

MECHANISMS AVAILABLE FOR INTERNAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN TEMEKE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, DAR- ES SALAAM – TANZANIA

Adam Matiko Charles¹, Africanus Calist Sarwatt², Victoria Eugene Massawe³

¹ Assistant Lecturer, Department of Social Studies, Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy, Pemba, Tanzania

² Lecturer, Department of Rural Development and Regional Planning, Institute of Rural Development Planning, Dodoma, Tanzania

³ Research Fellow, Department of Social Sciences, Kampala International University in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in Temeke Municipal Council (TMC) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The study adopted a positivism paradigm and utilized a descriptive research design with a quantitative research approach. A sample size of 181 employees from TMC was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection was conducted through self-administered close-ended questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using frequency, means, and standard deviation. The study's findings revealed that TMC had various conflict resolution mechanisms in place, including accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, and competing. However, the study also identified additional mechanisms that were available for conflict resolution in TMC. These included written rules, policies, and agreements that provided a framework for resolving conflicts. Effective management practices, such as careful hiring of employees, open door policies, and facilitation, were also found to contribute to conflict resolution. Peer review of disputes and mediation mechanisms were other approaches utilized within TMC. The study concluded that internal conflicts are a common occurrence in organizations, including TMC, and should be given serious consideration by stakeholders in terms of organizational efficiency. It emphasized the need for organizational leaders to carefully analyze their specific organizational context to understand the types of internal conflicts that arise and the underlying triggers. By gaining this understanding, leaders can develop appropriate strategies to effectively manage and resolve conflicts. In light of the study's findings, several recommendations were put forth. It was advised that organization leaders in TMC and similar contexts should conduct regular assessments of their organizations to identify emerging internal conflicts and the factors contributing to their occurrence. This knowledge will enable them to devise tailored strategies and interventions to address and manage conflicts more effectively. Additionally, it was suggested that TMC should invest in capacity building for conflict resolution, such as training programs for employees and managers, to enhance their skills in managing conflicts and promoting a harmonious work environment. In summary, this study sheds light on the available mechanisms for internal conflict resolution in Temeke Municipal Council. It emphasizes the significance of recognizing and addressing internal conflicts within organizations and provides insights for organizational leaders to develop strategies and interventions for effective conflict management.

Keyword: - Mechanism for Conflict Resolution, Internal Organizational Conflicts, Conflict Resolution

1. INTRODUCTION

Olu and Adesubomi (2014) define conflict as a state of serious disagreement and argument about something perceived to be important by at least one of the parties involved. It exists whenever an action by one party is perceived as preventing or interfering with the goals, needs or actions of another party. Individuals, groups and organizations experience conflict as they execute business due to several reasons such as the magnitudes of ambiguity in the rules governing their relations or over dissimilarities of interests or because one or more parties consciously break the agreed procedures (Murerwa and Guantai, 2019).

In the early 1900s, conflict was seen as an indicator of poor organizational management which needed to be avoided. In the mid-1950s, it was accepted passively and perceived as normal and expected the managers focused on resolving conflict, while in the 1970s, conflict was viewed necessary as not good or bad but could be used to promote growth (Ajike, Akinlabi, Magaji, & Sonubi, 2015). Moreover, in the 1990s, managers needed to confront as well as manage conflict appropriately because conflict has historically been viewed as undesirable, something to be avoided (Ajike *et al.*, 2015). Hence, internal conflict management was seen necessary for survival of organizations because it involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, establishing structures of conflict models, putting strategic measures as well as approaches in place, which are necessary for providing proper framework for employees' performance.

On another hand, proper conflict management leads to increased job satisfaction and better perceived organizational performance, some researchers advocate that the relationships could be of a curvilinear nature (Rahim, 2010). Approaches to internal conflict management focus on the principle that conflicts cannot necessarily be resolved but can be managed using appropriate actions. Such actions include avoiding, collaborating, compromising and confronting strategies to conflict management as a futuristic detailed approach that looks into achieving long-term wins for the parties involved in conflict (Rahim, 1983). Strategies include negotiation, collective bargaining, mediation, third party intervention, brainstorming and communication (Murerwa & Guantai, 2019). De Wit, Greer and Jehn (2012) established that internal conflict management has been assessed in relation to organizational outcomes including employee job satisfaction and perceived organizational performance. Employee job satisfaction is linked with other important organizational outcomes such as commitment, absenteeism, turnover and work performance. To be exact, conflict is found to be negatively related to employee job satisfaction (Chen, Zhao, Liu & Wu, 2012). Moreover, how people manage conflict may affect employee perceived organizational performance. Specifically, conflict management is associated with better perceived organizational performance (De Wit, Greer & Jehn, 2012).

Globally, there are diverse internal conflicts in various organizations, brought by differences in religion, culture, personalities, dissimilar interests in power, economic, social and status variations. Different organizations have employed varied strategies to solve their disputes such as integration, use of domination whereby leaders dictate, sometimes worsening the situation and bringing about strikes, which shatter employee performance (Das, 2014). In Africa, Mwikali (2016) established that integrated strategies targeted to support economic recovery and growth in nine Sub-Saharan African countries (Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan) have been developed to help conflict affected states to rebuild the destroyed growth, which leads to low performance of organizations and poor economy of the countries. In East Africa, specifically in Kenya, Muigua's (2012) study showed that disputes within organizations can be resolved by the use of a third party in three different ways. The ways include mediation, arbitration and litigation. Conflict resolution refers to a process where the outcome is based on mutual problem sharing with the conflicting parties cooperating in order to define their conflict and their relationship (Muigua, 2012).

In Tanzania the study of Matenga (2014) on persistence of conflicts in secondary school in Tanzania revealed that 77.4% of the respondent agreed to have experienced conflicts at their institutions. At least 29.6% and 20.7% of the respondents attributed the persistence of conflicts to bad leadership style and poor communication respectively. Other reasons for conflict persistence include food problems, lack of enough teachers, poor learning environment, students' bad behavior and lack of enough funds. Through his study it's noted that there is a gap between school administration and teachers as some workers remained uninformed of important issues such as sources of revenue and expenditure.

The study by Peter (2014) in Dar es Salaam city covering three municipalities (Ilala, Temeke and Kinondoni) revealed that internal conflicts within the said municipalities continues because the municipal management still faces several challenges. Such challenges include poor scheme of services, unfair treatment, poor working conditions, inadequate training, budget constraints, just to mention a few. On the other hand, ineffective human resource planning is another challenge for the continuing conflicts whereby high shortage of manpower affects production due to poor employees' performance and directly leads to conflict despite various reforms undertaken by the government to address their shortfalls (Moyo, 2015). Additionally, Salum's (2017) study findings on mechanisms of conflict management in LGAs indicate that conflict between councilors and employees arise due to different education levels, delay in project implementation, personal interests, scarcity of resources, negative

attitude, interference on duties between councilors and employees. Hence, such conflicts affected the organizations in terms of delay in project implementation, low employees' morale, resignation of potential employees, and increase in unnecessary costs. Therefore, this study intended to explore available mechanisms for internal conflict resolution in Temeke Municipal Council, Dar es Salaam – Tanzania.

2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Area

This study took place in Dar es Salaam region at Temeke Municipality which is in southern Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with Kinondoni to the far north of the city, and Ilala in the downtown of Dar es Salaam. To the east is the Indian Ocean and to the south and west is the coastal region of Tanzania. The 2012 Tanzania National Census reported that the population of Temeke District was 1,368,881. The area is 729 km².

2.2 Study Design, Data Collection and Analysis

According to Kothari (2004), research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted and it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. This study also followed a quantitative research approach and used a descriptive research design to get information about the conflict management and employees' performance in LGAs in TMC, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Descriptive research aids in learning people's perception, attitude beliefs, values, behaviors, opinions, likes and dislikes, habits, and desires. Bryman and Bell (2015) explain that a descriptive study is invariably a method of research which concerns itself with the present phenomena in terms of conditions, practices beliefs, processes, relationships or trends. This type of research includes proper analyses, interpretation, comparisons, and identification of trends and relationships and is not simply amassing and tabulating facts. Cooper and Schindler (2008) add that descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation.

Questionnaires were used as the main data collection instruments because of their efficiency and effectiveness in soliciting reliable and valid data. According to Kumar (2005) a questionnaire is a written list of questions which are recorded by respondents and is administered without the presence of the researcher. Kothari (2009) recommends this method because of its ability to collect data from large samples and its findings are dependable and reliable as it offers great anonymity. Quantitative information was collected by using close-ended questions from the targeted study population. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative information from respondents (employees of TMC). They were distributed to a total number of one hundred and eighty-one (181) respondents and each one was given a copy. The data collected were in form of Likert scale response modes.

In order to interpret the mean scores, the following scale was used.

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
1.01 – 2.00	Yes	High
0.01 – 1.00	No	Low

Table 1: Mean Score Interpretation

Mean range from Table 1 indicate that, 0.01 – 1.00 mean score stand for 'No' which is interpreted as 'low' while 1.01 – 2.00 mean score stand for 'Yes' which is interpreted as 'High'.

2.3 Response Rate

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaire returned	178	98%
Unreturned Questionnaire	3	2%
Total	181	100

Table 2: Response rate

Table 2 indicates that 178 (98%) of the questionnaires out of the total 181 distributed were returned fully responded to, while 3(2%) of the questionnaires were either not returned or had inadequate responses to be considered for analysis. The 178 questionnaires that were returned and considered for analysis met all (100%) of the study's requirements.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Mechanism available for internal conflict resolution

This section presents findings on the objective of the study. It starts with presentation of frequency tables and ends with description of the objective in terms of levels using means and standard deviation. The objective was to explore available mechanisms for internal conflict resolution in TMC. Participants were presented with five mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC and they were required to indicate (with a "Yes" or "No"), if they had ever got across any of the identified mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in their workplace - TMC. Additionally, respondents were at liberty to list any other mechanism available for internal conflict resolution in TMC. Generally, findings on mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC are presented in Tables 1 to 7

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	142	79.8
No	36	20.2
Total	178	100.0

Table 3: Accommodating

According to Table 3, out of 178 respondents involved in the study, 142 (79.8%) indicated a 'yes' response, while 36 (20.2%) indicated a 'no' response. Results indicate that accommodating was one of the mechanisms used by TMC in internal conflict resolution.

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	8.4
No	163	91.6
Total	178	100.0

Table 4: Avoiding

Table 4 shows that out of 178 respondents involved in the study, 15 (8.4%) indicated a 'yes' response, while 163 (91.6%) indicated a 'no' response on avoiding mechanism of internal conflict resolution at TMC. From these findings, the researcher observed that most of respondents (91.6%) indicated a 'no' response on avoiding mechanism, meaning that the mechanism is not applied at TMC.

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	145	81.5
No	33	18.5
Total	178	100.0

Table 5: Collaborating

Table 5 indicates that out of 178 respondents involved in the study, 145 (81.5%) provided a 'yes' response, while 33 (18.5%) provided a 'no' response on collaborating mechanism. These findings imply that most of the respondents (81.5%) agreed that collaborating mechanism exists at TMC and is being used to resolve conflicts.

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	139	78.1
No	39	21.9
Total	178	100.0

Table 6: Compromising

According to data in Table 6, out 178 respondents involved in the study, 139 (78.1%) provided a 'yes' response, while 39 (21.9%) provided a 'no' response. This means that most of the respondents (78.1%) supported compromising as a mechanism used at TMC in internal conflict resolution.

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	145	81.5
No	33	18.5
Total	178	100.0

Table 7: Competing

Results in Table 7 show that out of 178 respondents involved in the study, 145 (81.5%) provided a 'yes' response, while 33 (18.5%) provided a 'no' response. These findings imply that most of the respondents (81.5%) agreed on competing as a mechanism used at TMC in internal conflict resolution.

Items	Frequency	Percent
Written rules, policies and agreements	25	14.0
Effective management	26	14.6
Careful hiring of employees	26	14.6
Open door policy	28	15.7
Facilitation	27	15.2
Peer review of disputes	22	12.4
Mediation	24	13.5
Total	178	100.0

Table 8: Other mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC

According to Table 8, out of 178 respondents involved in the study, 25 (14%) identified written rules, policies and agreements as other mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC. In addition, 26 (14.6%) identified effective management, 26 (14.6%) identified careful hiring of employees, 28 (15.7%) identified open door policy, 27 (15.2%) identified facilitation, 22 (12.4%) identified peer review of disputes and 24 (13.5%) identified mediation as other mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC (Table 4.12). The findings imply that apart from accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, compromising and competing mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC, other mechanisms (written rules, policies and agreements, effective management, careful hiring of employees, open door policy, facilitation, peer review of disputes and mediation) were available for internal conflict resolution in TMC.

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Accommodating	1.2022	.40281	High
Avoiding	1.9157	.27858	High
Collaborating	1.1854	.38971	High
Compromising	1.2191	.41480	High
Competing	1.1854	.38971	High
Total	1.34156	0.375122	High

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics on mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC

KEY

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
1.01 – 2.00	Yes	High
0.01 —1.00	No	Low

Mean scores in Table 9 indicate that all items received a high score i.e. accommodating (mean = 1.2022, std. deviation = .40281), collaborating (mean = 1.1854, std. deviation = .38971), compromising (mean = 1.2191, std. deviation = .41480), competing (mean = 1.1854, std. deviation = .38971) and avoiding (mean = 1.9157, std. deviation = .27858). The findings generally indicate a high mean score average (1.34156). It implies that mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution in TMC were highly available. Thus, the process of resolving conflicts in TMC becomes easy if these mechanisms are all used or applied accordingly.

3.2 Discussion on Available mechanisms for internal conflict resolution in TMC

Conflict resolution scholars have shown great interest in the nature of organizational internal conflict management shift, which has led many organizations to revisit their traditional strategies for addressing organizational internal conflict (Avgar 2016). Many scholars have maintained that organizations have adopted these techniques, in large part, to address internal conflicts and disputes without the need to resort to litigation (Colvin, Klaas, & Mahony, 2006; Lipsky, Avgar, Lamare, & Gupta, 2014; Lipsky, Seeber, & Avgar, 2015).

The findings in this study revealed several mechanisms available for internal conflict resolution which included accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, compromising and competing mechanisms, all were found to be available in TMC. Findings further revealed that there were other mechanisms available for conflict resolution in TMC included written rules, policies and agreements. Others were effective management, careful hiring of employees, open door policy, facilitation, peer review of disputes and mediation mechanism. These findings concur with those of Abdul, Yaser and Yahya (2017) who found that avoiding, compromising and accommodating were mechanisms used in managing internal conflicts. The other study by Kassim, Abdullah and Mensor (2018) revealed that compromising mechanism was significant with effective commitment in management of internal conflicts.

Findings from this study on compromising concur with those of Gülnar and Kemal (2017) who found that conflict management involves several mechanisms whereby they identified compromising as the most used strategy, while dominating (competing) as the less used strategy. Moreover, findings from this study on negotiation agree with those of Olangi's (2017) who found that employees perceived negotiation mechanism as fairness because participation in the negotiation process permitted creation of shared values. Furthermore, findings from the study by Das (2014) indicated that the integrative style was the best one to manage conflict effectively compared to the other styles such as distributive, avoidance, dominating and obliging.

Findings from this study on arbitration are similar with those of Elkouri and Elkouri (2012) who found that arbitration is a quasi-judicial process that focuses primarily on the merits of the disputants' arguments. According to Elkouri and Elkouri (2012) in arbitration process, the resolution is reached through a ruling that is imposed by the arbitrator, usually in the form of a written award. The arbitrator's primary responsibility is not to uncover the parties' underlying interests but, rather, to adjudicate the case presented to him or her and to make a declaration as to the merits of each party's claims (Elkouri & Elkouri, 2012).

Findings from this study on mediation mechanism of conflict resolution agree with those of Wall and Lynn (1993), and those of Moore (2014) who identified interest-based options like mediation as informal processes designed, for the most part, to assist the parties in reaching a negotiated settlement that they fashion themselves. Moreover, mediation is therefore not designed to resolve the merits of a given dispute—that is, to decide which party is right or wrong—and do not involve a third party as a decision maker (Colvin 2014). Mediation is often used to assist the parties in resolving an impasse over important core issues; for example, mediators often assist unions and employers to resolve conflicting positions they have taken on wages and salaries. More importantly, mediation is often appreciated for its potential to increase the likelihood that the parties, with the assistance of a neutral, may be able to achieve creative solutions that not only resolve the conflicting positions they have taken on core issues but also address the parties' differing interests and needs uncovered during the mediation process (Latreille and Saundry 2014; Colvin 2014).

On one hand, Moore (2014) found that mediation and arbitration mechanisms of conflict resolution have a number of significant procedural differences that clearly distinguish one practice from the other. For example, a mediator lacks the authority to impose a settlement on the disputants, while an arbitrator has that authority. Mediation is a process that, at its core, strives to uncover disputants' underlying interests (and not merely their positions), and a mediator who can help the parties to recognize their underlying interests is better equipped to assist the parties in reaching a settlement. Often a mediator can provide creative options for resolving the parties' dispute that the

parties could not have developed on their own. In sum, a mediator's primary role is to assist the parties in identifying common and opposing interests and in finding settlement options that satisfy those interests (Moore, 2014). According to Avgar (2016) interest-based options like mediation are attractive to organizations not only because of their capacity to deliver settlements that reconcile the parties' differences on positions but also serve the parties' mutual interests and encourage problem solving.

In sum, most organizational conflict resolution mechanisms that are often preferred by disputants are those that seek informal and often less time-consuming processes that focus on attaining mutually acceptable settlements (Latreille and Saundry 2014; Colvin 2014). However, by contrast, rights-based options, like written rules, careful hiring of employees, effective management, open door policy, arbitration, do not, for the most part, have the capacity to deal with the disputing parties' underlying interests or needs. Rather, these processes use a third-party decision maker who focuses on the merits of each party's claims and arguments (Latreille and Saundry 2014; Colvin 2014). Written rules, arbitration and other rights-based options are designed to adjudicate each disputant's claims by focusing on the facts in the specific dispute with the goal of providing a third party with enough evidence to make a final and declarative ruling or award (Avgar, 2016). In contrast to interest-based options, rights-based options provide organizations with a much higher level of certainty regarding the formal, and usually final and binding, resolution of a given dispute. These options are likely to be attractive to organizations that have a preference for finality and certainty in dispute resolution and seek to shield themselves from exposure to litigation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that there were mechanisms of conflict resolution preferably applied at TMC which were important for organizational performance. These mechanisms were known by the employees and if there are used effectively; TMC can minimize its internal conflicts. Moreover, the study concluded that accommodating, compromising, competing and collaborating, were outstanding mechanisms available at TMC while other mechanisms included written rules, policies and agreements, effective management, careful hiring of employees, open door policy, facilitation, peer review of disputes and mediation mechanism were identified as mechanisms available at the TMC.

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BIOGRAPHIES

	Adam Matiko Charles is a University Instructor at the Department of Social Studies of the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy (MNMA). In addition to teaching, he provides consultancy on contemporary issues related to leadership and social science research. He is the author and coauthor of more than 20 papers in international refereed journals. In Human Rights and Social Affairs, Adam is a Chairperson of an NGO (Capacity Building & Education Link). He also serves as a Secretariat Member of the Tanzania Coalition Against Child Labour (TCACL).
	Dr. Africanus C. Sarwatt is a Lecturer at the Institute of Rural Development Planning (IRDP). He has been involved in conducting researches and consultancies in different areas. Dr. Sarwatt has also been involved in exhaustive trainings and skills acquired over years which include survey methods and techniques, techniques in dealing with adults, facilitation skills, group dynamics operations, M&E skills, and use of interactive methods as well as skills in using different socio-economic analysis tools, all these together gave him a vast experience of working with various stakeholders.
	Victoria Eugene Massawe is a research fellow with a Master's degree in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding from Kampala International University in Tanzania. Her academic achievements, research work, and practical experience demonstrate her commitment to addressing conflicts and building a more peaceful world. Victoria's expertise in conflict resolution, coupled with her passion for positive change, positions her as an influential figure in the field of peacebuilding.