

# EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF LABOUR RELATIONS IN KENYA COMMERCIAL BANK.

BY  
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A management research project submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of  
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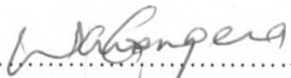

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## Declaration

### (a) Student's declaration.

This project is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other university

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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## **Dedication**

To my husband, Robert Gicharu Njenga, my son Jeffrey Kiongera and daughter  
Angela Njoki with love.

## **Acknowledgement**

I wish to acknowledge my employer Kenya Commercial Bank whose commitment to self-development of its employees is unrivalled. My supervisor James Gathungu for his selfless commitment towards the completion of this paper. My family whose time I took and spent selfishly yet none complained. My colleagues who covered the office work for me whenever I was on study leave, my respondents who are also my colleagues, thank you for taking your time to complete my questionnaire; all the UON Lecturers who in one way or another positively impacted on my intellect may God bless you. To my close friend Mary Gathoni Kihara who was always an encouragement and a companion throughout the course and more so when doing this paper. To all of you who in one way or another assisted in whatever manner, may God bless you.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgement</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of contents</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>List of figures</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of tables</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of abbreviations</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND .....	1
1.1.1 Employee Relations.....	1
1.1.2 Employee Relations in Kenya.....	5
1.1.3 The Banking Industry in Kenya.....	10
1.1.4 Kenya commercial bank .....	11
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	12
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	13
1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY.....	14
1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY.....	14
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.</b> .....	<b>15</b>
2.1 LABOUR RELATIONS.....	15
2.2 INTERNATIONAL LABOUR RELATIONS.....	15
2.3 LABOUR RELATIONS IN KENYA .....	16
2.3.1 Trade unionism.....	17
2.3.2 Collective Bargaining.....	19
2.3.3 The Government.....	20
2.3.4 The Industrial Court.....	22
2.3.5 Industrial Disputes.....	23

2.3.6 Employee Conflict and Grievance Resolution.....	23
2.4 EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.....	25
2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	28
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	31
3.2 POPULATION.....	31
3.3 DATA COLLECTION.....	31
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS.....	32
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND.....	33
4.2 EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF LABOUR RELATIONS.....	36
4.3 CONFLICTS AND GRIEVANCES AT WORK PLACE.....	46
4.4 PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING.....	50
4.5 SUMMARY.....	57
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS... </b>	<b>59</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	59
5.2 DISCUSSIONS.....	59
5.3 CONCLUSION.....	60
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	61
5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	61
5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	62
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: Letter of authorization to collect data.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>APPENDIX II: Introduction letter to the respondents.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>APPENDIX III: Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>71</b>

2.3.6 Employee Conflict and Grievance Resolution.....	23
2.4 EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.....	25
2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	28
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	31
3.2 POPULATION.....	31
3.3 DATA COLLECTION.....	31
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS.....	32
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND.....	33
4.2 EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF LABOUR RELATIONS.....	36
4.3 CONFLICTS AND GRIEVANCES AT WORK PLACE.....	46
4.4 PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING.....	50
4.5 SUMMARY.....	57
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS... </b>	<b>59</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	59
5.2 DISCUSSIONS.....	59
5.3 CONCLUSION.....	60
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	61
5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	61
5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	62
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: Letter of authorization to collect data.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>APPENDIX II: Introduction letter to the respondents.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>APPENDIX III: Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>71</b>

## List of figures

Figure 1.1: Kenya's industrial relations system.....	8
Figure 2.1: Schematic diagram for the theoretical framework.....	30
Figure 4. 1: Sex of respondents.....	33
Figure 4. 2 :Marital status of respondents.....	34
Figure 4. 3: Level of education of respondents.....	35
Figure 4. 4: Age of respondents.....	35
Figure 4. 5: Position of respondents.....	36
Figure 4. 6: Employee perception of labour relations.....	38
Figure 4. 7: Satisfaction with working at KCB.....	39
Figure 4. 8: Factors negatively affecting labour relations.....	41
Figure 4. 9: Whether respondents were satisfied with services provided by unions.....	42
Figure 4. 10: Extent of satisfaction with union services.....	43
Figure 4. 11:Trade unions are no longer effective in the banking sector.....	44
Figure 4. 12: Challenges that influence labour relations.....	45
Figure 4. 13: Whether respondents knew a colleague having conflict with another.....	47
Figure 4. 14: What respondents think is the cause of conflict with the boss.....	48
Figure 4. 15: Whether respondents think there are other participants.....	49
Figure 4. 16: How conflicts can be resolved.....	50
Figure 4. 17 : Whether respondents had participated in any important DM.....	51
Figure 4. 18: Section Heads opinion on how work is planned.....	52
Figure 4. 19: Clerks opinion on how work is planned.....	53
Figure 4. 20 : Decision making in KCB is for managers.....	54
Figure 4. 21: How respondents rate employees participation in KCB DM.....	55
Figure 4. 22: Challenges facing employee participation in decision-making.....	56



## List of tables

Table 4. 1: Sex of respondents .....	33
Table 4. 2: Marital status of respondents .....	33
Table 4.3: Employee perception of labour relations.....	37
Table 4. 4: Satisfaction with working at KCB .....	39
Table 4. 5: Factors negatively affecting labour relations.....	40
Table 4. 6: Whether respondents were satisfied with services provided by unions .....	42
Table 4. 7: Extent of satisfaction with services provided by unions if yes.....	42
Table 4. 8: Trade unions are no longer effective in the banking sector.....	43
Table 4. 9: Challenges that influence labour relations.....	44
Table 4. 10: Whether respondents knew a colleague having conflict with another. ....	46
Table 4. 11: What respondents think is the cause of conflict with the boss. ....	47
Table 4. 12: Whether respondents think there are other participants .....	48
Table 4. 13: How respondents think the conflicts can be resolved .....	49
Table 4. 14 : Whether respondents had participated in any important decision- making.	50
Table 4. 15: Extent management shares information on how work is planned .....	51
Table 4. 16 : Decision making in KCB is for managers .....	54
Table 4. 17 : How respondents rate employees participation in KCB decision making ..	55
Table 4.18: Challenges facing employee participation in decision-making. ....	56

## **List of abbreviations.**

<b>KCB</b>	Kenya commercial Bank
<b>BIFU</b>	Banking insurance and Finance Union
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FKE</b>	Federation of Kenya Employers
<b>COTU</b>	Central Organization of Trade Unions
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ACIE</b>	Association of Commercial and Industrial Employers
<b>KFL</b>	Kenya Federation of Labour
<b>KUCFAW</b>	Kenya Union of Commercial, Food and Allied Workers.
<b>KBA</b>	Kenya Bankers Association.
<b>UON</b>	University of Nairobi

## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the employee perception of labour relations in Kenya commercial bank. The main areas about which information was gathered included employee satisfaction with working at KCB and the factors which negatively affect labour relations, conflicts and grievances at work place, the position of trade unions in the banking sector and participation in decision making.

This was a survey research. It involved administering questionnaires to all levels of employees in KCB including Directors, Managers, Section Heads and Clerks involved in the daily running of the bank. Other people involved in labour relations in the bank included the trade union members and officials who work with the bank.

The study revealed that the main cause of moderate labour relations in the bank in the sense of flow of information from the managers to the employees under them and the main cause of conflicts is poor communication, followed by social relationships and tribalism in that order.

The study also established that participation in decision making in the bank is not hindered by lack of adequate education but moderately hindered by lack of time and motivation for such activities.

This study can go a long way in empowering employees of the bank and the management through data on the opinion of various cadres of staff. It would also help in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the union in bargaining collectively for its members.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Increasing global competition has made it almost impossible for one organization to perform all business functions on its own. Most organizations are reaching outside their own pools of resources and creating alliances with customers, suppliers, communities, unions, and even rivals (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2001). The best run companies have found ways to successfully and efficiently manage the diverse interests of these and other stakeholders. In the process, they have developed competitive advantages and discovered and exploited opportunities that were previously unimaginable. Many of these opportunities represent unmet needs of stakeholders or new combinations of resources they provide to the organization (Donaldson and Preston, 1995).

Organizations do not exist in a vacuum; they exist in an environment in which they have to relate with for their survival. Organization's environment consists of all the conditions and forces that affect its strategic options and defines its competitive situation. Contemporary business environments are characterized by ever increasing uncertainty due to business challenges from the environment. The success and survival of organizations depends on how well they relate with these challenges and how they position themselves in the environment. With this realization, continuous analysis of the impact of the complex and dynamic existing environmental considerations ensures organizations success in the future (Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Because of the dynamic nature of the environment, organizations need not only notice changes in their environment, but are also required to formulate strategies which match these changes in order to create a "fit".

### 1.1.1 Employee Relations

Employee relations constitute one of the most delicate and complex problems of the modern industrial society which is characterized by rapid change, industrial unrest and conflicting ideologies in the national and international spheres. It is a dynamic concept which depends upon the pattern of society, economic system

and political set-up of a country and changes with the changing economic and social order. It is an art of living together for the purposes of production, productive efficiency, human well being and industrial progress. It comprises of a network of institutions, such as trade unionism, collective bargaining, employers, the law, and the state, which are bound together by a set of common values and aspirations. In an organization, these relationships may be personal and informal at one end, and may be highly institutional with legally prescribed structures and procedures, at the other end. (Sarma, 1998).

Employee relations has been defined in various ways by different researchers. Farnham (1993) suggested that employee relations are concerned with the interactions between the primary parties who pay for work and those who provide it in the labour market (Employers and employees), those acting as secondary parties on their behalf (management or management organizations and trade unions) and those providing a third party role on employment matters (state agencies and EU institutions). The institute of personnel development in its professional education syllabus of 1993, defines employee relations as that part of personnel management that enables competent managers, through the development of institutions, procedures and policies, to reconcile within acceptable limits to the organization the interests of employers as the buyers of labour services and those of employees as the suppliers of labour services (Leat, 2001).

Employee relations refer to the interrelationships, both formal and informal, between managers and those whom they manage. Employee relations embraces the contractual obligations between employer and employed; communications policy and practice; joint decision-making; joint problem-solving; collective bargaining; and individual grievance and disciplinary policy and practice. In most of these issues, trade unions play an important part, but they are not a prerequisite, for employee relations is as important for non-union organizations as it is for unionized organizations (Cole, 2002).

Yoder (1984) defines the relationship between workers and management, unions and workers, and the unions and managements in an industry as a "whole field

of relationship that exists because of the necessary collaboration of men and women in the employment process of an industry". Tead and Metcalfe (1970) observe that "industrial relations are the composite result of the attitudes and approaches of employers and employees towards each other with regard to planning, supervision, direction, and coordination of the activities of an organization with a minimum of human efforts and frictions with an animating spirit of cooperation and with proper regard for the genuine well-being of all members of the organization". Clegg (1970) defines industrial relations in the broadest terms as encompassing "the rules governing employment together with the ways in which the rules are made and changed and their interpretation and administration". To put it simply, industrial relations is that part of management which is concerned with the manpower of the enterprise.

The most important parties to employee relations are primarily individual employees and their managers. There are however, other stakeholders who include trade unions, government and government bodies, courts and tribunals and employers' association representatives. Each of these parties has a particular perspective to bear on the interrelationship between management and managed. With differing perspective such as the above, it is not surprising that some degree of conflict is inherent in employee relations. In certain cases, this potential for conflict has broken out with savage and long lasting results such as strikes. Nevertheless, there can also be a substantial amount of common interest, and much of employee relations is concerned with finding out what are these areas and how they can be turned to mutual advantage. (Cole, 2002).

Employee relations development over the last two decades are consistent with the soft human resource management, with the introduction of direct employee oriented communication mechanisms as a means of achieving greater employee commitment rather than compliance. The emphasis upon the employment relations are characterized by cooperation rather than conflict and in particular partnership approaches. (Leat, 2001)

Employee relations is a social concept because it deals with social relationships in different walks of life. It is also a relative concept because it grows and flourishes or stagnates and decays in accordance with the economic, social and political conditions prevailing in a society and the laws made by the state to regulate them. The primary objective of employee relations is to bring about sound and health relations between employers and employees. It aims to facilitate production and productivity; to safeguard the rights and interests of both labour and management by enlisting their co-operation; to achieve a sound, harmonious, and mutually beneficial labour-management relations; to avoid unhealthy atmosphere in the industry, especially work stoppages, go-slow, strikes, lockouts ; and to establish and maintain industrial democracy (Sarma, 1998).

The industrial relations objectives must follow the determination of business objectives which they should be intended to facilitate. In this context, the industrial relations policies and practices should not negate its intentions in other areas. For instance, if a company wishes to encourage voluntary retirement, its salaries, pensions, working conditions and so on should not encourage its employees to stay at all costs. (Kirkaldy, 1947).

The state endeavors to correct, through effective industrial relations an imbalanced, disordered and maladjusted social and economic order with a view to reshaping the complex socio-economic relationships following technological and economic progress. It also controls and disciplines the parties concerned and adjusts their conflicting interests. In this process, it protects some and restrains others, depending upon the situation. (Sarma, 1998)

Employee relations involves the mutual connection or communication among employees, the participation of employees in management decisions, employee conflict and grievance resolution, trade unions and collective bargaining. Adequate employee relations reduce workplace stress to the employees and managers and so all the aspects of employee relations in the workplace ought to be considered carefully.

### **1.1.2 Employee Relations in Kenya.**

Employee relations in Kenya and collective bargaining systems or practices in Kenya are based on four very important instruments; the first one is the constitution of Kenya Section 80(1) which governs the protection of the freedom of assembly and association. This refers to the right to assemble freely and associate with other persons and in particular to form or belong to trade unions or other associations for the protection of an individual's right. The constitution is supreme and therefore provides the standards, measures and direction to which other laws including labour laws are pegged. The second instrument is the Kenya industrial relations charter as drawn by and signed by the government of Kenya, FKE, and KFL on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 1962 and which was revised on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1980. The third instrument are the Acts of Parliament in relation to labour laws as the trade disputes Act (Cap 234), the workman's compensation Act (Cap 236), The trade Union Act (Cap 233), and the Shop Hour Act (Cap 231). The fourth and final instrument is the International Labour Organization conventions and treaties.

It is worthy noting that the earliest employers' association in Kenya was known as the association of commercial and industrial employers (ACIE). It was renamed the Federation of Kenya employers in 1956, and registered in 1959. Federation of Kenya employers is the counterparty of Central Organization of trade Unions (COTU). It was first established in 1956 to represent the interests of all employers in Kenya. Its main objectives are to encourage the observance by employers of fair conditions of employments; to promote the interest of members in relation to the foregoing stated objects; to promote and encourage consultation between and amongst members on matters connected with, relating to, affecting or likely to affect such interests; to collect, collate and circulate amongst members statistics relating to or affecting such interests and to represent and advocate the views and policies of the federation to Government and other authorities among others. (Aluchio, 1998).



Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU) on the other hand pays a lot of attention and is committed to promoting the social, economic, political and other interests of the Kenyan workers. COTU (K) was established in 1965. Prior to its registration, the Kenya Federation of Labour was the Apex Body of Trade Unions in Kenya. COTU's Objectives are generally to improve the economic and social conditions of all workers in all parts of Kenya and to render them assistance whether or not such workers are employed or have ceased to be employed; To assist in the complete organization of all workers in the trade union movement; To organize the structure and spheres of influence and amalgamation of trade unions affiliated to COTU (K); To assist, in settling disputes between members of trade unions and their employers or between the trade unions and their members or employees of one union and employees of another union, or between two or more trade unions; To encourage the principles of the development and maintenance of good relations between employees and employers; To secure adequate representation of Government Boards and Committees dealing with labour legislation on all matters affecting workers; To set up , appropriate committees to provide training, education and other facilities and enterprise for the advancement of workers and the labour movement; and To establish and maintain funds by means of membership fees, monthly contributions, donations, subscriptions, levies and by borrowing on such security and such terms as may from time to time be arranged by the Executive Board, but subject to such maximum amount as may from time to time be determined in consultation with the Minister for Labour. (Constitution and rules of COTU (K), 1970).

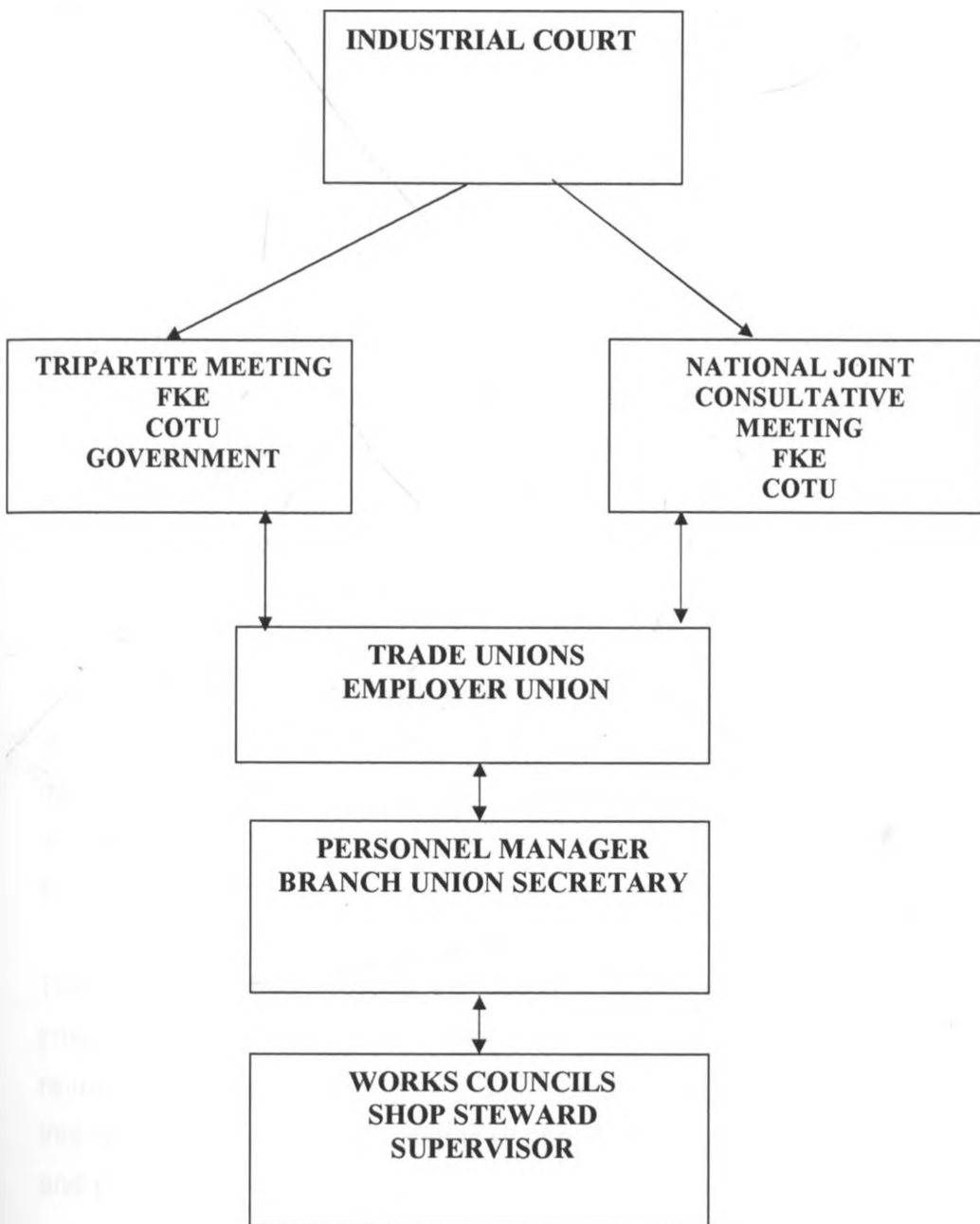
FKE together with COTU have their representatives sitting on several government's statutory bodies in advisory capacities, for example labour advisory board and wages advisory board. The FKE and COTU also have their own joint committees in which they thrash out differences among their members, for example the Demarcation committee. In addition there are regular consultative meetings which are held between themselves jointly with the government representatives where appropriate, for tackling emergencies or

national labour matters. All these meetings have contributed much to improve Kenya's industrial relations. One of the reasons for the federation's success in the field of industrial relations has been its ability to steer clear of politics in dealing with labour matters. The Federation is in effect a professional institution. (Odaga, 1980).

According to Aluchio (1998), the biggest problem the Federation of Kenya employers suffer from is lack of resources to train managers and equip them fully to take the future challenge in the industrial relations' scene. He pointed out the lack of a labour relations' Faculty in any of our local universities to train both managers and employees dealing with labour relations up to degree level in industrial relations.

Kenya's industrial relations system consists of four levels which form four stages of interactions. According to (Gathungu, 1990), at each stage there are actors, rules and a context.

**Figure 1. 1:Kenya's Industrial Relations System.**



*Source: Gathungu (1990)*

The first stage is the **work place** where the actors include representatives of management, staff representatives and a shop steward who represents both union and other employees. He is responsible for the coordination of union activities and dealing with any new working arrangements. He acts as the daily

contact between union members and management. The rules at this level are made up of the constitution that the actors have formed and other formal and informal regulations which govern their interactions. The context comprises of the company policies, political system, and social system. (Gathungu, 1990).

The second stage is the **branch level**. This is an amalgamation of shops in a particular geographical area. The main duty of a branch is to collect subscriptions from the shop stewards and to distribute the benefits. The actors here are the company industrial relations' managers who represent management and the union branch manager who represents the workers. Rules here include the recognition agreement which is also called the industrial relations' machinery and other agreements reached during the previous interactions. The context includes the five environmental factors and the rules and programs of the whole industry.

The third stage is the **industry level**. The actors at this level are the unions, the association of employers, for example FKE representing individual company members. The rules include joint consultative councils or joint councils for the industry and previous agreements. The context includes, besides the environment, national agreements, rules and programs. (Gathungu, 1990).

The fourth and final stage is the **national level**. Here there are two forms of interactions. The first one is between the two primary participants namely, FKE representing employers and COTU (K) representing the workers. The rules at this level include the memorandum of agreement, the industrial relations Charter and previous agreements. The context is similar to that of the lower levels.

The second form of interaction is the tripartite meeting which is made up of the government, FKE, and COTU. At all these levels, the deliberations of and agreement reached by participants, are determined by the goals, values and power of the participants and the context. (Gathungu, 1990)

### **1.1.3 The Banking Industry in Kenya.**

The Kenyan banking industry has been undergoing drastic changes since the onset of liberalization in the early 1990s. Some of the changes include accelerated implementation of economic reforms, the liberalization of the economy, discontinuation of price controls, privatization and commercialization of the public sector and increased competition. In this changing environment organizations have constantly adapted their activities and cultural configuration to reflect the new realities. Failure of which may put the future success of organizations in jeopardy (Boen, 2006).

External conditions have drastically changed the economy in Kenya continuously exerting new challenges on the organizations. This has created a lot of pressure on organizations to respond to the environment. Generally commercial banks bore the brunt of these environmental changes which squeezed profits and created highly volatile interest rates as opposed to the stable rates experienced in earlier years. The resultant effect of the above was irregular returns and higher investment risks. This is evidenced by the low Treasury bill rates which have forced the banks to lend to individuals and other business enterprises rather than lend to the government which is risk free. (Muturi, 2006). All these have led to the need to involve staff in decision making participation in order to motivate them to serve the customer better. Banks can no longer afford to be conservative in the manner in which they do business; they need to pay more attention to the customer demands and complaints (Boen, 2006).

There are 43 banks, 15 micro finance institutions and 48 foreign bureaus with a total of kshs.459.6 billion (Central Bank of Kenya 2003). 35 banks, most of which are small and medium size are locally owned. A few large banks dominate the industry most of which are foreign owned, though some are partially locally owned. Six of the major banks are listed on the Nairobi Stock Exchange. Commercial banks offer both corporate and retail banking services but a small number, mainly comprising the larger banks offer other services including investment banking.

The Central bank has on a few occasions put certain commercial banks under statutory management and some have resulted to closure. Some of the smaller banks have started to merge in a bid for survival as they are faced with an increase in commercial banks' minimum paid up capital and high operational costs due to cut throat competition from the bigger players (banking survey 2002).

The banking sector is poised for significant product and market development that should result in further consolidation of the banking sector. In the commercial banking industry the practices that have been embraced include total quality management that advocates employee participation and involvement in decision making, Teamwork, Quality staff committees, Change management and performance management among others (market intelligence, 2004).

#### **1.1.4 Kenya commercial bank**

The history of Kenya Commercial Bank dates back to 1896 when its predecessor, the National Bank of India, opened a small branch in the coastal town of Mombasa. In 1958, Grindlays Bank of Britain merged with the National Bank of India to form the National and Grindlays Bank. In 1970, the Government of Kenya acquired 60% shareholding in National and Grindlays Bank and renamed it the Kenya Commercial Bank. In 1976, the Government acquired 100% of the shares to take full control of the largest commercial bank in Kenya. The Government has over the years reduced its shareholding in the Bank to the current 26% with the public owning the remaining 74%. (Kimani, 2006).

A wholly owned subsidiary, Savings and Loan (K) Ltd. was acquired in 1972 to provide mortgage finance. In 1997, another subsidiary, Kenya Commercial Bank (Tanzania) Limited was incorporated in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania to provide banking and financial services and to facilitate cross-border trade within the East African region. Since inception, the Kenya Commercial Bank Group has endeavored to provide quality and customer friendly services geared towards meeting the ever-changing customer needs. This has ensured consistent growth

in customer deposits that have, in turn, provided a strong reservoir for steady growth in customer borrowings every year (KCB, 2005).

Effective employee relations is crucial for successful organizations as it affects the ability of managers to engage employees and achieve objectives. Banks customers' needs are ever changing and customer friendly services have to be provided by the employees. For this to be achieved, the relation between the workers of the bank is very crucial. According to Casey (2006), an organization's performance is closely linked to employee relations such that good performance can be achieved when there are good employee relations. Currently, the bank has 130 branches and 117 ATMs and plans in the coming year to open 35 new branches in Kenya and 50 new ATMs in Kenya as well as in Dar-es-Salam and Juba, Sudan (Mugambi, 2007).

As a player in the global financial market, the group maintains working arrangements with over 400 correspondent banks throughout the world. It has the widest network of outlets in the country with an asset base of over 100 billion, and it represents over 55% of the total banking outlets in Kenya. Of the total outlets, 80% are located in the rural areas, with representation in all administrative districts. This demonstrates the need for improved employee relations as more employees will be employed and so there is expected to be a change in employee relations (KCB, 2005).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In the past bank employees were known to be very vocal in the demand for their rights, be they procedural or substantive. In recent years specifically from 1998 bank employees have kept a very low profile concerning issues that can trigger strikes, go-slows, lock-outs or any such drastic measures. The unions that represented employees for example KUCFAW and BIFU were known for their prowess in winning cases and awards from the industrial court up to the early 1990s. Thereafter they became quiet and less aggressive in their approach to issues. To emphasize this point a salary award given in year 2003 was not

honored but instead KBA chose to appeal to the Court of Appeal and to date the same has never been resolved (CBA Cause 100/2003). It is therefore important to establish the perception of the employees toward employee relations in KCB.

In the last decade, there has been an accelerated competition in the banking sector. It has been necessary for the banks to change their strategies in order to compete and be able to adequately provide for the continuously changing needs of their customers. Studies done on commercial banks have focused more in strategy change management (Mbogo, 2003). Other studies which have been done propose ways for the banks to survive the competition to include more corporate social responsibility (Thuo, 2006), improved outsourcing practices (Wandabwa, 2006), limiting operational losses and risks (Ongera, 2006) and relationship between employee participation in decision making and motivation in commercial banks (Boen, 2006).

The overall research problem that has been addressed in this study is that despite the competition and changes taking place in the banking sector, empirical data on the issue of employee relations is unknown. If the issue of employee relations in the banking sector is not looked at with the seriousness it deserves, the banks may lose the opportunity to provide adequate services required by the customers. The objective of this paper is to explore the nature of employee relations in KCB whether it is characterized by conflicts or consensus. However, it is necessary first to establish the existing employee relations and later provide what constitutes good employee relations.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.**

The study seeks to answer the following research questions;

- a) What are the employees perception of relationships within KCB?
- b) What influences the perceived employee relations in KCB ?



## **1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

### **Objectives**

- I. To determine the employee perception of relationships within KCB
- II. To determine what influences the perceived employee relations in KCB

## **1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will be of utmost significance to employee relations practitioners who will be offered a fresh perspective from which to consider employee relations. The nature and extent of employee relations proposed here could be used to improve internal employee relations that may be applied to the strategic analysis, planning and evaluation of internal communication in the banking sector. The internal communication concept offers a lens through which managers can consider employee relations tactics.

This study is significant since it will broaden previous approaches to employee relations. The paper will introduce the concept of individualistic and collectivist management styles that affect employee relations for good or for worse. This study will also help policy makers know what aspects of human resource they need to consider while making policies that will directly or indirectly affect the human resource in an organization and labour relations in general.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.**

### **2.1 LABOUR RELATIONS.**

Margerison (1969) discusses labour relations in terms of the emergence of conflict within organizations and suggests that there are three main causes or types of conflict; distributive (economic) conflict, structural conflict and human relations conflict. The first two are more collective than individual in nature, because of their respective causes. The human relation conflict is more informal and interpersonal in nature, but Margerison (1969) does state that in the last resort all conflict whether its original cause is distributive or structural is manifested at this human relation level. Human relations conflict can have three major outcomes; individual alienation or isolation, rupture of personal relations between at least two people and group strain.

The primary common thread running through all labour relation research and policies is the understanding that labour is more than a commodity (Kochan 1980a). Economic, political, legal and social factors influence the goals, expectations and relative power of workers, employers and the state and have significant conditioning effects on the labour relations system (Finnemore and Van der Merwe 1989; Slabbert and Mathews 1990). This is evident during periods of economic recession and high unemployment, when the power of trade union is not only diminished but its goals are also redirected towards job security. Labour or employee relations therefore conduct its analysis with a view to determining the conditions under which work is done so that the needs of both parties are addressed.

### **2.2 INTERNATIONAL LABOUR RELATIONS.**

According to Burchill (1997) capital has always organized itself on both a national and international basis. World production is dominated by multinational corporations. At the levels of both United Nations and European Union there has been concern with and attempts to control the influence of Multinational Corporation across national frontiers. The international labour organization (ILO)

was founded in 1919 as part of first world war settlement, originally part of the league of Nations, it continued after the second world war as part of the United Nations. The annual international labour conference consists of four delegates from each member state made up of two government representatives. At the conference, conventions and recommendations are adopted with regard to labour and employment matters and submitted to member states. A governing body is elected by the international labour organization electoral college, and places on it are allocated in proportion to the distribution of the delegates. The ILO sets standards of minimum provision and rights that should be complied with by the various parties in membership. Member states are however not bound to accept the conventions and recommendations of international labour organization. These are expected to have moral force, while the key ones are surrounded by possible qualifications to them in national laws. There are however conventions that have been adopted which include the right to join a trade union, the right to engage in a collective bargaining, health and safety and minimum terms and conditions of employment. (Leat, 2001).

### **2.3 LABOUR RELATIONS IN KENYA**

Kenya's industrial relations have made an impressive advancement in only a few years and have contributed in no small way to the overall national development. To sustain the level of development so far achieved and even to improve on it further, it is imperative that industrial relations should be given a "front position" among the most effective means of achieving economic progress. Good labour relations give hope for greater human happiness particularly in the world of today with numerous social, economic, and political problems. The hope lies in the expectation of enlarged cake, better services and improved respect for "workers". Trade unions, employers and the government must look for better means of sharing their resources in the improvement of labour relations (Odaga, 1980)

Kenya has no choice but to aspire for higher standards of labour relations. The current good record of performance is no guarantee that the future will be the

same. She must continue to improve the labour laws and negotiated agreements. And most importantly, the ideals of the international labour organization (ILO) and the need for the voluntary approach should form the frame-work for whatever changes that are to be preferred. Labour relations concern people, employees and employers. These are the producers of goods and services. Do they matter? Are they threatened unfairly? The correct answers to these questions should be in the affirmative. It is worthy noting that in Kenya, the philosophies, practices and attitudes relating to industrial relations indicate an optimistic future (Odaga, 1980).

### **2.3.1 Trade unionism.**

Over the years there have been many different definitions of trade union and in some respects they can each be seen as reflective of the time at which they were devised. The earliest of the well known definitions is that of Webb and Webb (1894), which defined a trade union as a "continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives". In the UK the legal definition dates from the trade union and labour relations Act 1974 and states that a trade union is "an organization whether permanent or temporary which consists wholly or mainly of workers of one or more descriptions and is an organization whose principal purpose include the regulation of relations between workers of that description and employers or employer association". Hirsch-Weber (1970) defined the trade union as an "association of workers who by means of collective bargaining endeavor to improve their working conditions and economic and social position.

In Kenya the trade union Act of Kenya (CAP. 233) defines a trade union as "an association or combination of whether temporary or permanent of more than six persons (other than staff associations, employee associations or employee organizations not deemed to be a trade union under section 3 of this Act) (Machyo, 2003). A union is a distinct organization separate from an employer. Membership consists of employees. Its interest concern conditions of employment and its primary activity is representing workers' interests to

management. The primary role of a union in an organization is to influence an employer's decision about conditions of employment. Trade unions have significant effect on wages, benefits and working conditions (Manda et.al. 2001; Hansen, 1997; Johnson, 1971).

It also sometimes dictates how employee relations between those in the union and the management should be. In Kenya trade unions came into being as a result of protests against working conditions. The employers involved were foreigners and working conditions were attributed not only to the disorder and uncertainty caused by growth of money economies and commercial production but also equally to outside intervention. Most trade unions came into being either as a result of a direct confrontation of workers and employers or out of collusion between workers and politicians (Singh, 1969). In 1937 a change in British labour policy resulted in the enactment of the 1937 trade unions ordinance which stipulated conditions under which Africans could organize themselves in trade unions. After the publications of the above ordinance, three unions were registered in Kenya by the Registrar of trade unions; East African standard union, East African limited staff union and the labor trade union of East Africa. In 1940 the 1937 ordinance was amended consequently the number of trade unions in Kenya rose from three to six (Machyo, 2003).

During the colonial period the authorities tried to suppress union activities through intimidation, harassment and arrest of union officials. The declaration of the state of emergency in the 1950s made it more difficult for unions to operate as union officials were detained while others joined the freedom fighter Mau Mau movement. However towards the late 1950s trade unions became incessantly important and better established and the basic structure of the present trade unions in Kenya was almost complete in 1960 and 1961 when unions catering for agricultural workers were formed (Singh, 1969). Among the unions registered then were Transport and Allied workers union, Domestic and Hotel workers union, Night watchmen workers' union, East African Federation of Building construction workers Union and Tailors' Union. In January 1966, Kenya by an

Act of parliament passed the Central Organization of trade Unions (COTU) as a control device which brought trade union movement in line with the one party state and thereby fulfilled the provision of sessional paper No. 10 of 1965 on African socialism and its application to planning in Kenya (ROK, 1965).

According to McCarthy (1967), workplace trade unionism can act as a 'lubricant not an irritant' in the management of employee relations. This can only be true for some institutional arrangements and depends on the management of the trade unions themselves. This view is shared by Bryson (2005) who argue that the associations between employee relations and unionization vary with institutional arrangements in relation to bargaining and lay representation. In KCB there are workers who belong to the Banking insurance and Finance Union (K) (BIFU) and it is not known whether membership of an individual in the bank influences relations with the managers or colleagues.

### **2.3.2 Collective Bargaining**

Collective bargaining was invented by Beatrice Webb and propagated by the "Webbs" in 1902 to describe a process of agreeing terms and conditions of employment through representing of employers and employees (Burchill 1997). This was created to mitigate the uneven balance in bargaining power between an employer and an individual employee. It therefore follows that collective bargaining is essentially a representative process in which representatives of employers reach agreements or compromises with representatives of employees. Collective bargaining is a continuous process that calls for the maintenance, regulation, interpretation and supplementation of such agreements on a day-by-day basis. It mainly determines the rules that govern the relationships between the parties at the place of work. According to Burchill (1997), however collective bargaining is not the sole determinant. Management makes some rules unilaterally without bargaining, so sometimes do workers. Other rules are made by the government through legislation and on occasions employers, union and the government have established joint agreements (Tripartite).

Once a union has been certified as the bargaining representative of the employees of a company, negotiation of the terms and conditions of employment takes place. In negotiating sessions both parties bargain for concessions that will help them achieve their objectives which are often more the personal aspirations of individual negotiators than the goals of their constituents. The procedures they use to arrive at an agreement depend on the situation since there is no one best way to negotiate a contract. Collective bargaining is an art that demands the talents of skilled professionals (Miner and Crane, 1995). Chamberlain and Kuhn (1965) offered an analysis which outlines three distinct activities which interact to form the bargaining process. One of the activities is the market or economic function. This determines the price of labour to the employer, thus the collective agreement form the contract for the terms under which employees will work for the employer that is, the substantive terms of employment. The second activity is the decision-making function. In this role, collective bargaining offers employees the opportunity, if they wish, to participate in the determination of the policies which guide and rule their working lives. The third activity is the government function. Collective bargaining establishes rules by which the employment relationship is governed. Thus bargaining is a political process as it establishes a "constitution" (Salamon, 1992). From the above it is clear that collective bargaining is concerned with the establishment of substantive rules, which regulate all aspects of pay agreements and hours of work; and procedures - rules which establish the rules under which negotiation over terms and conditions of employment can take place and establish grievance and dispute procedures (Beardwell, Holden, and Claydon, 2004).

### **2.3.3 The Government.**

The government has a keen interest in trade unionism and trade union activities. It plays two major roles in industrial relations scene. Constituting the two roles are law-making and peace-keeping functions. In exercising its legislative right the government generates statutes which are regulatory in nature. The peace - keeping role is practiced through arbitration (either voluntary or compulsory), use

of tribunals and, as a last resort, intervening directly by the use of instruments of coercion usually in the form of police, paramilitary unit and even the military in some extreme cases.( K'obonyo, 1981). Aware of the potential power of the trade unions and the possible social, economic and political disasters that are bound to arise from the use of the said power, practically all the governments all over the world have passed legislations curtailing the power of organized labour. (Flanders and Clegg, 1954). The extent to which the government legislations and policies are restrictive depends largely on the relations between union and goals and government policies.

Although our system of collective bargaining is fairly free from government interference there are many good reasons why the government must directly be involved in the determination of terms and conditions of employment through collective bargaining. These include; the government is the largest single employer with a huge expenditure taken up by the wages and salaries of its employees and is also a large investor in or through the parastatal organizations. It must see through its economic planning that the wage development does not have negative effects on the generation of employment opportunities for the growing population. The government must also ensure that healthy industrial relations are maintained in order to avoid any possibility of industrial unrest that may threaten the security and economy of the country. For these basic reasons, the government amended the Trade Dispute Act in 1971 to empower the minister for Finance to issue from time to time wages guidelines to the industrial Court depending on the state of the economy. The court uses such guidelines in determining wage awards as well as in deciding whether or not a collective agreement should be registered. These guidelines are used to ensure, as much as possible that wage increases granted through collective bargaining do not hamper the growth of wage employment in a country like Kenya where the wage earners form a very small part of the population. (Aluchio, 1998).



### **2.3.4 The Industrial Court.**

The Industrial court has powers to hear disputes in both the private and public sectors and to make awards in respect of all employees with the exception of those who are in military, Naval or Air force, police force or in prison service or in the National youth service or in reserve force. The court interprets contractual terms of employment between the worker concerned and his employer. It goes beyond the strict legal ties between the two as the main concern of the court is to see good industrial relations are maintained. The court will not allow mere allegations of misconduct, negligence or insufficiency be permitted to uphold a dismissal. It would have to prove that the alleged reason for dismissal actually exists. (Otega, 1975).

Apart from scrutiny and subsequent registration of collective agreement, the industrial court adjudicates upon all types of trade disputes referred to it either by the parties themselves or the minister for labour. The disputes are usually referred to it after the parties have been unable to settle them at their own level or by way of conciliation on investigation. Each party to the dispute is required to file with the court eight copies of its written submission within a specified time. In the case of economic dispute, the court first refers the parties' submissions to the planning and research division of the ministry of labour for an independent analysis based on the parties' submission vis-à-vis the wage guidelines. However, the court is the final authority as far as the interpretation of the guidelines is concerned. In both the economic and employment termination disputes, the parties are required to make oral submissions to the court and the parties may call witnesses to support their case with the permission of the court. Aluchio, 1998). The Industrial court does not execute its awards like the civil courts where elaborate legal provisions exist in the civil procedure code for execution of court decrees. The trade unions generally rely on their traditional right to strike in order to secure enforcement of an award in their favor. (Cockar, 1969)

### **2.3.5 Industrial Disputes.**

Hugh (1975) defines industrial disputes as a conflict between workers and employers and the immunities given to registered unions will only apply in these cases. This means that strikes between unions will lay open the parties concerned to claims for unlimited compensation for damages. Similarly, any strike which is not a result of an industrial dispute will lay open those authorizing the strike to damages under the Act. When aggrieved either party can use the courts and legal sanctions (Burchill 1997). Employers are constantly seeking means of exercising control over the workforce and these will include systems of both reward and punishment. Sanctions may be applied on an individual basis, a collective basis or both. Those on an individual basis will include dismissal, suspension, transfer, downgrading, withholding of pay or promotion among others. Those on collective basis could include lockout and mass dismissal among others. Employees on the other hand equally are constantly seeking means of resistance and may act individually or collectively. Usually the means mainly used are absenteeism -often on sickness grounds or quitting, working without enthusiasm, even sabotage is often seen as a sanction used by individual employee. Collective action is usually associated with such activities as strikes, working to rule and overtime bans (Burchill, 1997).

### **2.3.6 Employee Conflict and Grievance Resolution.**

Employee conflicts may arise as a result of differences, real or perceived. These could be differences about information available to the interested parties, or differences about attaining common goals or differences about values. (Lubembe 1968). Lack of information or lack of accurate information leads to a breakdown in communication which escalates into widespread rumors, distortion of issues and consequently mistrusts and suspicion. The means of attaining an agreed goal may cause a serious rift. For example, some members of a group may prefer peaceful and diplomatic negotiations with the employer while another section of the group may opt for a radical approach that does not allow for modification in the original demands if such modification is seen to be in favor of the opponents. (K'obonyo, 1981)

Conflict in workplaces is common, and it has been estimated that managers spend 25-35% of their time responding to conflicts (Phillips, 1990). Bottom line costs are high as well, even when conflicts do not result in litigation and employer liability, because the costs accrue from time and energy spent not only by the managers and directly involved employees, but also from lowered productivity and damaged morale among co-workers indirectly impacted by the conflict. Conflict resolution is an important tool for striking a balance among strategic options and competing interests. It is a process through which conflicting or competing interests may be accommodated and brought to a consensus through which co-operative action can be taken (Clarkson, 1995). Conflict resolution as a management tool is quite important for the participatory process, particularly during the strategy formulation phase, when a balance must be struck concerning choices among strategic options which have different cost and benefit implications for different stakeholder groups. When designing a conflict resolution strategy, the root of the conflict needs to be analyzed, as well as the roles of the various stakeholders and the influence of power relations within the specific cultural context. Well-established tools of managing conflict include active listening, constructive dialogue, and negotiation, mediation, and (re) conciliation (Kimani, 2006). The main reason why employers and employees find it difficult to get together is that each group is by open declaration out to get as much and to give as little as it can. A concept, which adds complexity to the problem, is the tendency of employers or managers to regard the employee as a means, not as an end in himself (University of Colorado, 2004). To deal with men intelligently, they must be known as they are; we must recognize their individual differences, desires and aims, and their common desire in a democracy to be represented in the deliberations on policies which affect their lives and their interests.

Phillips (1990) argues that organizational progress must increasingly depend upon the principle of personality growth, upon the unique value residing in human quality, skill, initiative, and courage. Personality growth is essentially a social problem; it comes from sharing; it depends upon an opportunity for self-

expression in a process which is reciprocal, mutual, in its effects. This need for conflict resolution in the development of employees in the banking industry is timely as banks continue to experience cutthroat competition from each other.

## **2.4 EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT DECISIONS**

Participation is giving employees greater opportunity to make work related decisions. According to Gallagher (2002) employee participation means giving workers a greater opportunity to be involved in decision making beyond the immediate boundary of their jobs. The practice increases employee share of influence in decision making at different levels of the organization hierarchy, with increased sense of accountability and responsibility. Employee participation and involvement is used synonymously to cover all forms of individual representative information sharing, consultation and participation. However, according to Juliette and Jeff (2005), involvement are those practices which are initiated by the management and are designed to increase employee information and commitment to the organization while employee participation play a greater part in decision making.

Employee involvement programs are increasingly being implemented in an attempt to remedy a variety of problems facing organizations in Kenya. According to reports in human resource management periodicals, the promise of employee involvement is far-reaching and includes improvements in labor productivity, enhanced product quality, stronger employee motivation, positive changes in employee attitudes, and better employer-employee relations. Researchers have long promoted the concept of employee involvement in decision making, beginning with the Hawthorne experiments of the 1920s (Carrie et. al., 1992). In employee involvement, as well as in other participation programs, positive changes in employee attitudes and behavior are said to be realized through a process of involving employees in aspects of decision making that have been traditionally reserved for management.

According to theory, this inclusion of employees is intrinsically rewarding in that it provides them with a greater sense of ownership or involvement in their work and a better understanding of both how their work can be done most effectively and management's perspective on the operation of the business (Armstrong, 2001). Thus, employee involvement is thought to benefit the employee as well as the employer. Recent reviews of the accumulated research on employee participation programs have been consistent in their conclusions regarding the effects of participation on work-related attitudes. Employee involvement in decision making has been positively associated in numerous studies with attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Summers and Hyman, 2005)). The theoretical rationale for these relationships is that participation promotes feelings of independence, influence, and esteem among employees, which in turn enhance morale and commitment. Summers and Hyman (2005) also found out that employees actively involved in an employee involvement program will have more positive attitudes toward their work and employer than will non-participants. This will be established for the case of Kenya commercial bank. Their research also suggests that when a workers' union is active in structuring an employee involvement program, employees will not be divided into pro-union and anti-union camps nor will participation in an employee involvement program erode union attitudes. In fact, participation in the program may enhance both company and union attitudes (Bryson, 2005).

There are different levels of employee participation. Armstrong (2001) provides four levels of participation which include: job level, management level, policy making level and ownership level. At the job level, the team leaders and their teams communicate ideas about how the work should be done in an informal process. At the management level, the information is shared on how the work is planned and carried out, the work arrangements and conditions. At the policy making level, the management willingly share the decision making power with the employees to make key decisions about the direction in which the organization is moving. Then at the ownership level, participation involve share of equity and the employee use their voting right as owners of the organization to

determine the composition of the board. In this study the level of participation by the employees of KCB will also be established.

The effects of employee involvement in unions on employee relations have also received attention from researchers. Benjamin et al. (1999) observed that traditionally, management has initiated employee involvement, and that employee involvement in decision making of their organizations is thought to be eroding the support for unions and encroach upon their traditional role as the representative of employee concerns. Recent competition in the banking sector has convinced many union leaders that employees and their unions must be far more actively involved than they have been in making decisions previously reserved for management.

Employee attitudes toward a union may also be associated directly with employee involvement, or viewed as a consequence of changes in employees' work attitudes. Some unionists have voiced concern that improved attitudes toward management as a result of employee involvement will erode union commitment. Michael's (2003) work concentrated on two potential mechanisms by which employee involvement programs might affect union attitudes. First, such programs may attract employees less interested than others in unions and thus structurally divide employees into pro-union and anti-union camps. Michael (2003) labeled this phenomenon a "selection effect," since correlations between program participation and union attitudes are attributed to self-sorting based on differences among employees that predate the employee involvement program. Michael labeled the second way that employee involvement participation may be associated with changes in union attitudes a "program effect." As stated previously, numerous studies have suggested that the experience of participation in an employee involvement program may enhance employees' positive attitudes toward their jobs and employing organizations.

A decrease in union allegiance may accompany those positive attitudes, particularly if the union was not involved in the design and implementation of the

employee involvement program. Positive attitudes toward a company, however, need not be associated with negative ones toward a union. Research on dual loyalty models of commitment indicates that individuals can simultaneously hold positive attitudes toward their unions and their employers (Kneeland, 1999). Kneeland further suggested that the degree of cooperation between management and labour may influence the ability of employees to maintain dual loyalty. Employees may have some difficulty maintaining dual allegiance to a union and management that are in conflict, but they are able to maintain commitment to both parties when the two have cooperative relations.

Research on employee involvement programs and union involvement has supported this general finding (Bronfenbrenner et al. (1998)). A more specific issue that may be of some concern to both companies and unions is the effect of an employee involvement program on employees' attitudes toward collective bargaining, the traditional union process for involving employees in decision making. Following Michael's (2003) framework, this study is set to establish a more specific, potential effect of employee involvement in KCB. Although Kenya labour law compels collective bargaining for many decisions concerning employment relations, union member support for the process and, by implication, for the union may nonetheless be influenced by the presence of other decision-making structures, such as an employee involvement program of the banks. In this study issues regarding the effects of employee involvement programs on employee attitudes and perceptions, and the bases for those effects are explored.

## **2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The foundation on which the entire research project is based is such that the primary interest is employee perception of labour relations in Kenya Commercial Bank which can be affected by various factors including the levels and degrees of employee participation, communication, conflict resolution and trade union activities.

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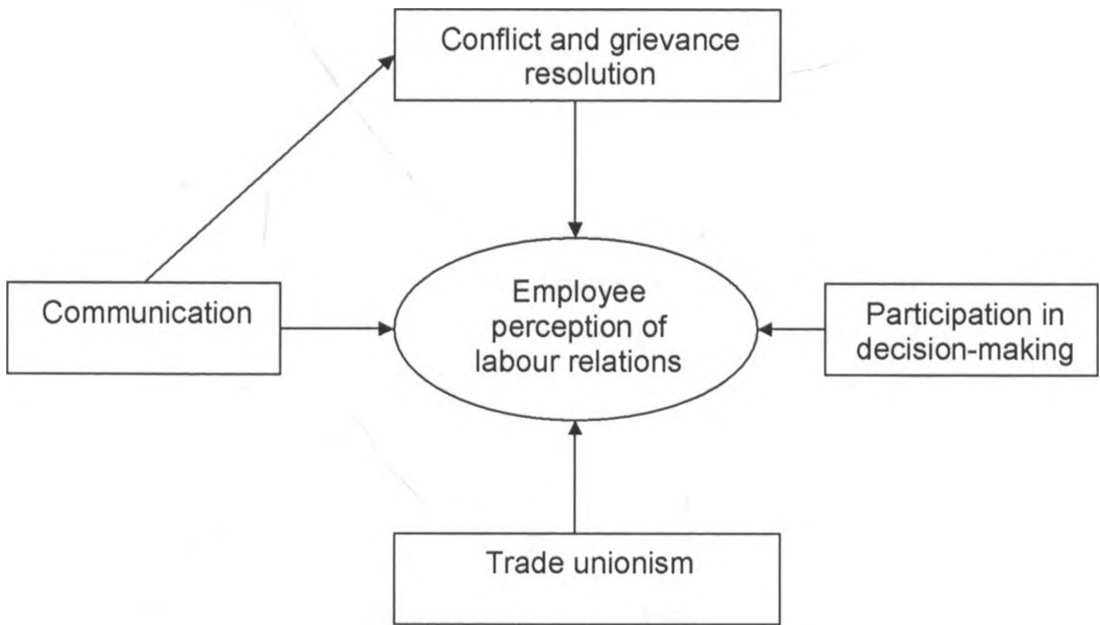
The foundation on which the entire research project is based is such that the primary interest is employee perception of labour relations in Kenya Commercial Bank which can be affected by various factors including the levels and degrees of employee participation, communication, conflict resolution and trade union activities.



Employee participation that covers all forms of individual representative information sharing, consultation and participation would improve if the roles of each employee are clearly defined and he or she is aware of them. The framework of participation is such that there are four levels of participation. At the job level, the team leaders and their teams communicate ideas about how the work should be done in an informal process. At the management level, the information is shared and decisions made about issues of the way work is planned and carried out, the work arrangements and conditions. At the policy making level, the management willingly share the decision making power as employees share power to make key decisions about the directions in which the business is taking. At the ownership level, participation involves share of equity and employees use their voting rights as owners of the enterprise to determine the composition of the board. When the employees are highly involved in decision-making, they perceive labour relations to be flourishing.

Communication between the employees and management influences the perception of the employees of labour relations for example when there is smooth information flow in all departments, the employees get adequate information on how they should perform their jobs and this reduces manager-employee conflict and employee-employee conflict. The role of trade unions is to protect workers individual and collective rights. They also address disputes and conflicts through the collective bargaining agreement. It is easier for union officials to talk to the management about a problem than individual employees. If a worker belongs to a trade union, his/her perception of labour relations may differ from the perception of employees who do not belong to trade unions. If the trade union is not effective in performing its role, employees see it as of no consequence in labour relations matters. The relations are diagrammed in the figure below.

**Figure 2.1 Schematic diagram for the theoretical framework**



The variables in the theoretical framework include: employee perception of labour relations, communication in the work place, conflict and grievance resolution, participation in decision making and trade unionism. Employee perception of labour relations is the dependent variable in the above framework while the other variables are independent.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.**

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A survey research design was used in the study. This was suitable because the population consisted of bank employees who included Clerks, Section Heads, Managers and Directors in Head office and Nairobi branches. Babie (1995) noted that survey is the most appropriate technique of generating original data for describing a population too large to observe directly. Through the use of appropriate sampling procedures survey research ensures that a representative part of the population is drawn and studied. The researcher therefore opted for survey research in this study.

### **3.2 POPULATION**

The population of study consisted of all employees in KCB and the area chosen for the study was Nairobi where KCB has 14 branches including Head Office and about 800 employees. (KCB database, 2007). The research site was chosen because it is typical of many branches of the bank, and the working conditions in Nairobi and the character of employee relations is similar to those in other branches out of Nairobi. The research site was also attractive because of the characteristics of its employee involvement program.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION**

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. (Appendix 2). The questionnaire was divided into three parts; part one dealt with the bio data of the respondents; part two addressed employee relations that affect the respondents while part three dealt with the general issues which were suggested by respondents in the course of filling the questionnaire. The questionnaires were sent through the established internal system of sending mail by the bank popularly known as the "computer box". The questionnaires were sent to senior Managers in every division of the bank situated in Head Office, union members and other line managers based in Head Office and branches. The questionnaires were delivered as above and returned through the same mail system later or

personally picked by the researcher. Follow up was aggressively done via personal visits, telephone calls and emails which greatly facilitated response rates.

### **3.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

The completed responses were coded into SPSS variable view and translated into specific categories in line with the objectives of the study and guided by the research questions formulated. The data was entered, cleaned, explored and analyzed using descriptive statistics tool of SPSS to generate the frequencies and the percentages. Tables, graphs and charts were used to demonstrate the nature and extent of employee relations in the bank. The results of the data analysis were interpreted and conclusions and recommendations were made.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.

This section provides the results of the analysis of the data from the questionnaire and the discussion of the results as appropriate.

### 4.1 INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND

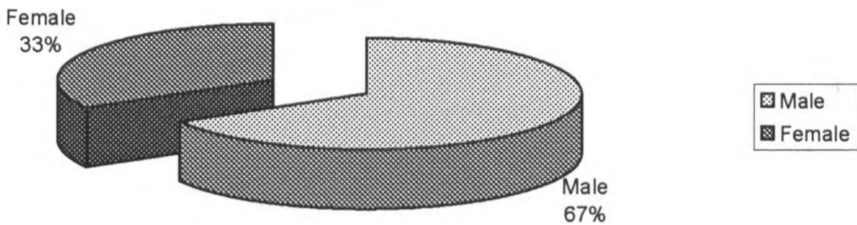
A total of 66 questionnaires were available for analysis.

**Table 4. 1: Sex of respondents**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	44	66.7
Female	22	33.3
Total	66	100.0

About 67% of the respondents were male, 33% female. This is evidence that in a way there is gender sensitivity in KCB.

**Figure 4. 1: Sex of respondents**

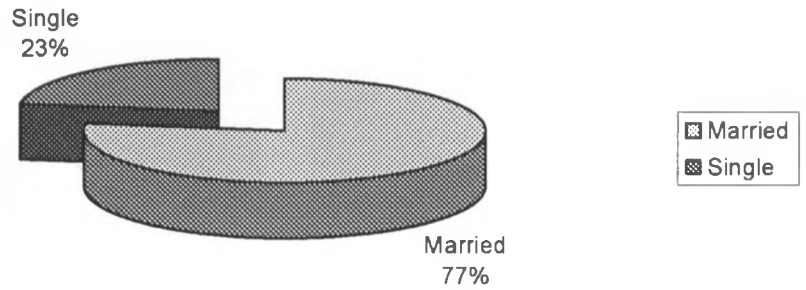


**Table 4. 2: Marital status of respondents**

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	51	77.3
Single	15	22.7
Total	66	100.0

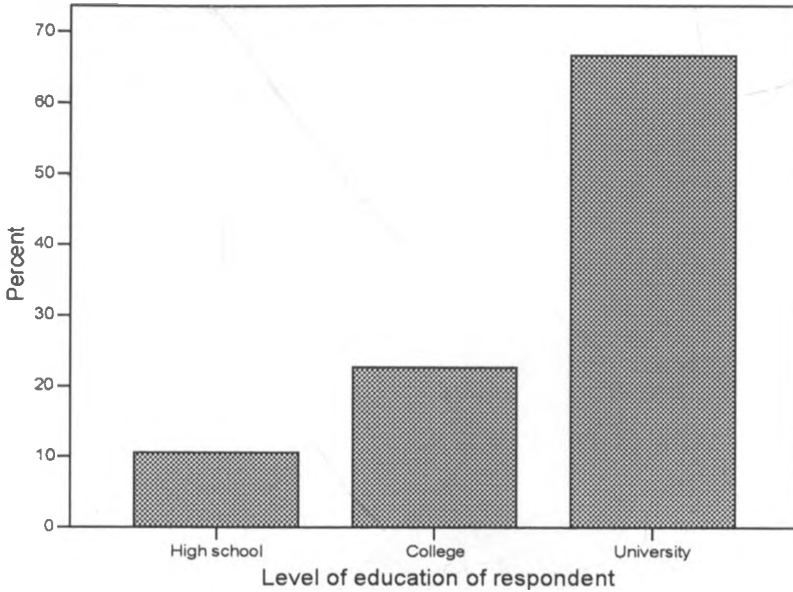
The majority of the respondents, 77% were found to be married while 23% were not.

**Figure 4. 2 :Marital status of respondents**



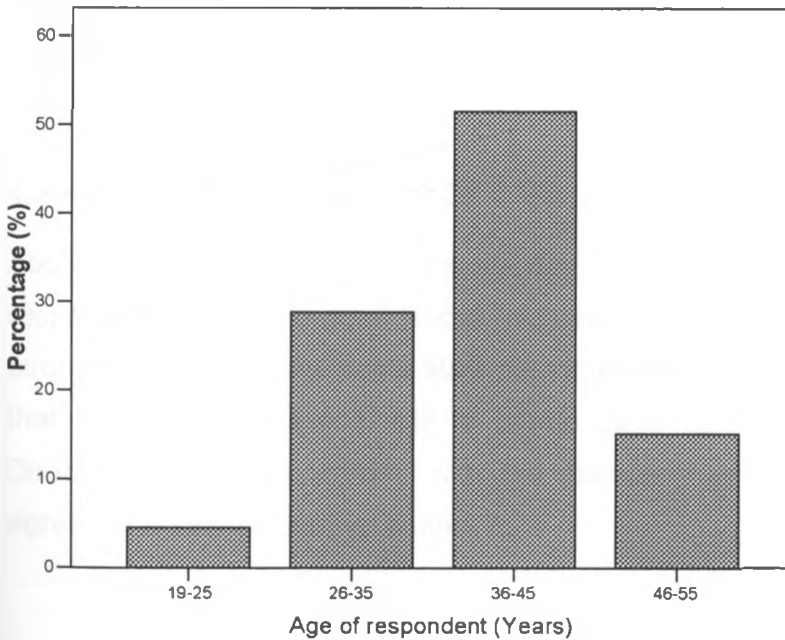
77% of respondents are married while 23% are not.

**Figure 4. 3: Level of education of respondents**



The majority of respondents, 67% had attained university education, 23% college education, and only 10% had attained a high school education. This implies that KCB has a highly educated and informed personnel.

**Figure 4. 4: Age of respondents**



From Figure 4.4 above the research revealed that 51% of the respondents are aged between 36-45 Years, 29% between 26-35 Years, 15% between 46-55

Years and 5% between 19-25 Years. The age spread in KCB looks healthy with the majority at above 36 years of age.

**Figure 4. 5: Position of respondents**

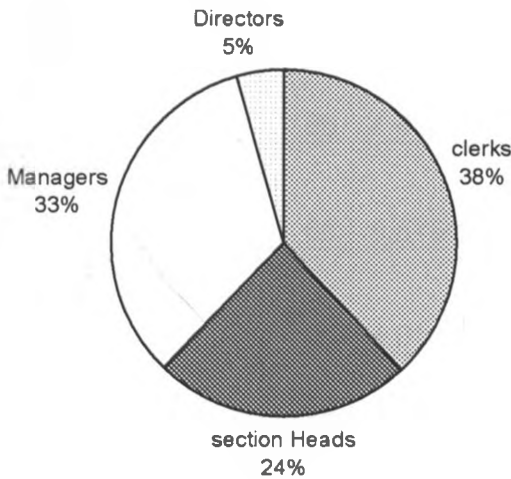


Figure 4.5 shows that Most of the respondents were Clerks (38%). 33% were Managers; about 24% of the respondents were Section Heads and 5% Directors. All cadre of staff were therefore included in the research to give a representative view.

## **4.2 EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF LABOUR RELATIONS**

About 25% of the Section Heads strongly disagreed that it was management's responsibility to create good labour relations. More than half (54%) of Managers strongly agreed with the same statement indicating that most Managers believed that it was their responsibility to create good labour relations. 67% of the Directors moderately agreed with the statement while the Clerks response agreed and strongly agreed shared 32%.



**Table 4.3: Employee perception of labour relations**

	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>STD DEV.</b>	<b>VARIANCE</b>
1	Whether good labour relations make respondent like his job	66	4.623053	1.121521	1.25780
2	Respondent's employer creates environment perpetuating good labour relations.	66	4.485911	1.070150	1.14522
3	Managers and Non Management employees relate freely	66	4.576133	1.024752	1.05012
4	Respondent is fairly compensated for work done.	66	4.018604	1.227881	1.50769
5	Managers demonstrate what should be done.	66	4.589836	0.929195	0.86340
6	Good working relations in the office is important to respondent.	66	4.673511	1.451709	2.10746
7	It is Management's responsibility to create good labour relations.	66	4.595657	1.313370	1.72494
8	KCB operates an open door policy.	66	4.367556	1.258722	1.58438
9	Respondents subscription to the trade union gives them job security.	66	2.998528	0.902857	0.81515
10	Management supports the union activities.	66	2.892473	0.903245	0.81585

**Figure 4. 6: Employee perception of labour relations**

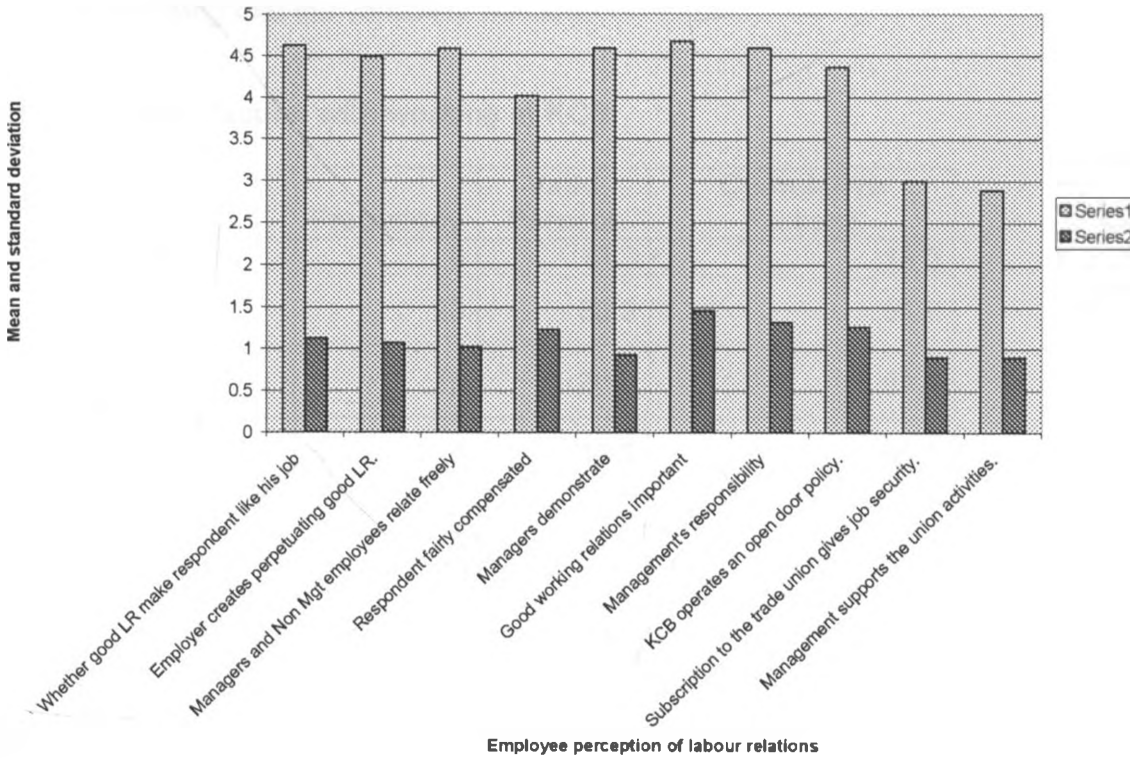


Table 4.3 and Figure 4.6 above shows that good labour relations, a good working environment, good interrelationships between employee and manager, remuneration, coaching, harmony in the office, conducive working environment and open door policy have high means averaging over 4.0 on a 5-point scale. This implies that employees know the value of good labour relations. However, job security through union subscription and management support of union activities had a lower mean averaging 2.9, this implies that the union was no longer as powerful as it used to be, and the issues that have negatively affected the Union need to be addressed to foster good labour relations.

The highest variability was recorded for the answer to the question of whether good working relations in the office is important and the lowest variability was recorded for the answer to the question of whether respondents' subscription to the trade union gives them job security. Generally the variability for all the

responses to the questions pertaining to employee perception of labour relations was unity showing that the variability was low.

**Table 4. 4: Satisfaction with working at KCB**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
A very great deal	8	13.3	13.3
A great deal	23	38.3	51.7
Quite a bit	18	30.0	81.7
A fair amount	8	13.3	95.0
A little	2	3.3	98.3
No answer	1	1.7	100.0

**Figure 4. 7: Satisfaction with working at KCB**

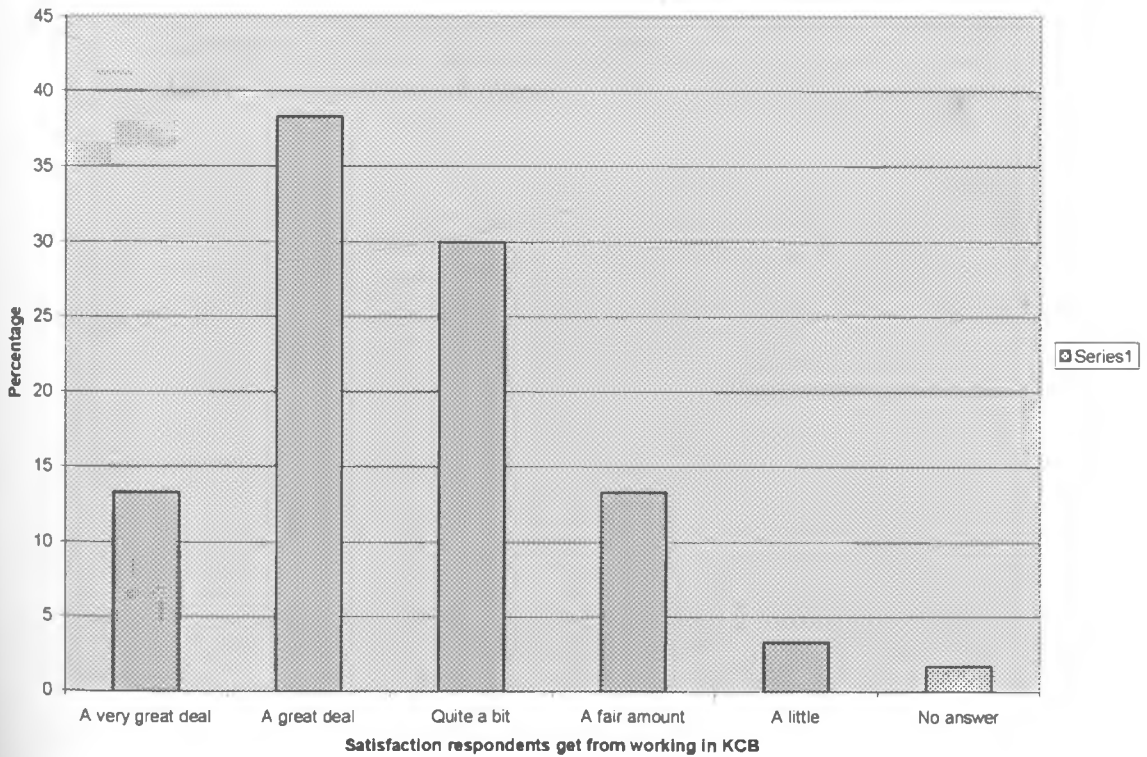


Table 4.4 and figure 4.7 above analyses employee satisfaction in working at KCB and the extent of satisfaction. 13% of the respondents are a very great deal satisfied in working at KCB, 38% are a great deal satisfied giving a cumulative total of 52% which is just more than half of the respondents, while 3% are satisfied in a little way.

**Table 4. 5: Factors negatively affecting labour relations**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Activities of worker's union	4	7.7	7.7
Kind of management	15	28.8	36.5
Lack of communication	16	30.8	67.3
Tribalism	14	26.9	94.2
Level of education	1	1.9	96.2
Political orientation	2	3.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	
System	14		
Total	66		

**Figure 4. 8: Factors negatively affecting labour relations**

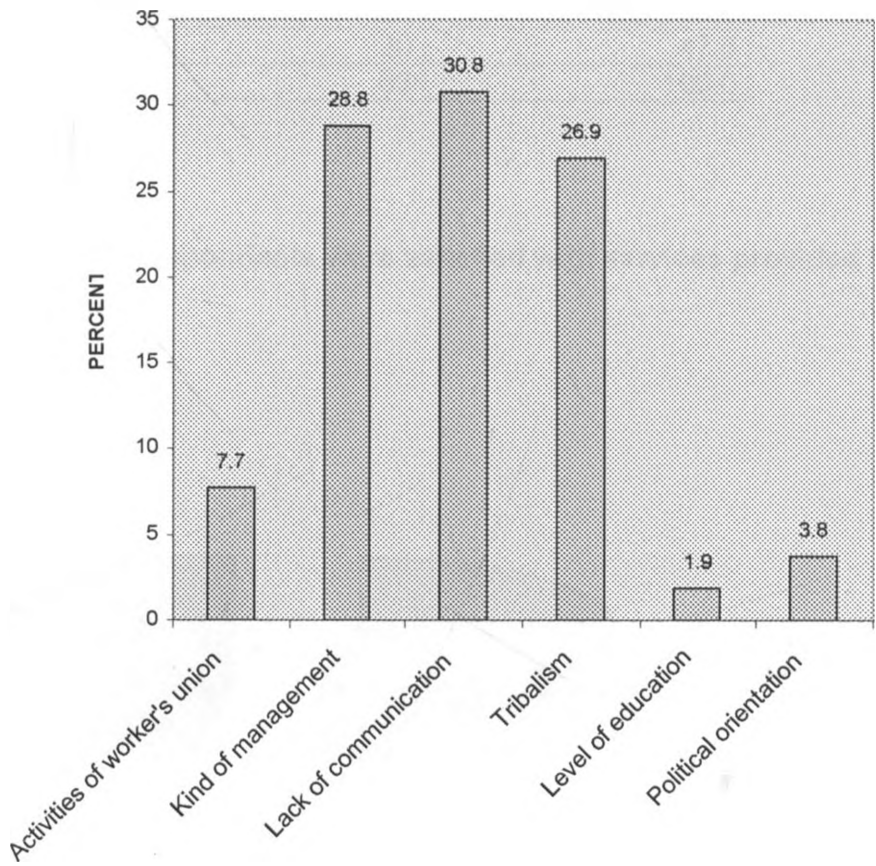
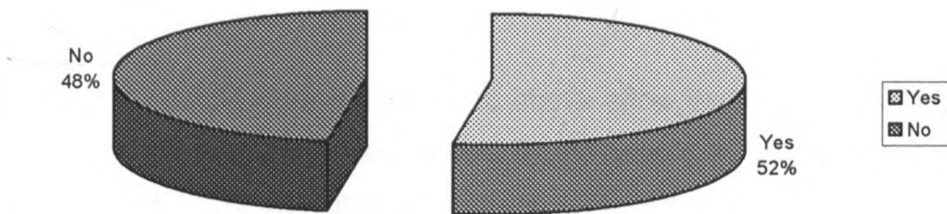


Table 4.5 and Figure 4.8 above illustrate the number one factor negatively affecting labour relations as lack of communication since 31% of the respondents ranked it as the first. 29% ranked kind of management as the number two factor affecting labour relations while 27% ranked tribalism as number three factor affecting labour relations. Political orientation was not a key factor in negatively affecting labour relations (4%), level of education (2%) and activities of workers' union (8%) were not considered as negatively affecting labour relations.

**Table 4. 6: Whether respondents were satisfied with services provided by unions**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	52.4
No	30	47.6
Total	63	100.0

**Figure 4. 9: Whether respondents were satisfied with services provided by unions**



**Table 4. 7: Extent of satisfaction with services provided by unions if yes**

	Frequency	Percent
Generally satisfied	22	62.9
Somewhat satisfied	6	17.1
Very satisfied	7	20.0
Total	35	100.0

**Figure 4. 10: Extent of satisfaction with union services.**

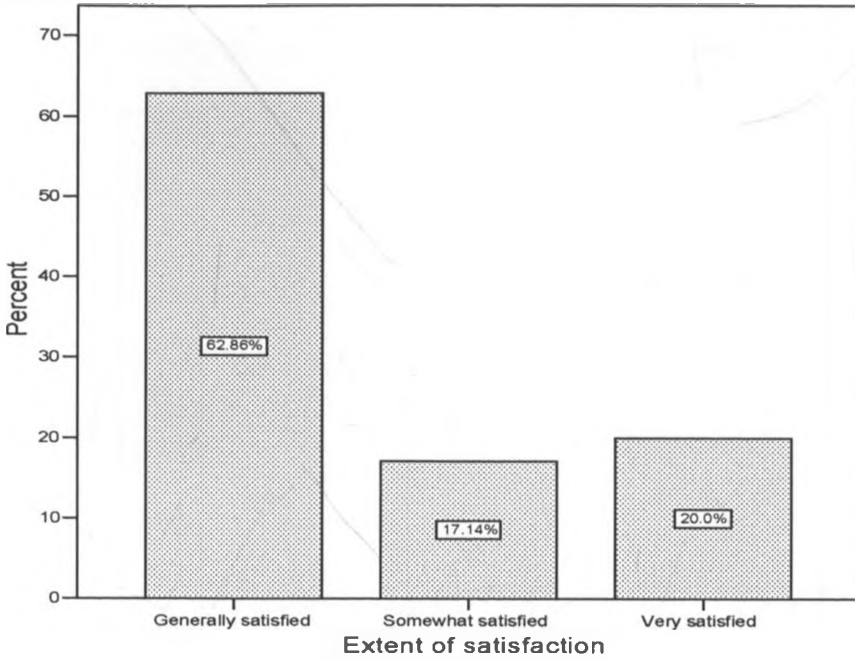


Table 4.6, 4.7 and Figure 4.9 and 4.10 above show that 52% of the respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the unions in the banking sector while 48% are not. 63% of the satisfied ones are generally satisfied while 20% are very satisfied and 17% were somewhat satisfied.

**Table 4. 8: Trade unions are no longer effective in the banking sector.**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly agree	26	40.0
Agree	20	30.8
Uncertain	5	7.7
Disagree	14	21.5
Total	65	100.0

**Figure 4. 11:Trade unions are no longer effective in the banking sector.**

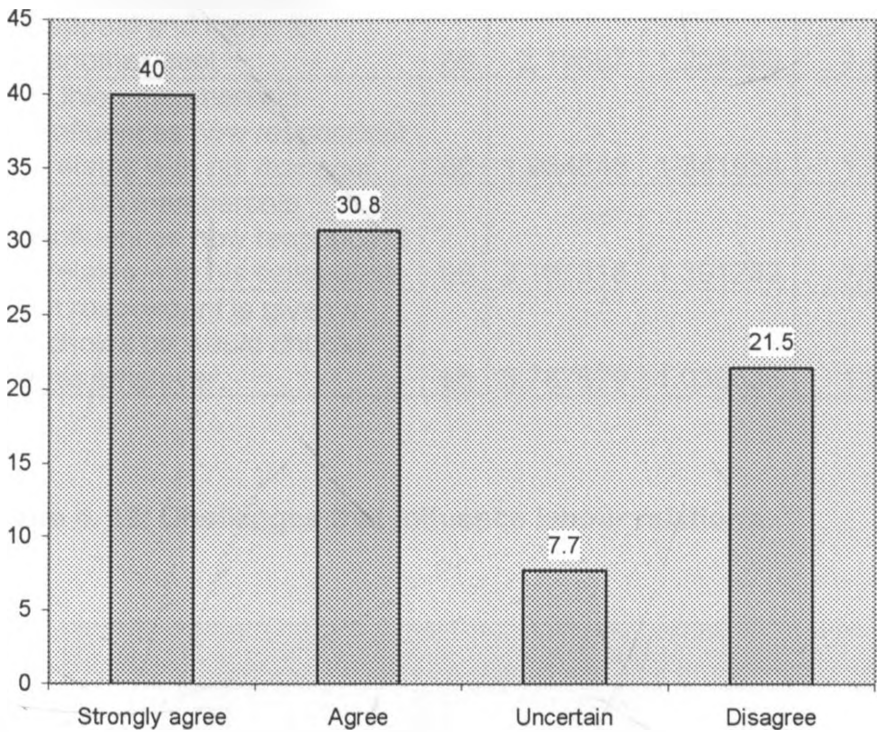


Table 4.8 and Figure 4.11 above show that most respondents agreed that trade unions were no longer effective in the banking sector. 40% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 31% agreed, 21% disagreed while 8% were uncertain.

**Table 4. 9: Challenges that influence labour relations.**

	STATEMENT	N	MEAN	STD DEV.	VARIANCE
1	Respondent feel employer is concerned with their welfare.	66	3.166667	1.089578	1.187180
2	Manager respects respondent	66	3.833333	0.904405	0.817948
3	Competition for scarce positions affects how respondent relates.	66	2.515152	1.53164	2.345921
4	Respondent know his job responsibilities.	66	4.227273	0.422282	0.178322
5	Respondent confident with how promotions are awarded.	66	2.166667	1.271986	1.617948



6	If unhappy with manager respondent is able to appeal and move to another dept	66	2.19697	1.205369	1.452914
7	Union membership influences how respondent relates with his manager.	66	1.984848	1.341554	1.799767
8	Union membership influences how respondent relates with his colleagues.	66	2.181818	1.391282	1.935666
9	If respondent is given a choice he would choose his employer.	66	3.787879	1.030536	1.062004

**Figure 4. 12: Challenges that influence labour relations**

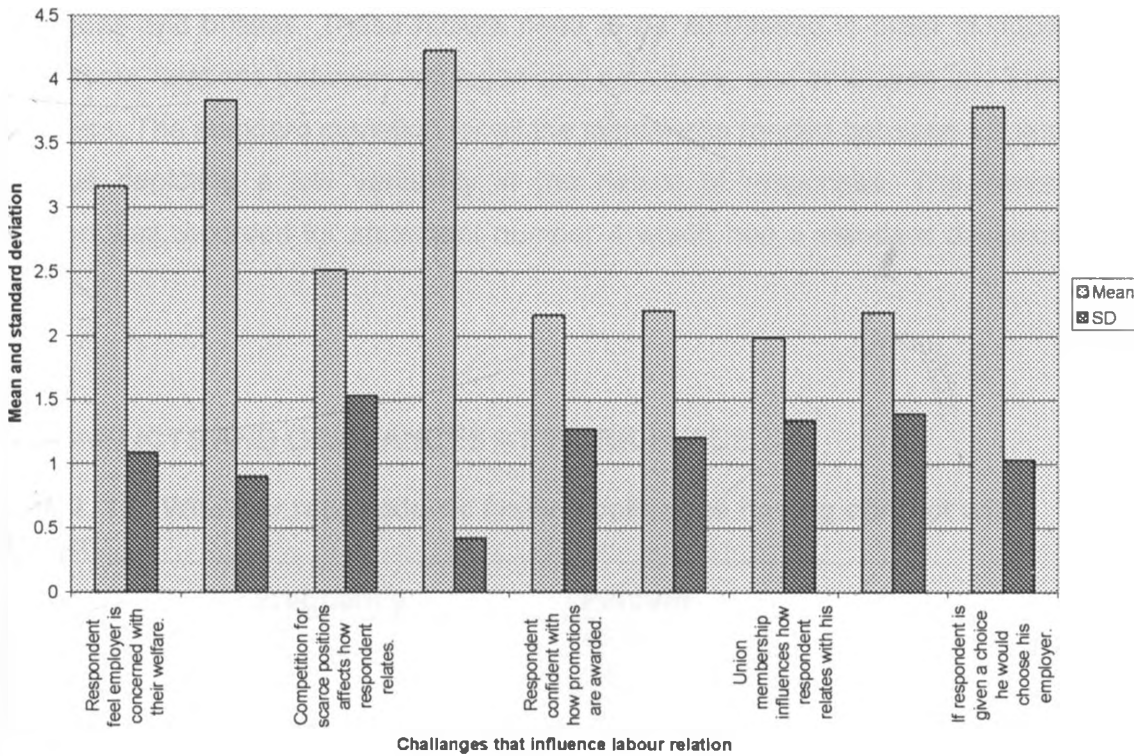


Table 4.9 and Figure 4.12 show the various challenges that influence labour relations in KCB. Statements 2, 4 and 9 had a mean of about 4.0 on a 5-point scale meaning that these factors favoured good labour relations. Of importance

was that respondents felt respected by their managers, they also felt that they knew their job responsibilities very well and were willing to continue having KCB as their employer of choice.

Statements 1 and 3 had a mean of about 3.0 on a 5-point scale, meaning that these were statements that needed some reinforcement in order to foster good labour relations. These statements were concerned with how much the respondents felt that the employer was concerned with their welfare and how competition for scarce positions affected their relationships with fellow colleagues. Statements 5, 6, 7 and 8 scored a much lower mean of about 2.0. In general these were statements that negatively affected good labour relations. These statements involved how promotions were awarded, transfers if unhappy with ones' manager, and how the union influenced how one related with ones' colleagues and bosses. These factors need to be addressed in order to boost good labour relations between employee and employee, and employee and their managers. The standard deviation for all the statements ranged between 1.0 and 1.5 thus depicting a low variability in the nature of responses. The lowest variation was recorded for statement number 4 which had a standard deviation of 0.4.

**4.3 CONFLICTS AND GRIEVANCES AT WORK PLACE.**

**Table 4. 10: Whether respondents knew a colleague having conflict with another.**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	30	46.9
No	34	53.1
Total	64	100.0

**Figure 4. 13: Whether respondents knew a colleague having conflict with another.**

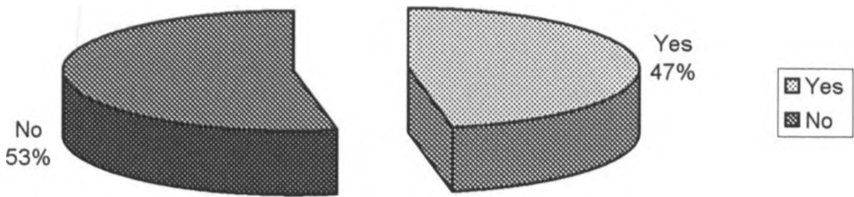


Table 4.10 and Figure 4.13 above provide findings on whether the respondents knew of colleagues who had conflicts with each other. 53% of the respondents did not know of any colleague who had conflict with another while 47% knew. The main cause of conflict between colleague and colleague was found to be poor communication as 44% of the respondents agreed with this statement. Social relationships were the second cause of conflicts at 31%. Competition was third at 22%.

**Table 4. 11: What respondents think is the cause of conflict with the boss.**

	Frequency	Percent
Social relationships	10	34.5
Incompetence	6	20.7
Competition	3	10.3
Poor communication	10	34.5
Total	29	100.0

**Figure 4. 14: What respondents think is the cause of conflict with the boss.**

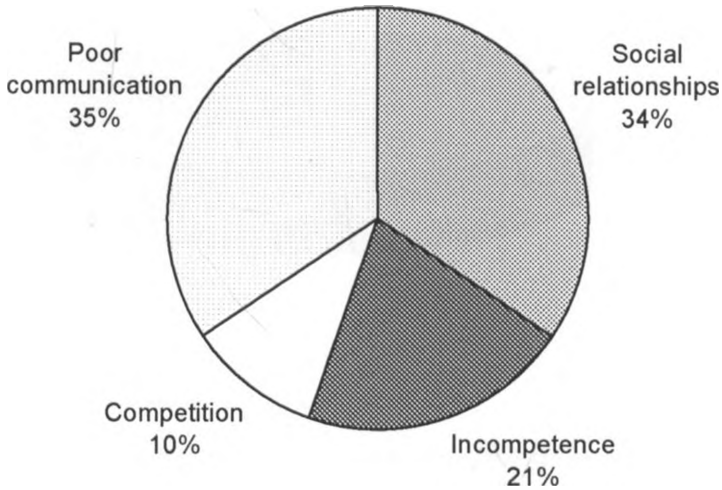


Table 4.11 and Figure 4.14 above show that 35% of the respondents felt that Conflicts with bosses was mainly due to poor communication and social relationships, this percentage was shared by the two, 21% felt that conflicts with bosses was due to incompetence, while 10% felt it was due to competition.

**Table 4. 12: Whether respondents think there are other participants in the conflict.**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	39	63.9
No	22	36.1
Total	61	100.0

**Figure 4. 15: Whether respondents think there are other participants in the conflict.**

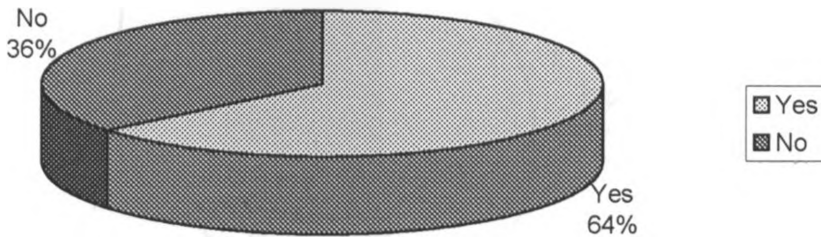


Table 4.12 and Figure 4.15 above shows that 64% of the respondents felt that there were other participants in the conflict apart from the people involved while 36% thought otherwise. The research therefore revealed that conflicts should be avoided at all costs due to their great ramifications.

**Table 4. 13: How respondents think the conflicts can be resolved**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Improve social relationships	15	26.8	26.8
Recommend training	13	23.2	50
Improve communication	27	48.2	98.2
All of the above	1	1.8	100
Total	56	100.0	

**Figure 4. 16: How conflicts can be resolved**

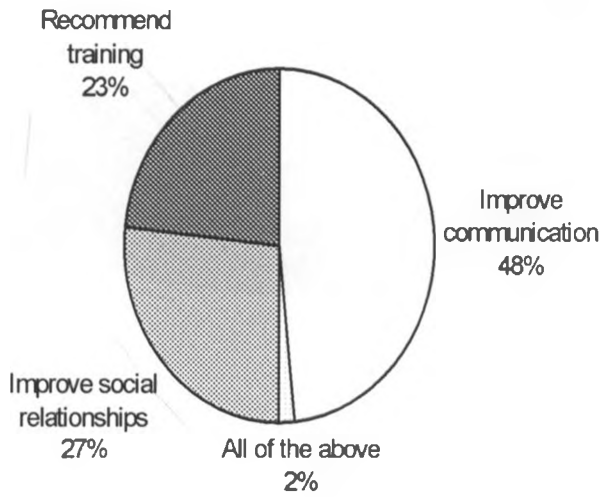


Table 4.13 and Figure 4.16 above show that 48% of the respondents felt that conflicts could be resolved by improving communication, 27% felt conflicts could be resolved by improving social relationships while 23% recommended training as a way of resolving conflicts.

**4.4 PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING.**

**Table 4. 14 : Whether respondents had participated in any important decision- making.**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	41	65.1
No	22	34.9
Total	63	100.0

**Figure 4. 17 : Whether respondents had participated in any important decision- making.**

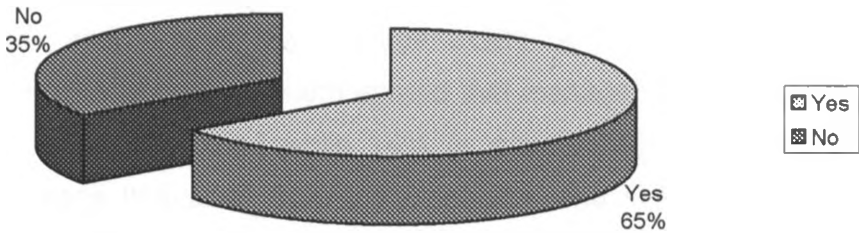


Table 4.14 and Figure 4.17 above show that 65% of the respondents had participated in at least an important decision making activity in the bank while 35% had not. 35% of employees in this case should be considered as high considering every employee needs to be empowered enough to be able to participate in important decision making activities.

**Table 4. 15: Extent management shares information on how work is planned**

		Very small extent (1)		Small extent. (2)		Moderate (3)		Large extent (4)		Very large extent (5)		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Clerks	3	12%	11	44%	5	20%	4	16%	2	8%	25	100%
2.	Section Heads	2	13%	5	31%	5	31%	1	6%	3	19%	16	100%
3.	Managers	0	0	0	0	2	10%	16	76%	3	14%	21	100%
4.	Directors	0	0	0	0	2	67%	1	33%	0	0	3	100%

Table 4.15 above shows that the majority of clerks (44%) agreed to a small extent that management shared information on how work was planned and only 8% to a very large extent agreed that management shared information. 67% of Directors moderately agreed while 33% agreed to a large extent. 31% of Section Heads to a small extent agreed, 31% to a moderate extent, 6% to a large extent and 19% to a very large extent. An overwhelming majority of Managers (76%) to a large extent agreed that management shared information on how work was planned while 14% to a very large extent agreed. This therefore means that apart from the managers who strongly agreed with the statement the majority of the employees disagreed that management shared information on how work was planned.

**Figure 4. 18: Section Heads opinion on the extent management shares information on how work is planned**

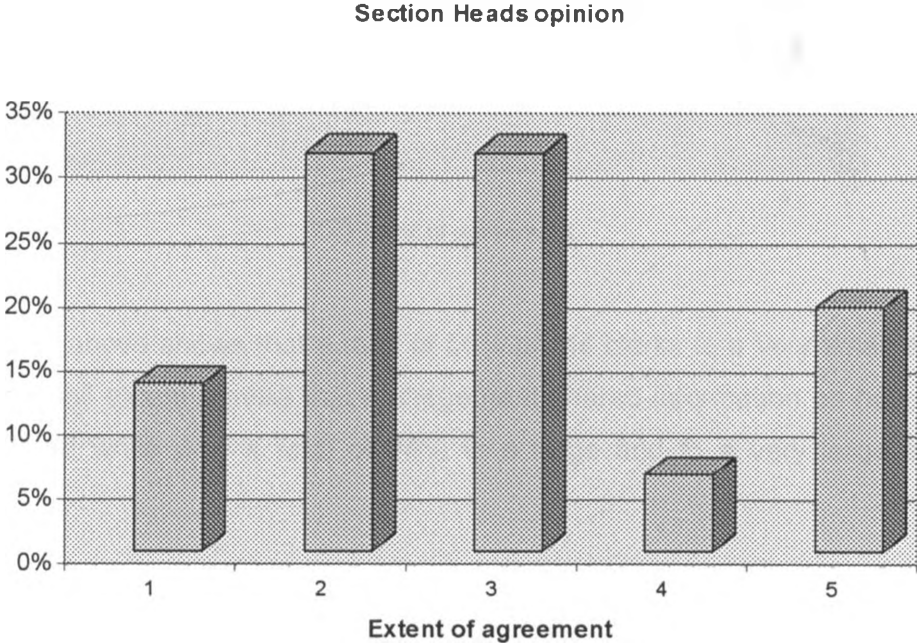




Figure 4.18 above shows the extent Section Heads agreed with the fact that management shared information on how work was planned. 31% to a small extent and 31% to a moderate extent agreed that management shared information on how work was planned.

**Figure 4. 19: Clerks opinion on the extent management shares information on how work is planned**

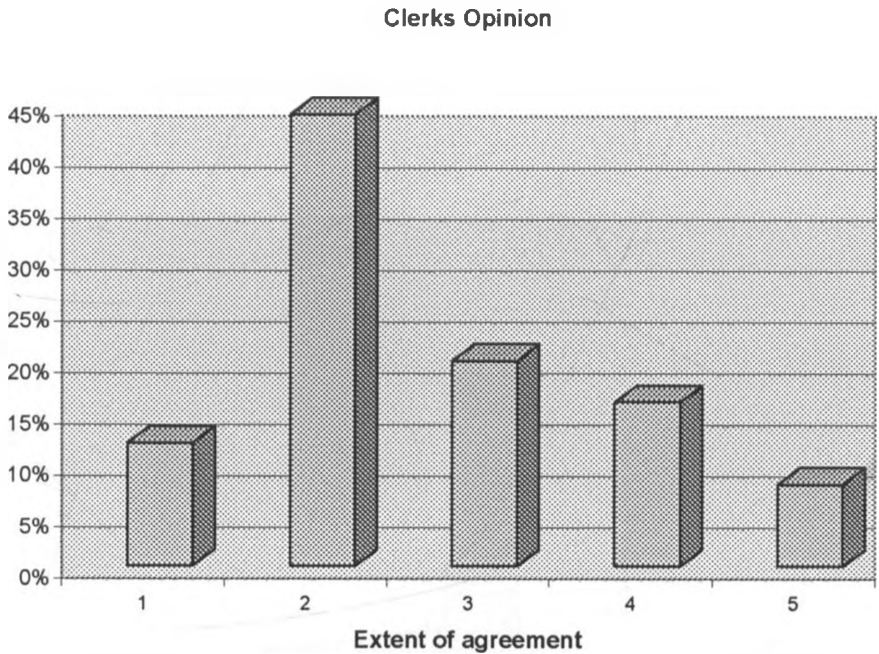


Figure 4.19 above shows that a total of 56% of the clerks to a very small extent and to a small extent agreed that management shared information on how work was planned while only a total of 24% to a large and to a very large extent agreed.

**Table 4. 16 : Decision making in KCB is for managers**

Factors	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
To a very small extent	1	1.5	1.5
To a small extent	4	6.2	7.7
Moderate	20	30.8	38.5
Large extent	13	20.0	58.5
To a very large extent	27	41.5	100.0
	65	100	

**Figure 4. 20 : Decision making in KCB is for managers**

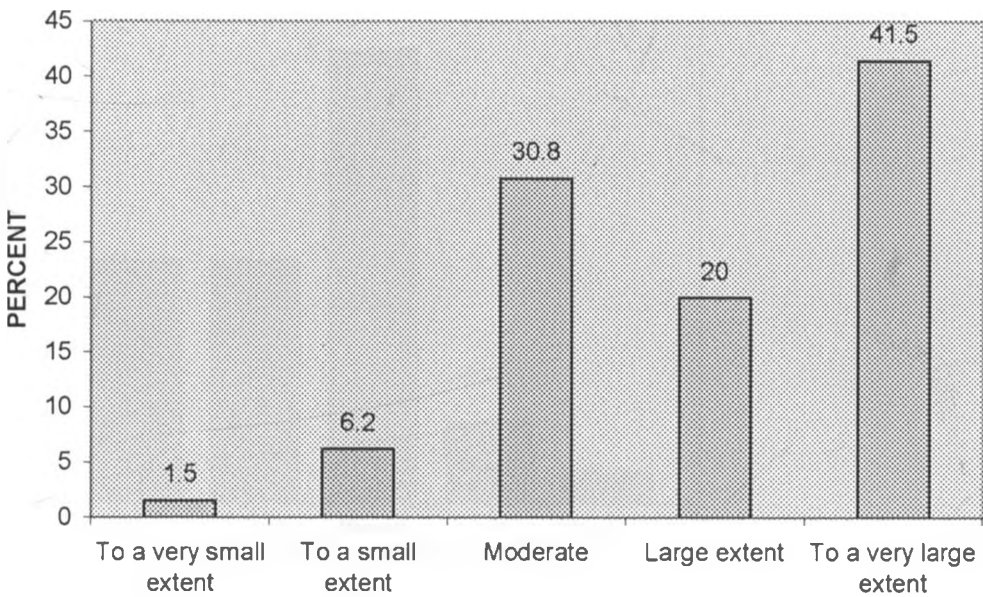


Table 4.16 and Figure 4.20 illustrate the extent to which decision-making is for managers in KCB. A total of 62% of the respondents to a large and to a very large extent believe that decision making in KCB is for managers while only a total of 8% to a very small and to a small extent believe otherwise.

**Table 4. 17 : How respondents rate non-management employees participation in KCB decision making**

Factors	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very low	15	23.1	23.1
Low	15	23.1	46.2
Moderate	28	43.1	89.2
High	5	7.7	96.9
Very high	2	3.1	100.0
Total	65	100.0	

**Figure 4. 21: How respondents rate non-management employees participation in KCB decision making.**

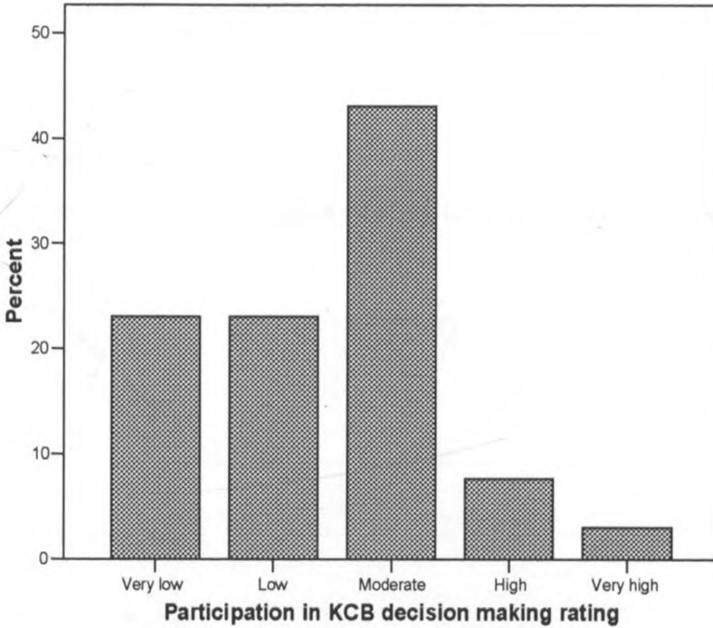


Table 4.17 and Figure 4.21 above show how respondents rate non-management employees' participation in KCB decision making. 23% of the respondents rated the decision making as very low, another 23% rated it as low, 43% rated it as moderate while 8% rated it as high and 3% rated it as very high. Non management employee's decision making can therefore be rated as generally low.

**Table 4.18: Challenges facing employee participation in decision-making.**

	STATEMENT	N	MEAN	STD DEV.	VARIANCE
1.	Team leaders and their teams communicate in an informal process .	66	3.015152	1.330037	1.768998
2	Non Management employees share key decision making process with management	66	2.303030	1.300529	1.691376
3.	Employees vote to determine the composition of the board.	66	1.666667	1.154701	1.333334
4.	Decision making in KCB is for managers.	66	3.893939	1.111185	1.234732
5.	I make decisions pertaining to the performance of my job.	66	3.272727	1.342162	1.801399

**Figure 4. 22: Challenges facing employee participation in decision-making.**

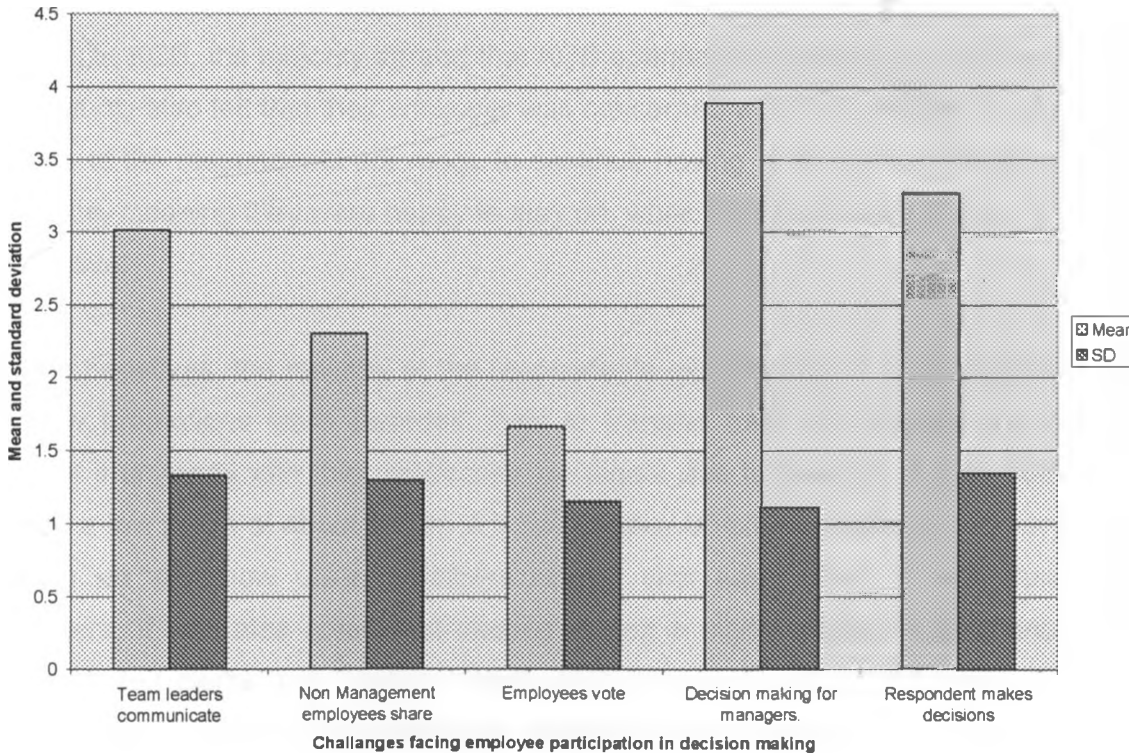


Table 4.18 and Figure 4.22 above show challenges faced by KCB employees' participation in decision making. There was a mean of about 4.0 on a 5-point scale on managers as the decision makers in KCB and a moderate mean of 3.0 on respondents being able to make decisions pertaining to the performance of their job and on informal communication between team leaders and their teams. The lower mean of about 2.0 was however on lack of empowerment on the part of the employee to make key decisions and voting to determine the composition of the board. The standard deviation for all the statements ranged between 1.1 and 1.3 depicting a low variability in the nature of responses.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY.**

This chapter has described and shown the results and findings of the study in order to address the study objectives and research questions. From the findings it seems that the players in establishing good labour relations are mainly the managers and to a lesser extent the rest of the staff, that is, Section Heads and Clerks. KCB was noted to have a highly educated personnel, 67% of them university graduates who knew their job responsibilities without exception, (100% of the respondents). The majority of employees expressed their satisfaction in working at KCB, the majority agreed that KCB operated an open door policy and the majority also felt that their employer was concerned with their welfare. A total of 64% of the respondents are ready to continue having KCB as their employer of choice, meaning they were happy to stay on, while 7% would leave if given an alternative.

On the negatives, the majority of the respondents expressed lack of confidence on how promotions were awarded, how to transfer from one department to another if unhappy with their respective Managers due to creation of silos both scored a low mean of about 2.0 on a 5-point scale. Union membership had very little to do with how union members related with each other or with their Managers. It was also noted that despite having a highly educated personnel who included clerks and Section Heads, to a large extent decision-making in KCB was a preserve of Managers. Although the majority (53%) of the

respondents did not know a colleague who had conflict with another, those who did stated poor communication and social relations as the main causes of conflict, followed by incompetence and competition in that order.

# **CHAPTER FIVE : DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the study was to explore employee perception of labour relations in KCB and to determine what influences the perceived employee relations within the bank. The research took on a Survey design and the population of study was the entire staff of KCB which included Directors, Managers, Section Heads and Clerks.

## **5.2 DISCUSSIONS**

The objective of the study was to establish what employee perception of labour relations in the bank was and to understand the various factors which influenced the perceptions. The factors included the way communication was done, and the kind of environment created for perpetuating good labour relations. The way communication is done should be in such a way that personal employee goals match with company goals through a process of participation and mutual modification. This serves to link workplace democracy to an organization's ability to change. Other factors essential to good labour relations included issues to do with welfare of the employees, mutual respect between managers and employees, competition for positions, compensation issues, union activities and management support of the same and awarding of promotions in the bank among others.

Participation in decision-making in KCB is to a very small extent hindered by lack of education as most of the employees are above the college level of education, in fact 67% of the respondents interviewed had attained university level of education. Although participation is a necessary condition of democracy, it is not sufficient as pointed by Cheney, (1995). Cheney viewed workplace democracy as a process involving the celebration of "self-reflection", collective development

and individual opportunity. KCB therefore needs to encourage all cadres of employees to participate in decision-making especially if such decisions affected their lives and day-to-day performance of their duties.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

Majority of the Managers (76%) believed that to a large extent that they shared information on how work was planned, while only 8% of the clerks believed to a very large extent that managers shared information on how work was planned. Most companies have failed to effectively explain to employees the purpose of their jobs and the mission and strategy of their businesses. According to this survey it is the managers who believe they share information on how work is planned but not the employees under them. Effective leadership communication means that an organization's leaders have taken the time to clearly and succinctly articulate the vision of the business, show how employees can contribute to it, and demonstrate how it can be 'lived' in their daily jobs. At the senior leadership level, ongoing, consistent communication is critical even when there is nothing new or vital to communicate. This builds trust and credibility. The research brought out clearly that the responsibility of creating good labour relations squarely lay with the managers. It was therefore the responsibility of every manager to ensure that he/she perpetuated good labour relations for their staff in order to get the best out of them.

To a very large extent employees in KCB are highly educated and know their job responsibilities. They also believe that improved communication and social relationships coupled with training can drastically reduce conflict. The management however needed to involve employees in decision-making, and decision-making should not be seen as a preserve for Managers. There should also be more free interdivisional and interdepartmental movement and the grievance appeal procedure should be more elaborate and open to enable an aggrieved employee to move from one department to another in case of any misunderstanding with the boss. This is not the current scenario since most employees felt locked in one place and to a very small extent able to appeal



successfully to move to an alternative department within KCB. The employees generally felt that KCB was a good employer and the majority were of the opinion that to a very large and to a large extent (64%) they would still choose KCB as their employer of choice given other alternatives.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has the following recommendations for improving labour relations in KCB:

- i. There should be more open communication between Managers and other employees to foster good labour relations,
- ii. There should be more participative programmes to enable employee's personal goals match with the company's vision and goals as much as possible.
- iii. The managers should learn to actively tap the highly developed human resource and allow them a more participative role especially in decisions pertaining to their welfare and in the performance of their daily duties.
- iv. Human resource professionals should also be strengthened to ensure good human relations and thus improved trust.

#### **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.**

The banking industry in general has its code of practice where confidentiality is highly regarded and KCB is no exception. It was therefore difficult to get information from employees for fear of recrimination should the responses be traced to them. Some employees needed persuading and reassuring that their responses would not go beyond this study while others felt that filling the questionnaire would interfere with their demanding timelines. Other employees did not want to be bothered and were simply unwilling to invest any amount of time in filling the questionnaire while others were unwilling to fill certain parts of the questionnaire which seemed too sensitive to them. Despite all the above the response was commendable and thus reflective of the study.

## **5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.**

Generally more studies should be carried out to establish alternative ways of employee participation in decision-making and employee empowerment.

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APPENDIX 1: Letter of authorization to collect data.



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**  
**MBA PROGRAM - LOWER KABETE CAMPUS**

Telephone: 4184160 Ext. 208  
Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi  
Telex: 22095 Varsity

P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi, Kenya

DATE..... 29/08/2007 .....

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

The bearer of this letter ..... GRACE WAIRIMU NJENGA .....

Registration No: ..... DG1/P/17565/05 .....

is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student of the University of Nairobi.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate if you assist him/her by allowing him/her to collect data in your organization for the research.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.

  
**J.T. KARIUKI**  
CO-ORDINATOR, MBA PROGRAM

## APPENDIX II: Introduction letter to the respondents



### University of Nairobi

School of Business

P.O. Box 30197

"Varsity", Nairobi

Nairobi, Kenya

Varsity

Telephone: +2542-318262

Telegrams:

Telex: 22095

=====

Dear Respondent,

### **COLLECTION OF RESEARCH DATA.**

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a Management Research project on "**Employee perception of labour relations in Kenya Commercial Bank.**"

As you have been selected to assist me in collection of the requisite data, this is to kindly request you to spare some time to fill out the attached questionnaire. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only and will be treated with utmost confidence. At no time will your name appear as a source on my report.

Upon request, a copy of the final report will be made available to you.

Thank you,

Grace Wairimu Njenga  
MBA Student, University of Nairobi  
Reg. No. D61/P/7565/05

James Gathungu  
University of Nairobi,  
School of Business.  
Supervisor



**PART II: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

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**a) Employee perception of labour relations**

1) What is your opinion about these labour relations' issues at KCB?

Statement	Strongly disagree  (1)	Disagree  (2)	Moderately agree  (3)	Agree  (4)	Strongly agree  (5)
a) Good labour relations make me like my job.					
b) My employer creates an environment which perpetuates good labour relations.					
c) Managers and non-management employees relate freely.					
d) I am fairly compensated for the work I do.					
e) Managers demonstrate to employees what should be done.					
f) Good working relations in the office are important to me.					
g) It is the management's responsibility to create good labour relations.					
h) In my opinion KCB operates an open door policy.					
i) I believe my subscription to the union gives me job security					
j) In my opinion the management supports the union activities.					

2. Please, tell me the number that shows how much satisfaction you get from working in KCB.

1) A very great deal ( )	6) Very little ( )
2) A great deal ( )	7) None ( )
3) Quite a bit ( )	8) Don't know ( )
4) A fair amount ( )	9) No answer ( )
5) A little ( )	

3) Among the items listed below, in your opinion, which ones negatively affect labour relations? (Rank from 1 to 6)

- \_\_\_ Activities of workers' union
- \_\_\_ Kind of management improved.
- \_\_\_ Lack of communication
- \_\_\_ Tribalism
- \_\_\_ Level of education
- \_\_\_ Political orientation
- \_\_\_ Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please suggest ways that you think could improve labour relations in the bank.

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

5) Are you satisfied with the services provided by the unions in the banking sector?

- Yes ( )
- No ( )

If yes, are you generally satisfied, somewhat satisfied, very satisfied or extremely satisfied?

Generally satisfied ( )

Somewhat satisfied ( )

Very satisfied ( )

Extremely satisfied ( )

6) Trade unions in the banking sector are no longer effective.

Strongly agree ( )

Agree ( )

Uncertain ( )

Disagree ( )

Strongly disagree ( )

**b) Factors that influence the labour relations.**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Statement	Very small extent (1)	Small extent (2)	Moderate extent (3)	Large extent (4)	Very large extent (5)
a) feel my employer is concerned about my welfare.					
b) My manager respects me.					
c) Competition for scarce positions affect how I relate with my colleagues.					
d) I know what my job responsibilities are.					
e) Being a member of the union helps me relate better with my manager.					

f) I am confident with the way promotions are awarded in the bank					
g) If unhappy with my manager I am able to appeal and move to another Department.					
h) Union membership influences how I relate with my Manager.					
i) Union membership influences how I relate with my colleagues.					
j) Given a choice I would still choose my employer.					

**c) Conflicts and grievances at work place.**

1) Do you know of a colleague who has conflict with another?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2) If yes what do you think is the cause of the conflict?

Social relationships ( ) Incompetence ( ) Competition ( )

Poor Communication ( )

Other (Specify) .....

3) Do you know of a colleague who has conflict with the boss?

Yes ( ) No ( )

4) If yes what do you think is the cause of the conflict?

Social relationships ( ) Incompetence ( ) Competition ( )

Poor Communication ( )

5) Have you ever had a conflict with a colleague?

Yes ( )                      No ( )

6) If yes what was the cause of the conflict?

Social relationships ( )      Incompetence ( )      Competition ( )

Poor Communication ( )

Other (Specify) .....

7) Have you ever had a conflict with your boss?

Yes ( )                      No ( )

8) If yes what was the cause of the conflict?

Social relationships ( )      Incompetence ( )      Competition ( )

Poor Communication ( )

9) Do you think there are other participants in the conflicts apart from the affected?

Yes ( )                      No ( )

10) In your opinion, how can the conflicts be resolved?

Improve Social relationships ( )

Recommend training ( )

Improve communication ( )

Other (Specify) .....

**b) Participation in decision-making.**

1) Have you participated in any important decision-making process in the bank?

Yes ( )                      No ( )



2) How would you agree with the following statements about KCB?

Statement	To a very small extent (1)	to a small extent (2)	Moderate (3)	Large extent (4)	To a very large extent. (5)
a) Team leaders and their teams communicate in an informal process					
b) Management shares information on how work is planned.					
c) Non Management employees share key decision-making process with management.					
d) Employees vote to determine the composition of the board.					
e) Decision making in KCB is for managers.					
f) I make decisions pertaining to the performance of my job.					

3) How do the following hinder your participation in employee participative programs?

Statement	To a very small extent (1)	to a small extent (2)	Moderate (3)	Large extent (4)	To a very large extent (5)
a) Lack of adequate education					
b) Too busy for such					
c) It is too involving					
d) Lack of motivation					

4) On average, how would you rate non-management employees participation in KCB decision-making?

Very low ( ) Low ( ) Moderate ( ) High ( ) Very high ( )

**The end-Thank you very much. God bless you**