

**CONFLICT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

**A CASE STUDY OF SONY SUGAR COMPANY**

**SOUTH NYANZA - KENYA**

**BY**

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### DECLARATION

I, MISATI M. MILLICENT, declare that this manuscript is my original work and has never been presented to any institution of higher learning for any award whatsoever.

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### APPROVAL

I confirm that this work of research was carried out by the student under my supervision as the university supervisor. It has been submitted with review of my approval.

NAME: MR. BALIRUNO JOHN BAPTIST

SIGNATURE ..... 

DATE ..... 

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents Mr. Joseph Doyle Misati and my mum Annah N. Misati, my beloved brothers Charles, Jared, Dennis, Edwin and Amos. Not forgetting my sisters-in-law, friends and my dearest Jeff, for their tireless and sacrificial efforts, moral and social encouragements and the endurances they have gone through that period I was away.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 *Introduction*

As Huffman B. (1997) describes an organization as an officially organized group of people who work together or have the same aims, for example a company, an institution or a political party. These organizations are beaurocratic in nature which need good co-relation of members. A conflict is described as a struggle between two or more people over values, or competition for status, power, or scarce resources (Coser, 1967). Organizational conflict is therefore the struggle between employees of a given company or institution over competition for status, power and values. Good relation among employees of a company will lead to increase in production and profit in an organization.

### 1.1 *Background of the Study*

Globally organization conflict has been a major cause of company loss and failure to achieve its stated goals and objectives. According to Gardner (1996) conflict or disputes seem to be present in all human relationships and in all societies and organizations. Disputes or conflicts that occur in organizations can cost millions of dollars in legal fees, lost productivity, recruitment expenses, and even stress leave (Earnshaw & Cooper, 1996).

The annual on organization performance report (2007), was observed that since the early 1980s organizational conflict has lead to closer or poor performance of companies which in turn lead the company or business into losses. However it was noted that since the introduction of conflict resolution programs which have brought some levity to organizational conflict and in turn has helped organization performance.

According to Adesina S. (1990) organizational conflict can cause failure to follow the hierarchy of the organization, low consumer service provision, lack of respect among employees, distrust, and poor relation amongst employees. He advises that for effect performance in an organization



the leader should diagnose the cause of the conflict and encourage co-operation among organization staff.

It was found that recently there was a conflict the employees of Sony Sugar Company with the management, this portrays that the company may not operate and perform as expected. This is because a company only succeeds when there is a conflict in an organization.

## **1.2 *Problem statement***

The issues of organizational conflict have of recent raised a growing concern more especially in companies and businesses. These organizational conflicts were to a large extent a threat to the well being and productivity of a company or a business and the country at large. They disrupt the organizations activities and ruin their profit making ability or aim. Therefore the researcher decided to take a study on organizational conflict and its effects on performance.

## **1.3 *Purpose of the study***

This study was therefore, intended to investigate the factors contributing organizational conflict, to establish whether it was the leadership of an organization that lack the capacity to quell conflict or it was the persistence nature of workers to struggle amongst themselves.

## **1.4 *General Objectives***

The general objective was to investigate the causes of organizational conflict among employees as a factor on company performance in Sony Sugar Company.

### **1.4.1 *Specific Objectives***

The study planned to do the following:-

1. To investigate the effect of conflict on organization performance in Sony Sugar Company.
2. To establish the impact of the effect of conflict on organization performance in Sony Sugar Company.
3. To identify the possible measures for solving the effect of organizational conflict on employee performance in Sony Sugar Company.

### **1.5 *Research Questions***

1. What were the various effect of conflict on organization performance in Sony Sugar Company?
2. What were the impacts of the effect of conflict on organization performance in Sony Sugar Company?
3. What were the possible measures for solving the effect of organizational conflict on employee performance in Sony Sugar Company?

### **1.6 *Hypothesis***

The study was guided by the following hypothesis :-

1. There was no significant relationship between organizational conflicts and employee performance in Sony Sugar Company?
2. There was no significant relationship between impact of the effects of organizational conflict and employee performance in Sony Sugar Company?
3. There was no clear way of attaining effective solutions to the effect of conflict on organization performance.

## **1.7 *Scope of the Study***

The scope of this study was divided into three namely; geographical, subject matter and time scope.

### **Geographical scope**

The study was carried out from Sony Sugar Company, in south Nyanza province, Kenya.

### **Subject matter**

This aimed at investigating the effect of conflict on organizational performance. The centre of attention was on factors contributing to organizational conflict and their effect on company performance.

### **Time scope**

This study was to be carried out in a period of four months (August – December 2010)

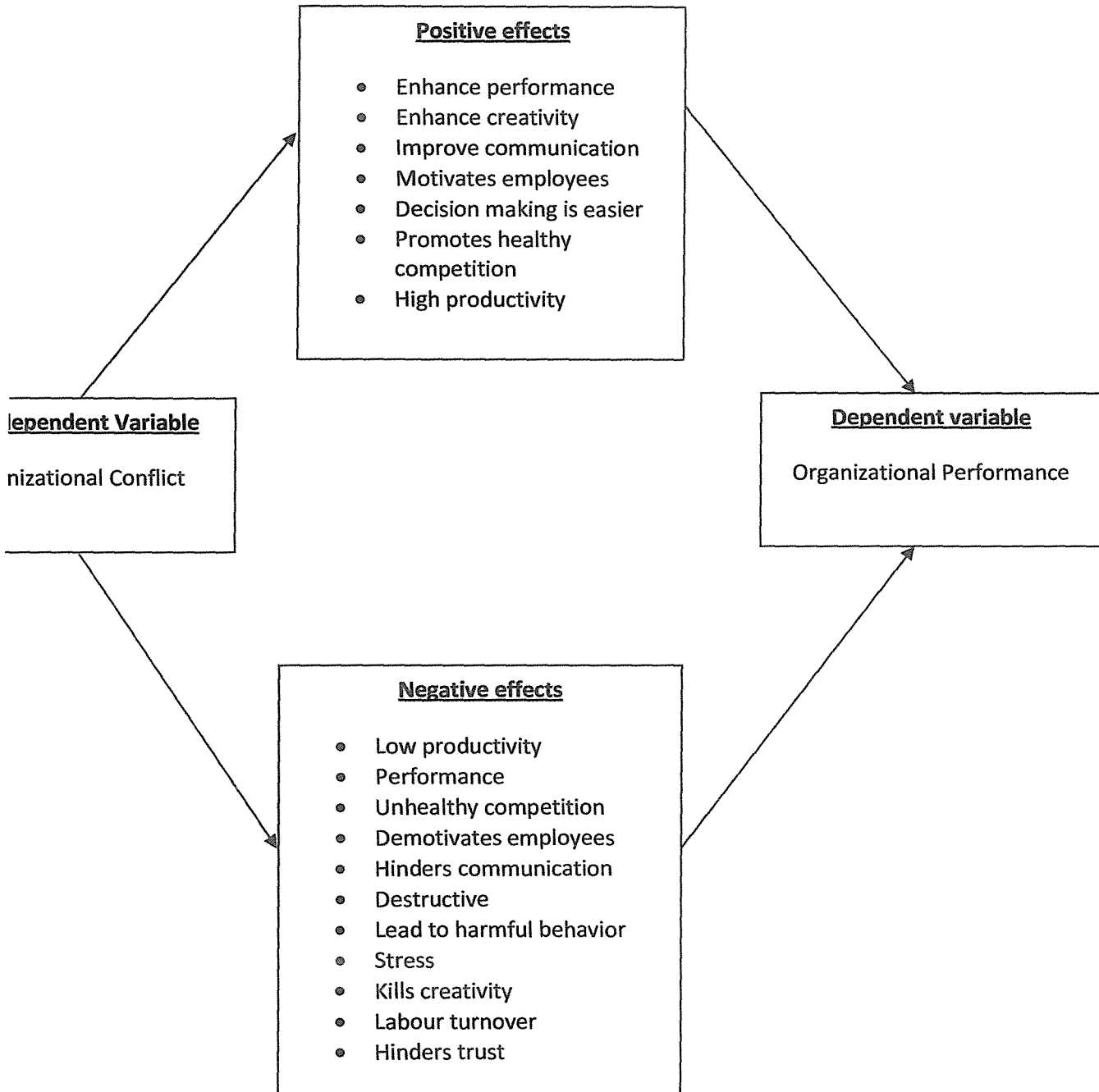
## **1.8 *Significance of the Study***

The findings of the study was expected to provide concrete information to the ministry of trade and industry in that it used the findings to design appropriate strategies to deal with the raising cases of organizational conflicts.

The findings were expected to give an insight into the effect of conflict on organization performance in companies and businesses and so rectifying the past failure while consolidating the achievements.

Further researchers in the same topic and related topic shall use the findings of this study as a get off ground, on effects of conflict on employee performance. It was consequently hoped that this study will encourage further research.

## 1.9 Conceptual Framework



Source; (Debra and James 2003)

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviewed the available literature about conflict and organizational performance. The available literature suggests that continued organizational conflict can ruin the entire company or business and more so affect the future of that particular company or business, an effect that retards the entire social - economic development of that particular area.

#### **2.1 Understanding organizational conflict**

An organization is a social group in any society, typically consisting of different people male and female who are committed to see the achievement of certain goals. Organizational conflict can at times be a confusing issue in that many people are unaware that certain acts constitute organizational conflicts. Others think that certain forms of organizational conflict are acceptable because it has been in an organizational culture, while others are firmly against it. Some people living in a patriarchal mentality, have justified organizational conflict in such a way that it seem to appear a “normal” happening in society today.

#### **2.2 The Cycle and phases of organizational conflict**

Conflict is often a process and can go through a number of stages in what is commonly known as the cycle of family conflict. Bryan Strong and Christine Default (1992) explain that organizational conflict takes place in phases and some of the writers identify three major phases.

It starts with tension building up between those who will eventually become involved in the conflict. In everyday life, even trivial issues can lead to unnecessary quarrel and annoyance among people who work closely together.

The second phase is that in which various trivial issues explode. This explosion, for some, occurs unconsciously; people of this nature only become sensitive to the wrongs of an organization after

the act of violence has been perpetrated, unless if the act was intended. In most cases, this phase is mingled with the way some people express annoyance.

The third and last phase is the phase of regret. Some writers have named this phase the “sorry phase”. At this stage there is reconciliation between those involved in the conflict and may make vows that they will never conflict again. Generally the victim believes that this will be the case, but usually the tension goes on and on. One who is interested in identifying or understanding domestic violence should be able to identify which phase or stage the cycle a particular family has reached. Obviously, not all trivial disagreements lead to family conflict, but concerned parties, with adequate training should be able to assist before any actual conflict can start again, unfortunately, this cycle is not reflected in all cases of a conflict.

### **2.3 Perpetrators of organizational conflict**

Very often the perpetrators of organizational conflict are very difficult to identify, although according to general statistics, most are managers. At times someone who is respected in the organization can be the most unlikely perpetrator of violence. Organizational conflicts a non-cultural phenomenon, and one will discover that both perpetrators and victims of organizational conflict come from all ethnic groups, social classes and regions of the world.

### **2.4 Causes of organizational conflict**

Organizational conflict has a wide range of causes ranging from those that are socially constructed, to those that are constructed on the basis of individual’s perception. Organizational conflict can also be caused by reasons that are difficult to perceive, or very serious reasons depending on the situation at hand.

### **Communication aspect of conflict**

According to Jit scandal poor communication conflict can have powerful effect in causing conflict misunderstanding information during the process of communication can make difference between the successes and the failure of a task and such failure for which the responsibility become difficult to trace can cause conflict between the sender and the receive problem

encountered during the communication process stimulate misunderstanding. For example if a manager is going on an extended vacation fails to communicate properly with his subordinates as to who would be doing that, he will find these jobs partially done with subordinates blaming each other for not completing the task hence organizational conflict. (It is also supported by Leslie and Lloyd(2000)).

### **Behavioral aspect of conflict**

According to Jit s. Chadon these conflicts arise out of human thought and feeling , emotion and the attitude value and perception and reflect some basic traits of a personality. Thus some people values and perception of the situation are particular likely to generate conflict with each other. For example highly authoritarian are more prone to antagonize co-workers by highlighting minor differences that may exist. In simple matter and may overreact causing conflict. This conflict may also be on personal biases regarding such factor as religion, race or sexiest is supported by (Garl (1984); likert and likert(1976); and Stephen and Nancy (2003)).

### **Structural aspect of conflict**

These conflicts arise due to issue related to structural design of the organization as a whole some structurally related factors are. Size of the organization. The larger the size of the organization the more basic for existence of conflict. It is likely that as an organization becomes large there is greater impersonal formality less goal clarity. All these breed grounds for conflicts. (Supported by Leslie and Lloyd(2000)).

Line staff distinction. The distinction between the line and staff units within an organization leads to conflict. For example production department would be a line unit manufacturing organization and sales department would be considered a line in a customer oriented services organization.

Participation. It is assumed that if subordinates are not allowed to participate the decision making process then they will show resentment which will induce conflict. On the other hand ironically, if subordinates are provided with greater participation opportunities, the level of conflict also tends to be higher.

Role ambiguity. A role reflects a set of activities associated with a certain position in the organization. If these work activities are ill defined, then the person who is carrying out these activities will not perform as others expect him to, because his role is not clearly defined hence conflicting. (Dalton, Dawn, Watts(2000); Andrew J.Durbin (1984)).

Design of workflow. These are primarily inter-group problem and conflicts which are outcomes of poorly designed workflow structure and poorly planned coordination. According to Sash Kin and Morris organization are made up of many different groups that must work together towards the accomplishment of common objectives. Poorly designed workflow and uncoordinated activities create conflicts within an organization (Schermorhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2005)).

Scarcity of resources. When individuals and units must share such resource as capital facilities staff assistance and so on, and these resources are scarce and there is high competition for them conflict can become quite intense. (Thomas and John (2003))

## **2.5 The conflict process.**

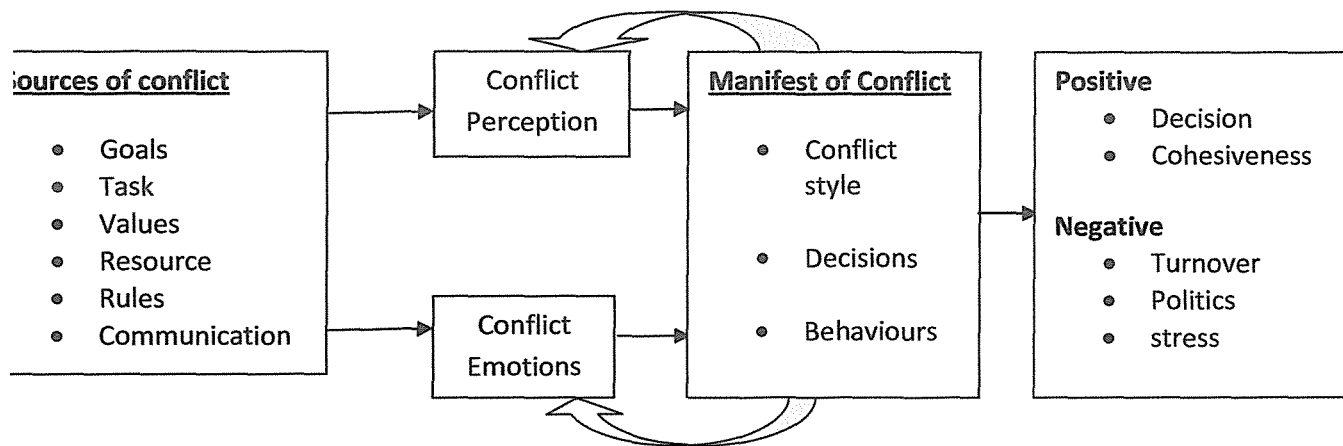
i) When we describe an incident involving conflict, we are usually referring to the observable part of the conflict. The conflict process begins with the sources of conflict incompatible goals; different values and other conditions lead to both parties perceiving that conflict (Stephen P. Robbins (1988); Stephen Robbins (1996); Steven and Mary (2003) pg (386)).

ii) Conflicts and perceptions and emotions. Sources of conflict lead to one or both parties perceiving that conflict exists. They also experience various conflict-laden emotions toward the other party.

iii) Manifest conflict, perceptions and emotions are usually manifest themselves in the decisions and behaviors of one party to the other. Conflict is also manifested by the style each side uses to resolve the conflict, for example whether one side tries to defeat the other or find a mutually beneficial solution.



iv) Conflict outcomes. Conflict can lead to various things for example increased labour turnover, absenteeism, cohesiveness within the group.



Source: Stephen R. (1998)

## 2.6 Effect of organizational conflict on performance

### Negative effects

Low productivity. Once a problem arises, some people are being affected negatively; this will kill their level of performance. They will perform lowly compared to the previous times (Jit S.Chandan; Debra and James 2003)

Introduces unhealthy competition. Members in the organization are going to compete unfavorably within the organization in order to achieve better than the opponent because of hatred hence low performance.

Demotivates the workers. When a conflict arises, if not balanced when handling it, other members will feel hated, this will kill their morale and creativity hence end up performing lowly (Jit S. Chandan).

Hinders communication. When a conflict has come up, some people develop hatred to others, they will even cut communication in the organization with other employees, this leads to low performance in that they can even fail to deliver.

Conflicts are destructive. Due to existence of conflict in the organization some good relationships in the organization will be destroyed. They promote hatred which is not harmful for organizational performance.

Leads to harmful behaviors. Conflict can lead to fighting, strikes which also leads to loss of lives and properties. This pulls the organization behind because may be of doing some repairs some productive people died hence the level of performance goes low. (Debra and James 2003).

Kills creativity. The person affected while solving the conflict will feel; not appreciated, hence will not have that more to bring out new ideas to the organization hence lowering performance.

Hinders trust. Before the conflict, workers had unity but once a conflict arises, hatred comes in they no longer trust each other, each one minds his or her own business and without team work, performances deteriorates.

Labour turnover. Conflict can lead to increased labour in the sense that, if the conflict will not be handled carefully some workers will not be comfortable to work in the organization hence leading to labour turnover.

Leads to stress. Conflicts stress employees that the environment is not conducive for them to work, conflict also stresses them hence end up producing lowly.

## **Positive effects**

Enhance creativity. Once a conflict arises, employees and management look for ways to handle the problem, hence creating room for members to come with new ideas to tackle the problem hence enhancing creativity and improving performance (Debra and James 2003).

Enhance performance. A problem has a raised, and solved stay in peace and unity and look forward to achieve the common goal hence increasing level of performance as they work together as a team.

Improve communication the process of a conflict workers get a chance to communicate to the management by airing out their views resulting to perform their tasks to the maximum hence better result.

Promote health competition. Once a problem has been solved, workers have that inner desire to do their work. They compete favorably to achieve good result hence level of performance is increased.

Leads to high productivity. Conflict enhance creativity, they enhance performance and motivate workers. All these lead to high proclivity.

Decision making is easier. Here decision making is shared among all members in the organization, hence making them feel recognized hence motivating them to work and achieve good results.

## **2.7 Solution for organizational conflicts**

Goal structure. Goals should be clearly defined and the role and contribution of each unit towards the organizational goal must be clearly identified. All units and the individuals in this units must be aware of the importance of their role and such importance must be fully recognized (Schein).

Reward system. The compensation system should be such that it does not create individual competition or conflict with unit. It should be appropriate and proportionate to the group effort and reflect the degree interdependence among units necessary. (Stein; Daniel and Hugh 1983).

Trust and communication the greater the trust among the members of the unit the more honest and open the communication among them would be individuals and can all understand each other problem and help each other.

Coordination. Coordination is the next step of communication. Properly coordinated activities reduce conflict whenever there are problems in coordination, a special liaison office should be established to assist such coordination (Schein).

Ignoring the conflict. In certain situation, it may be advisable to a passive role and avoid it all together people intrinsically believe that conflict is fundamentally evil and its financial consequences are never good thus people may try to get away from conflict causing (Jit S. Chandan).

Smoothing . It means covering up the conflict by appealing for the need for unity rather than addressing the issues of the conflict itself. If two parties have a conflict, the supervisor may try to clam things down by been understanding and supportive to both parties and appealing for cooperation (Dalton, Hoyle and watts (200); Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1973)).

Compromising. According to Jit S. Chadan a compromise is the conflict reached by balancing the demand of the conflicting parties. Each party gives up something and gains something. It is useful when tare time constrain. If the problems are complex and the time is limited to solve, it might be in the interests of conflicting parties to reach a compromise. (Angelo and Kreitner 2003).

Forcing. As Webber puts it the simplest conceivable resolution is the elimination of the other party to force opponents to flee and give up the fight. This technique is potentially effective in situation such as a president of the company firing a manager because he is considered a conflict creator it needs up in one party being a loser and the winner.

Problem solving. It involves confronting the conflict in order to seek the best solution to the problem. It assumes that all organization, no matter how well they are managed there will be differences of opinion which must be resolved. It is responsible for resolving conflicts arising out of semantic misunderstanding (Angelo and kreitner 2003).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, an organizational conflict is any misunderstanding that happens when organizational staffs have different views or beliefs that clash. Sometimes organizational conflict can occur when people misunderstand each other and jump to the wrong conclusions; issues of conflict often lead to arguments and resentment which deters cooperative productivity and in the long run hinders the development and company progress.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter will give the nature of the research design, sample size, study procedure, methods of data analysis and problems that will be encountered during the field study.

#### **3.2 Research design**

The research design of this study was descriptive and analytical since the problem studied entails seeking people's opinions and attitudes towards the causes and effect of conflict on organization performance of Sony Sugar Company.

#### **3.2 Sample selection**

The researcher used sampling techniques when she was looking at capable people to give the relevant information to the problem.

Sony Sugar Company has both male and female workers in various departments which comprises of Finance, Production, Supplies and Procurement and Marketing/Public Relations and Human Resource. It has a population of about 560 employees. The respondents were selected employees from various departments as well as the company's administrators.

#### **3.3 Sample size**

The researcher targeted the population of 150 respondents. From this population, the respondents should be literate that is those who know how to read and write when given questionnaires. Oral interviews were used for the illiterate.

#### **3.4 Instruments to be used**

In the process of carrying out research, the researcher will use the following instrument in data collection; interviews, questionnaires and observation.

The interview looked for more detailed answers (primary data) to the research question.

The questionnaire used had closed and open ended questions, to collect specific information from the respondents.

The researcher used observation to view the relationship between workers in the company. This is expected to contribute adversely to the study since it enabled the researcher to obtain the evidence to support his findings.

### **3.5 Study procedure**

Prior to going for research, the researcher got a letter from the Dean of studies or head of department of Business and management of Kampala International University. I got a letter of authority from the manager in charge authorizing me to move getting information from people in order to make the study legal to be conducted. I followed the procedure below.

- a. I supplied questionnaires to respondents and I gave them a period of time like one month to answer the questions carefully.
- b. After one month I collected the questionnaires

### **3.6 Methods of data analysis**

The researcher used quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. I collected qualitative data through interviews. The researcher organized the data from interviews in a logical manner to avoid errors and draw a conclusion.

Quantitatively, I organized and categorize the data in terms of each question, item per item.

In this case, percentage was to be used to determine the trend of the findings and to draw conclusions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION & INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research in reference to the research questions in chapter one, mainly based on the analysis of primary data.

#### 4.2 Demographic characteristics

Table 4.2.1 Age category of respondents

Age category of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
20-30 years	270	60.0
31-40 years	145	37.1
41-50 years	20	2.9
Total	435	100.0

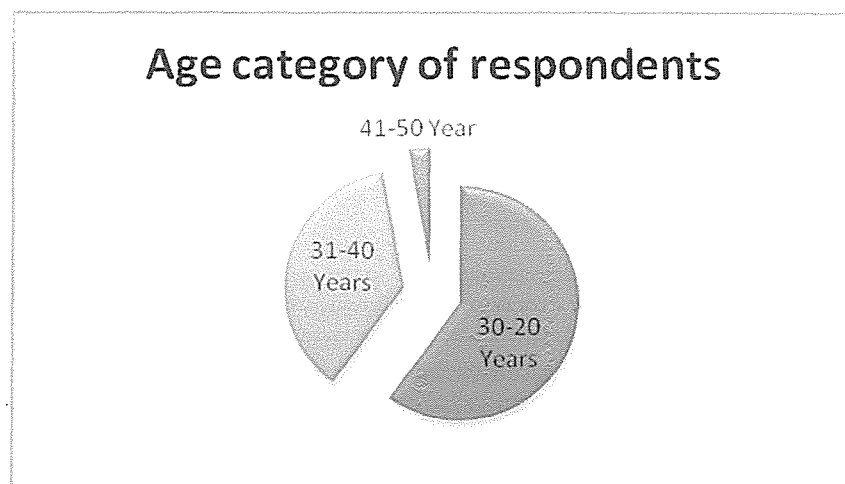
Source: primary data

From the above table (table 4.1), it can clearly be seen that majority of respondents were in the category of 20-33 years of age, representing 60%. This is followed by 31-40 years accounting for 37.1%. While only 1 respondent was in category 41-50 years of age.

From the above analysis, it can be construed that majority of the staff in the company are young people and therefore have active memory, hence the information obtained from them was trusted and looked at as a true good representation of the information the researcher was looking for.



Fig.4.2.1. Pie chart showing age description of respondents



Source: primary data

The above pie chart was a representation of age of respondents that were used in the research. The greatest percentage is clearly that of 20-30 years of age, followed by 31-40 years and lastly the 41-50 years. This perfectly relates to the information the researcher was looking for and the outcome of the analysis of responses.

Table. 4.2.2. Respondents' education level

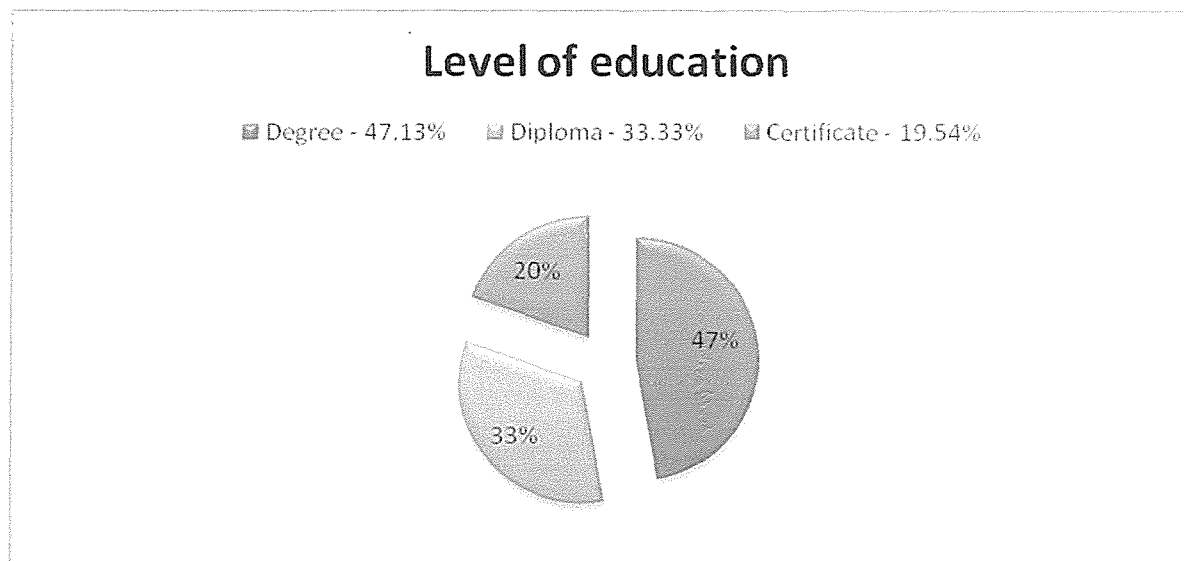
Level of education		
	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	145	33.33
Degree	205	47.54
Certificate	85	19.54
Total	435	100.0

Source: primary data

The above table shows clearly shows that majority of the staff in the company are degree holders, (about 47%) of the total respondents, 33% of the respondents are diploma holders and only 19% of respondents are certificate holder. This clearly implies that the company has well

educated staff and therefore the information got from them was reliable and deemed to be sufficient for the companies strategies and in consonance with the research.

Fig. 4.2.2 Pie Chart showing education levels of respondents



Source: primary data

The above reinforce the pie chart. 47.13% of the respondents are degree holders and 33.33% indicates the percentage of diploma holders at the company.

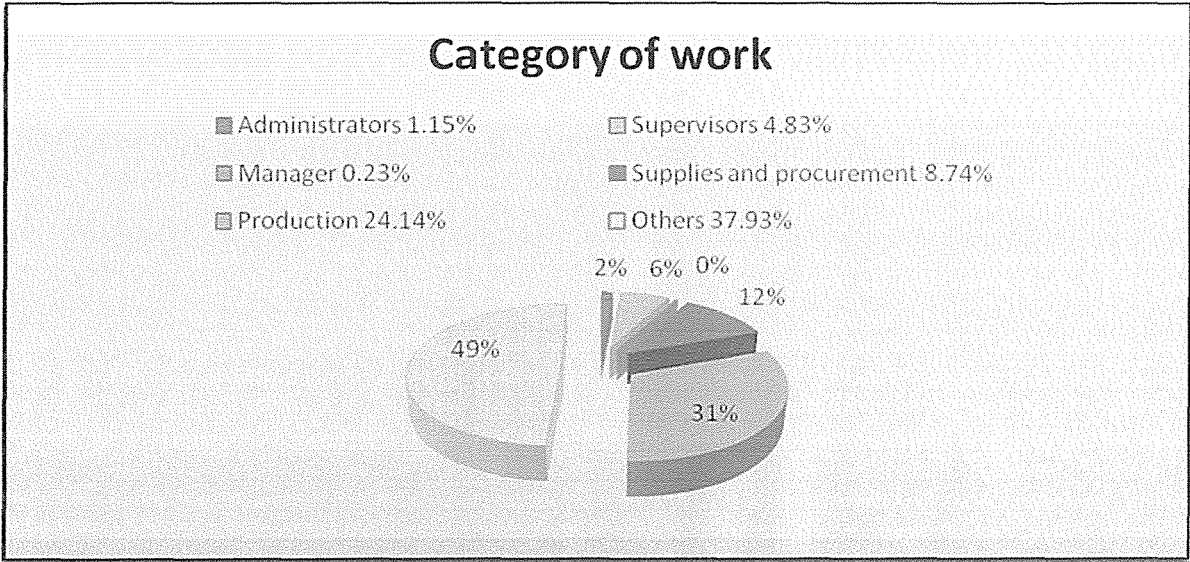
Table 4.2.3 Respondent's job position

Category of work		
	Frequency	Percent
Administrators	5	1.15
Supervisor	21	4.83
Manager	1	0.23
Supplies and Procurement	38	8.74
Production	105	24.14
Others	165	37.93
Total	435	100.0

Source: primary data

From table 4.2.3 it can be seen that the majority of the Sony sugar staff that were interviewed are Other workers (37.93%). Followed by production workers (24.14%).

Fig. 4.2.3 Pie Chart showing job category of respondents



Source: primary data

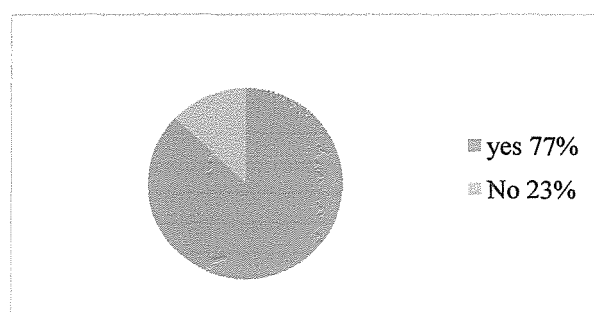
**4.2.4 Effects of organizational conflict on organization performance of Sony Sugar company.**

The first objective of this study was to examine the effects of organizational conflict on performance.

**Table 4.2.4 Employees' idea on organizational conflict on organization performance at Sony Sugar Company.**

Does the company solve organizational conflict?	Yes	No	TOTAL
Frequency (fo)	58	20	78
Percentage %	77%	23%	100%

The information in table 4.2.4 shows that 58 employees or (77%) strongly agree that conflict resolution was highly valued at Sony Sugar Company as a way of increasing performance. The difference in response is as a result that management has not made employees especially in other sectors apart from production, to know the value of conflict resolution.



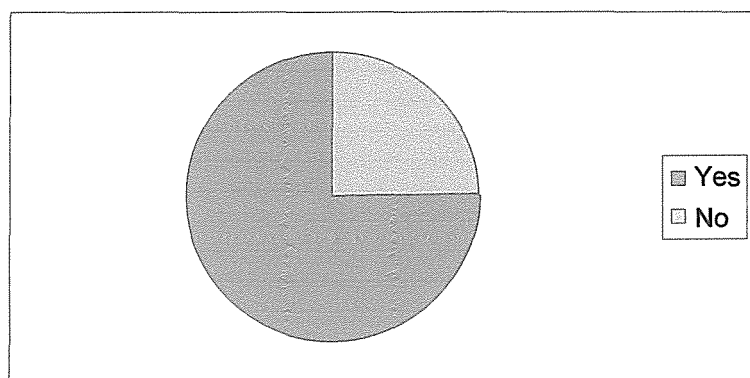
**Figure 4.2.4** A pie chart showing percentage of employees who agree that at Sony Sugar Company conflict resolution was highly valued.

**Table 4.2.5: Were there conflicts at Sony Sugar Company?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	300	75
No	100	25
Total	400	100

Source: primary data

**Figure4. 1.5: A pie chart showing that there were conflicts at Sony Sugar Company.**



From the table and figure above indicate that 75% of the respondents said that are organizational conflict at Sony Sugar Company, while 25% did not agreed that there was organizational conflict at Sony Sugar Company.

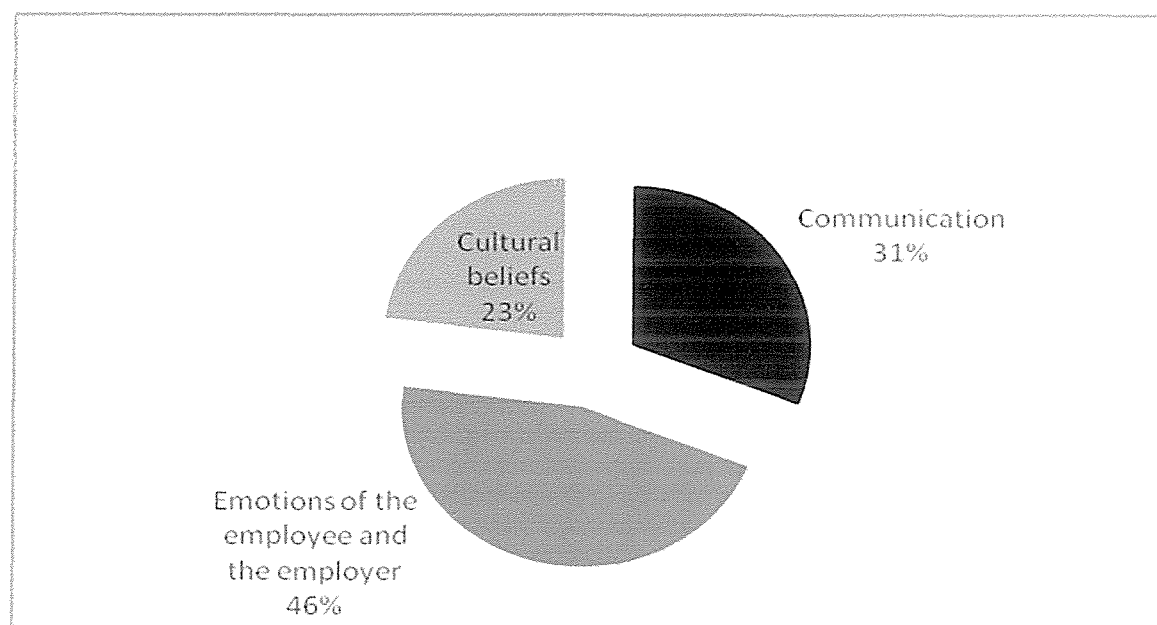
**Table4. 1.6: What were the main causes of organizational conflict**

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Communication	135	31.03%
Emotions of the employee and the employer	200	45.98%
Cultural beliefs	100	22.99%
<b>Total</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

Table 4.2.6: Indicates that 46% of the employees agree that it was because of emotions of the employees and employers that cause organizational conflict.

Figure 4.2.6: A chart showing the main cause of organizational conflict.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the summary of findings, discussions, conclusions, recommendations and for areas for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary**

This research study entailed the review of related literature, Data collection and subsequent analysis in order to ascertain the relationship between organizational conflict and organizational performance. The data collected was analyzed by the measures of central tendency and represented in pie chart and bar graphs.

#### **5.2 Discussion**

The first objective of the study was to investigate the effect of conflict on organization performance in Sony Sugar Company. According to data collected, it revealed that majority of the employees knew that there were conflicts at Sony Sugar Company. It was therefore deduced that, a few employees especially from human resource and marketing department clear idea of the issues at hand. Employees were not given enough time to know operations from other departments' thus poor communication. It was therefore recommended that to achieve full resolution of conflict as a tool to better performance, employees should be trained on how to handle conflicts within an organization and maintain organizational performance.

The second objective was to establish the impact of the effect of conflict on organization performance in Sony Sugar Company. It was revealed that majority of the employees acknowledged that conflict had a significant role when attempting to achieve organization performance. The employees who are in conflict played a minor role in the production and sale