an influence on the emergence and prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in organizations. This study therefore sought to find out whether this is the case in the Immigration Department at the airport. To begin with, respondents were asked to rate the relative strength of their reasons for working in order to explore their influence on conflict. A number of possible reasons were listed and

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respondents were asked to assign them their relative strength of influence from 1(weakest) to 5(strongest). These were: - To meet the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, to make use of professional and technical skills, to accumulate and grow wealth, and for self esteem and gratification.

a) Basic needs of food, shelter and clothing.

From the findings, the need to meet the human basic needs of food, shelter and clothing was found to be one of the strongest motivators for respondents to work with an overwhelming majority of 70.5% assigning it the strongest rating of 5 and 20.5% giving an equally strong rating of 4.

Table 4.16: Meet the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing?

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	2	3
2	2	3
3	2	3
4	14	20.5
5	48	70.5
TOTAL	68	100

b) Use of professional and technical skills.

The wish to make use of professional and technical skills acquired over many years in school and college was equally rated as a strong motivator with a total of 38% and 41% respondents assigning it ratings of 4 and 5 respectively (table 4.17 below). It may be observed that nearly all respondents had a bachelor's degree as their minimum educational qualification.

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This high rating may therefore be due the fact that all wish to see their efforts put to appropriate and relevant use.

Table 4.17: To make use of their professional and technical skills?

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	4	6
2	2	3
3	8	12
4	26	38
5	28	41
	68	100

c) **Self esteem and gratification.**

An equally large number of respondents indicated that they work for self esteem and gratification with 29% and 38% of respondents giving strong ratings of 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 4.18: For self esteem and gratification.

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	4	6
2	6	9
3	12	18
4	20	29
5	26	38
TOTAL	68	100

d) **Accumulate and grow wealth**

The least motivator was found to be the wish to grow and accumulate wealth with most respondents assigning an average rating of 3. This is probably due to the fact that at their current

stations in life, while the wish to accumulate and grow wealth is not completely off their minds, it's the least of their worries. They are more concerned with having a job, earning a living and meeting mostly security and esteem needs.

Table 4.19: To accumulate and grow wealth?

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	10	15
2	10	15
3	20	29
4	15	22
5	13	19
TOTAL	68	100

4.8.2 Factors influencing individuals' values, goals and attitudes.

To find out the underlying factors that influence the respondents' goals and attitudes, respondents were asked to rate the relative strength of possible factors behind their motivations for working. Again this was on a scale of 1- weakest influence to 5-strongest influence. The findings are summarized in the following section.

i) Level of education

From the findings, it can be noted that majority of respondents think that level of education has the strongest influence on their values, goals and attitudes with 29.4% and 51.5% of respondents giving it strong ratings of 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 4.20: Influence of level of education

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	3	4.4
2	4	5.9
3	6	8.8
4	20	29.4
5	35	51.5
TOTAL	68	100

ii) Age

One's age was also found to have an equally strong influence with 34% and 38% of respondents giving a rating of 4 and 5 respectively. This means that one's view of life and their definition of success are highly dependent on one's age.

Table 4.21: Influence of age

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	7	10.3
2	5	7.4
3	7	10.3
4	23	34
5	26	38
TOTAL	68	100

iii) Family background

Family background was also found to have a fairly significant influence on one's choices with 23.5% and 32.5% of the respondents giving it a rating of 4 and 5 respectively. The import of these responses is that one will most likely seek to enhance or at least maintain the standard of life like that of their families. This is sure to have an influence on their goals and objectives in life and work.

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Table 4.22: Influence of family background

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	12	17.6
2	8	11.8
3	10	14.7
4	16	23.5
5	22	32.4
TOTAL	68	100

iv) Cultural background

This was found to have an average influence on the respondents' choices. From a summary of the findings in table 4.23 below, it can be observed that most respondents (32.4%) assigned an average strength of 3 while 22.1% and 19.1% assigned ratings of 2 and 4 respectively..

Table 4.23: influence of cultural background

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	13	19
2	15	22.1
3	22	32.4
4	13	19.1
5	5	7.4
TOTAL	68	100

v) Religious orientation

Religious orientation was found to have very insignificant influence on the respondents' choices with majority i.e. 47% and 26.5% giving low ratings of 1 and 2 respectively (table 4.24 below). Only 8.8% and 5.9% of respondents give it high ratings of 4 and 5 respectively. This essentially means that religion plays only a minor or no role at all in shaping respondents' goals and objectives at work and in life generally.

Table 4.24: Religious orientation

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	32	47
2	18	26.5
3	8	11.8
4	6	8.8
5	4	5.9
TOTAL	68	100

vi) Political opinion

The researcher sought to find out if one's political opinion had any influence on their values, goals and attitudes. Findings summarized in table 4.25 below clearly indicate that political opinion is of minimum or of no consequence at all in respondents' choices at work and in life with 54.4% of respondents giving the lowest rating of 1 and 25% giving an equally low rating of 2.

Table 4.25: Influence of Political opinion

Rating(1-weakest to 5-strongest attribute)	Frequency	Percentage %
1	37	54.4
2	17	25
3	8	11.8
4	6	8.8
5	-	-
TOTAL	68	100

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of key findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies on the subject. Here, a summary of the key findings are presented in themes derived from the key objectives of the study namely:- to establish the communication structures and processes that influence the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts, to find out how resource utilization contributes to the emergence of interpersonal conflicts among staff, to establish how job roles fuel interpersonal conflicts and to assess the influence of personal values of staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA on the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

5.2 Summary of findings

The following is a summary of findings of this study presented along themes derived from the study objectives.

5.2.1 Prevalence of interpersonal conflicts

From the findings, it's quite evident that interpersonal conflicts are indeed prevalent in the Immigration Department at JKIA with 55.9% of respondents saying they have personally been involved in conflict situations at work.

However, the level of conflicts is not as alarming with most respondents (69.1%) giving a general rating of low and only 14.7% giving a rating of very high

5.2.2 Communication structures and processes

Letters, Circulars and memos were cited as the most commonly used means of communication in the department. Others cited include oral communication through meetings, telephone conversations and over two way radio communication.

a) Findings on timeliness, accuracy and appropriateness of the communication structures and processes.

Less than half (47%) of the respondents felt that the communication process in the department is timely i.e. that dissemination of information and important instructions as well as feedback is done in a timely manner. However, a significant number (45.6%) felt the process is either slow or very slow.

An overwhelming majority of respondents thought the communication process is accurate with 81% saying it is fairly accurate and the remaining 19% saying it's highly accurate. None of the respondents thought it was inaccurate or highly inaccurate.

Majority of the respondents (76.5%) thought the communication process in the department is quite appropriate while 17.6% said it's highly appropriate. Only a small minority (5.9%) said the process is inappropriate.

b) Influence of communication on relationships between co-workers

Majority of respondents (88.2%) said that communication does influence the way they relate with co-workers. 73.5% of respondents further said that communication does influence the prevalence of conflicts between co-workers. To explain this, most respondents stated that good communication enhances understanding, ensures that tasks are executed in a

timely manner and ensures quick problem- solving.

Majority of respondents (63%) rated the communication structures and processes in the department as good and 18% gave a rating of very good. Only 19% thought it is very poor.

In explaining how communication influences prevalence of conflicts, most respondents argued that:-

i)   Delays in communication lead to delays in completion of tasks.

ii)   Multiple levels of communication often lead to distortion of the message owing to the many handlers of the message along the line.

iii)   Some seniors talk down on (rather than communicate with) subordinates leading to resentment among subordinates.

5.2.3   Influence of resource availability and utilization

Respondents named the most common resources required in their workplace to include Furniture, Vehicles. Document examination equipment, Stationery, Computers and Human resources. In response to a question as to whether or not availability, adequacy, appropriateness and distribution of resources has any influence on work performance, 92% of respondents said yes and only 8.9 said no. Most importantly, 85.3% of respondents said availability and utilization of resources has a strong influence on personal relationships at work.

Findings on adequacy, appropriateness and distribution of resources.

Majority of respondents thought that resources available are not adequate for the intended purposes with 48.5% and 14.7% saying they are inadequate and highly inadequate respectively. Only 36.8% said resources provided are adequate.

On the other hand, majority of respondents felt that though the resources available are inadequate, they are quite appropriate for the intended purposes. In response to this question, 69.1% of respondents said yes resources provided are appropriate or highly appropriate and only 31% said they are inappropriate.

Asked to say whether or not these resources are well distributed, 54.4% of respondents said the resources are poorly distributed while only 33.8% said they are well distributed. This means that required resources are not available at the right place at the right time.

These findings essentially mean that while resources available are appropriate for the relevant purposes, they are inadequate and poorly distributed. It is these that has an influence on interpersonal conflicts due the ensuing competition over their usage.

5.2.4   Influence of Job roles

Majority of respondents (75%) said that job roles in the department are clearly defined and 91.2% of respondents said that performance their roles are highly dependent on others performing their own roles. Similarly, 81% thought that interdependence of roles is a potential source of conflict. Only 19% thought otherwise.

5.2.5 Personal values, goals and attitudes.

The study found that one of the strongest motivations for working was the need to meet the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. Asked to give a rating, 91% gave strong ratings of 4 and 5. The wish to make use of professional and technical skills was also given a strong rating with 79% of respondents giving strong ratings of 4 and 5.

Quite a significant number of respondents thought that self esteem and gratification is a very strong motivation for working with 67% giving ratings of 4 and 5. However, the urge to accumulate and grow wealth was found to have only modest influence as a motivation for working with most respondents giving an average rating of 3.

Factors that shape individual values, goals and attitudes.

Majority of respondents (80.9%) said their choices are strongly influenced by their levels of education. Age was also found to have a strong influence on individuals' attitudes, goals and values with 72% giving it a rating of 4 and 5. Cultural background was found to have an only average influence with 32.4% giving ratings of 3 while 22.1% and 19.1% gave ratings of 2 and 4 respectively.

On the other hand, religious orientation and one's political opinion were found to have very insignificant influence. Asked to rate the influence of religious orientation, 47% and 26.5% gave low ratings of 1 and 2 respectively while 54.4% and 25% of respondents gave political influence low ratings of 1 and 2 respectively.

The import of all these findings is that these factors conspire to result in conflicting individual values, goals and attitudes in the workplace. This inevitably breeds conflicts as

these interests compete to realize their individual goals and objectives which are often at variance.

5.3   Conclusions

The researcher is of the view that all the four objectives of this study were fully met. This is explained in the conclusions in this section.

The first objective of this study was to establish the communication structures and processes that influence the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the Immigration Department at JKIA. From the findings, it was established that letters, circulars and memos are the key means of communication in the department. In addition, oral communication is in common usage through meetings, telephone conversations and over two-way radios.

It was further established that while the communication process in the department is fairly accurate and appropriate, it is wanting in terms of timeliness. It was found that apart from delays, multiple levels of communication often result in distortions in the message due to many handlers along the way from the source to the recipient. It was generally thought that this leads to misunderstandings and is a source of conflicts between co-workers.

The second objective of this study was to find out how resource utilization contributes to the emergence of interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department at JKIA. Findings indicate that while resources deployed in the department are appropriate for the intended purposes, they were found to be generally inadequate and poorly distributed. The resultant strain on and competition for the limited resources is a source of misunderstanding and conflict between co-workers.

The third objective of the study was to establish how job roles fuel interpersonal conflicts among staff of the Immigration Department. Findings from the study generally indicate that job roles in the department are clearly defined. However, it was found that individual roles in the department are dependent for their well functioning and success on other persons playing their own roles. This interdependence of roles means that failure in one inevitably leads to failure in another or more roles. This often results in passing the buck, blame games and conflict.

The fourth objective was to assess the influence of personal values of Immigration Department staff on the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. It was found that the main factors that influence attitudes, goals and objectives of staff of the department include their levels of education, age, and their family backgrounds. The diversity of these factors results in competing interests at the workplace which in turn breeds conflict.

5.4   Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:-

i)   There is need to reduce the bureaucracy in communication in the department. This will help deal with the problem of delayed transmission of information which then leads to delayed completion of tasks. This will also reduce chances of distorted messages owing to reduced levels of transmission.

Moreover, there is need to back up all oral communication by follow-up letters after telephone conversations, as well as take and keep minutes of all meetings.

(ii)   The department needs to procure enough resources and ensure that the same are well distributed to the various sections and controls. To enable this, consideration

could be made for localized procurement rather that depending on centralized procurement by the department's head office. This may ensure timeliness, appropriateness and adequacy.

(iii)   There is need to develop an elaborate and fair system of accountability so that individuals are only held accountable for failures arising from their own faults. This will ensure that individual failures arising from other persons' failure to play their own roles are not unfairly blamed on innocent others.

(iv)   Finally, efforts should be made to socialize staff into an organizational culture that lays emphasis on what individuals share in common rather than magnifying their diverse backgrounds, goals, objectives and interests. A culture of finding comradeship in diversity can help reduce misunderstandings caused by differences in value systems.

5.5   Suggestions for further research.

To further contribute to the body of knowledge and understanding of this subject, the study suggests further research in the following:-

i)   The influence of interpersonal conflicts in the workplace on service delivery in public service organizations.

ii)   The influence of individual workers' domestic environment on their likelihood to be involved in interpersonal conflicts with co-workers.

iii)   The role of organizational culture in managing interpersonal conflicts in the workplace.

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APPENDIX I: LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Dear Respondent

RE: INTRODUCTION

I am a Master of Arts in Project Planning and Management student at the University of Nairobi. Currently, am undertaking a research study entitled 'Factors influencing the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts in organizations- a case of the Kenya Immigration Department at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport' as partial fulfillment for the award of the said Degree.

Kindly note that this is a purely academic undertaking and information collected shall not be used for any other purpose. Utmost confidentiality will also be exercised. Moreover, no personal information is required.

In filling out the questionnaire, please feel at liberty to attach additional paper where the space provided is not adequate for your response.

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully

W. W. Namalenya.

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Position in the department...

2. Your age

    o 30 and below

    o 31- 40

    o 41- 50

    o 51-60

3. Gender

    o Male

    o female

4. Marital status

    o Single

    o Married

5. How long have you been working in the department? *Please tick where applicable.*

    o 1   to 5 years

    o 6   to 10 years

    o 11 to 15 years

    o 15 to   20 years

    o 20   and above

6 How would you rate the prevalence of conflicts in your workplace? *Please tick where applicable.*

    o Very high

    o High

    o Low

o Very low

7. Have you personally been involved in any conflict a colleague or colleagues at work?

    o Yes

    o No

8. To what extent would you attribute the said conflict in 7 above to *(encircle your choice from 1- lowest attribute to 5- highest attribute)?*

    a) Communication   1   2   3   4   5

    b) Resource utilization   1   2   3   4   5

    c) Conflicting job roles   1   2   3   4   5

    d) Personal values   1   2   3   4   5

    e) Political reasons   1   2   3   4   5

9. In your opinion, what are the general causes of conflicts in your workplace? *Please list them*

I) ....

II) ....

III) ....

IV)..

V) ....

B. COMMUNICATION

1. Does your department have formal modes of communication?

    o Yes

    o No

2. Please list them.

    i)   ....

    ii)   ....

iii) ....

iv) ....

3. In your opinion, are they well articulated to members of staff?

- o Yes

- o No

4. Please explain your response in 3 above

....
....
....
....
....

5. Rate the communication process in the department in terms of:-

I. Timeliness

- o Very prompt

- o prompt

- o Slow

- o Very slow

II. Accuracy

- o Very accurate

- o Fairly accurate

- o Inaccurate

- o Totally inaccurate

6. What would be your general rating of the communication structures and processes in your department?

- o Very good

- o Good

- o Poor

○ Very poor

7. In your opinion, does communication affect how you relate with co-workers?

1 Yes

2 No

8. If yes, please explain.

....
....
....
....
....
....
....

9. Would you say that communication influences the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts at your workplace?

○ Yes

○ No

10. If yes, please explain

....
....
....
....

C. RESOURCES AND ROLE PERFORMANCE

1. Would you kindly list resources that you require in the performance of your duties?

....
....
....
....

2. How would you rate the availability of these resources in terms of:-

a. Adequacy

- Highly adequate

- Adequate

- Inadequate

- Highly inadequate

b. Appropriateness

- Highly appropriate.

- Appropriate.

- Inappropriate.

- Highly inappropriate.

c. Distribution

- Fairly distributed

- Unfairly

Please tick where applicable

3. Does availability of resources affect your work performance?

- Yes

- No

4. Please explain

....
....
....
....
....
....

5 From your experience, does availability of resources affect your relationships with co-workers, both seniors and juniors?

- Yes

- No

6   Please explain your response in 5 above.

....
....
....
....
....

7   From your experience, are roles in your organization clearly defined?

   o   Yes

   o   No

8   Does performance of your tasks depend on any other persons in the organization playing their own role?

       o   Yes

       o   No

9   Would you consider this a potential source of conflict?

   o   Yes

   o   No

10 Please explain your response in 9 above.

....
....
....
....
....
....

D. CULTURE, ATTITUDES AND VALUES

1. What would you consider as being your main reasons for working? Please rank them according to their relative strength on a scale of 1 (weakest) to 5 (strongest) by encircling your choice.

a) Meet basic needs of food, shelter and clothing	1	2	3	4	5
b) To make use professional and technical skills	1	2	3	4	5
c) To accumulate and grow wealth	1	2	3	4	5

d) For self esteem and gratification   1   2   3   4   5

To what extend would you say that your choices in 1 above are influenced by:

(Please encircle your choices)

A)   Your age   1   2   3   4   5

B)   Cultural background   1   2   3   4   5

C)   Your religious orientation   1   2   3   4   5

D)   Family background   1   2   3   4   5

E)   Level of education   1   2   3   4   5

F)   Political opinion   1   2   3   4   5

E. GENERAL

1. Is there a formal dispute resolution system in your department?

   o   Yes

   o   No

2 If yes, please rate its effectiveness in resolving conflicts at work. (Tick against your choice).

   o   Highly effective

   o   Effective

   o   Ineffective

   o   Highly ineffective.

3 Please suggest measures that can be taken to help manage interpersonal conflicts in your workplace

....

....

....

END