

Conflict Resolution Roles on Employee Productivity Among Flower Farms in Nakuru County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: Productivity issues among flower farms in Nakuru County, Kenya, pose significant challenges to the sustainability and competitiveness of the industry. Despite the region's potential for flower production, there is a noticeable decline in productivity levels among employees, leading to reduced output and profitability for flower farms. One of the primary reasons for the poor productivity among flower farms in Nakuru County is the lack of effective management practices including unresolved conflicts. Therefore, this study sought to determine the effect of conflict resolution roles on employee productivity among flower farms in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study was anchored on the concept of Thomas-Kilmann's theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The unit of analysis were flower farms within Nakuru County who are members of Kenya Flower Council. The study purposively selected 19 flower farms which are registered with the Kenya Flower Council in Nakuru County. The study targeted 106 top-level managers and 179 middle level managers in the 19 flower firms in Nakuru County. Thus, the target population was 285 managers. Nassiuma's formula was used to select a sample of 101 respondents. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data for the study. A pilot study was conducted at in Nyandarua County. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency and validity of the study. Quantitative data was analysed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data was presented in tables. The findings revealed that managers who adopt accommodating roles promote a cooperative and supportive atmosphere. The study concluded that there is a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation between conflict resolution roles on employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County.

Keywords: *Conflict Resolution Roles, Employee Productivity, Flower Farms*

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict resolution roles are specific responsibilities or positions individuals take on within a group or organization to effectively manage and resolve conflicts that may arise (Paresashvili et al., 2021). These roles help to ensure that conflicts are addressed in a constructive and organized manner, aiming for fair and mutually beneficial resolutions. Conflict resolution roles encompass various responsibilities aimed at facilitating constructive communication, finding mutually beneficial solutions, and maintaining a positive work environment. Conflicts can have a detrimental impact on morale, productivity, and the overall work environment. Managers with conflict resolution roles can mediate disputes, foster understanding among team members, and create a harmonious workplace. By addressing conflicts early and constructively, these contribute to a positive organizational culture, enhancing teamwork and employee satisfaction in the flower farm (Gilbert, 2018).

In Netherlands, Dutch flower firms, conflict resolution roles are crucial for maintaining the harmonious operation of the organization amidst the complexities of the industry (Hdergi, 2019). Managers often take on the roles of mediators and facilitators, utilizing their exceptional communication skills to address conflicts effectively and foster inclusive dialogue among team members (Lussier&Achua, 2022). They ensure that messages are conveyed clearly and inclusively, promoting understanding and collaboration among employees (Goodall, 2018). Additionally, Dutch flower farm managers prioritize team building and cohesive work environments, leveraging their communication roles to align team members with organizational goals and cultivate a sense of unity (Sampedro 2020).

South Africa's flower industry, characterized by diverse floral species and unique indigenous flora, relies on managers roles to navigate both domestic and international markets (Barros 2019). In South African flower firms, managers often serve as mediators and facilitators, leveraging their cultural sensitivity and communication skills to address conflicts effectively (Borrero 2020). They create inclusive work environments where the diversity of the workforce is celebrated

and leveraged as a strength. Additionally, they prioritize sustainability and ethical practices, aligning with both consumer preferences and the social and economic sustainability of the local flower industry (Oyedele, 2020).

Rwanda's flower industry represents a burgeoning sector driven by the vision and knowledge of its managerial roles (Nsengimana 2019). Managers often assume the roles of mediators and facilitators, utilizing their communication skills and cultural understanding to address conflicts effectively (Nkundabanyanga, 2021). They recognize the importance of inclusivity and diversity in the workforce and strive to create environments where differing perspectives are valued and respected. Moreover, managers prioritize community engagement and social responsibility, leveraging their roles to build strong relationships with stakeholders and mitigate conflicts through collaborative approaches (Mburu, 2020). Managers in Rwandan flower firms contribute not only to the success of their organizations but also to the broader social and economic development of Rwanda's floral industry and communities.

Kenya stands as a powerhouse in the global flower trade, thanks to the managerial acumen of its industry leaders (Karuri, 2018). If there is a dispute over land use rights between a flower farm and neighboring communities, managers may initiate dialogue sessions involving representatives from both sides to find mutually beneficial solutions (Mburu, 2020). Additionally, managers prioritize team building and employee engagement, leveraging their roles to promote collaboration and mutual understanding among team members. By implementing fair and inclusive conflict resolution strategies, Kenyan flower firm managers contribute to the overall success and sustainability of the industry, ensuring that the workforce remains motivated and focused on achieving organizational (Mugo 2019).

Productivity issues among flower farms in Nakuru County, Kenya, pose significant challenges to the sustainability and competitiveness of the industry. Despite the region's potential for flower production, there is a noticeable decline in productivity levels among employees, leading to reduced output and profitability for flower farms. One of the primary reasons for the poor productivity among flower farms in Nakuru County is the lack of effective management practices. Many flower farms in the region struggle with issues such as inadequate decision-making, communication barriers, unresolved conflicts, and low employee motivation. These deficiencies in managerial roles directly impact the efficiency and effectiveness of operations within flower farms, leading to suboptimal productivity levels therefore the study sought to assess the effect of conflict resolution roles on employee productivity among flower farms in Nakuru County, Kenya

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Thomas-Kilmann's Theory

The Thomas-Kilmann's theory was developed by Dr. Thomas and Dr. Kilmann in 1970. The model argues individuals can either act assertively or cooperatively during conflict situations. Depending on the degree of these behaviours shown, an individual's response can then be mapped on the model. The Thomas-Kilmann Model is useful for HR professionals, leaders and managers to be able to understand the responses of their co-workers and employees during conflict situations. By understanding someone's response, you are in a better position to handle a conflict and interpret certain behaviours (Thwala, 2022).

The Thomas-Kilmann Model is used to highlight the benefits and disadvantages of every position during different types of conflict (Altmæ, Turk & Toomet, 2013). For example, a 'collaborating' approach is particularly beneficial when seeking a long-term, quality decision which resolves any underlying issues. A 'competing' approach may be useful when fast, decisive action is required, whilst an 'accommodating' approach is necessary where preserving harmony and avoiding disruption is more important than the decision to be made (Haidarravy, 2023).

The Thomas-Kilmann model was used for this study to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and assessing conflict resolution styles, which can be particularly relevant in studying the effect of conflict resolution skills on employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County, Kenya. By utilizing the model, researchers can assess the predominant conflict resolution styles employed by managers and employees within these organizations. They can investigate how the different conflict styles, such as competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating, impact employee productivity in various work settings and situations.

Conflict Resolution Roles on Employee Productivity

Wanasika and Sinha (2020) sought to establish managers' conflict resolution roles and employee productivity in international organizations. The study found that managers' conflict resolution roles are critical in managing conflicts in international organizations. The study suggests that training programs for managers in conflict resolution roles can improve employee productivity and job satisfaction.

Adeyemi, Osei, and Mensah (2023) investigated conflict resolution roles among managers in Nigerian Healthcare Organizations. The study employed a qualitative research design. Selecting 15 healthcare organizations across Nigeria, through purposive sampling, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 30 managers. Thematic analysis

revealed the importance of active listening, empathy, and mediation roles in resolving conflicts effectively within healthcare settings.

Müller, and Wagner (2022) did a study on the conflict resolution strategies in Germany retail chains, the study utilized a survey research design. Sampling managers from retail chains in Germany, the researchers collected data through structured questionnaires. Statistical analysis revealed that managers who employed collaborative problem-solving approaches and engaged in constructive dialogue were more successful in resolving conflicts and maintaining positive work relationships.

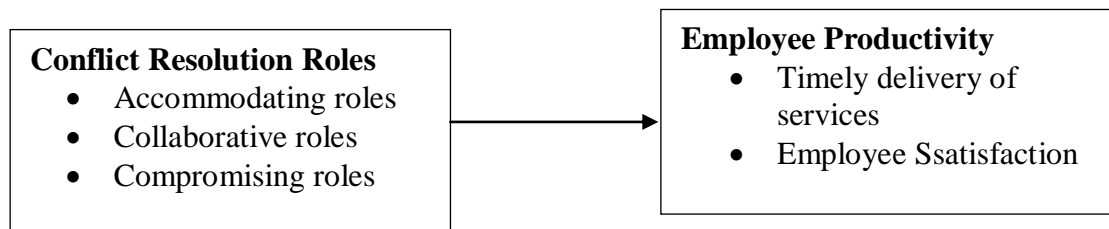
Lawal and Adetayo (2019) examined the managers' conflict resolution roles and employee productivity in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. The study was a literature review that targeted employees in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. The study found that managers' conflict resolution roles play a crucial role in resolving conflicts in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. The study also suggests that effective conflict resolution roles positively influence employee productivity and job satisfaction.

Sarker and Huda (2020) sought to determine the managers' communication roles and employee productivity. The study found that effective communication roles contribute to employee productivity and job satisfaction in multinational corporations. The study also suggests that managers should be trained in communication roles to enhance their effectiveness in managing employees.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The unit of analysis were flower farms within Nakuru County who are members of Kenya Flower Council. The study purposively selected 19 flower farms which are registered with the Kenya Flower Council in Nakuru County. The study targeted 106 top-level managers and 179 middle level managers in the 19 flower firms in Nakuru County. Thus, the target population was 285 managers. The study sampling frame was top level and middle managers from different flower farms within Nakuru County. A stratified random sampling was used in order to obtain the required sample size. The number of participants from each flower firm were determined using stratified random sampling. From the study population of 101, a sample size was determined using Nassiuma's formulae. The study used of primary data which was collected using semi structured questionnaires to collect primary data.

Data was collected using drop and pick later method which was collected after two weeks. In this method, the consent statement was issued and then the questionnaire administered. The respondents were assured of their confidentiality of information to improve the response rate. To test the reliability of the research instrument, the questionnaire was randomly be administered to a pilot group of 10 respondents at Sharimar Flowers and Primarosa- Zuri Farm in Nyandarua County. The respondents used in pilot study were not used again in the consequent study. The face validity was undertaken through the use of pilot study while content validity was ensued through the use of managerial and supervisor opinions. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using the internal consistency. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency. The data that was collected in this study was quantitative in nature. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. In addition, descriptive and inferential statistics was used in this study. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, measures of central tendencies (mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation and co-efficient of variation) was used to describe the characteristics of the target population. Further, a multiple regression analysis was used. Data was presented in graphs and tables.

IV. RESULTS

Response Rate

The study administered 101 questionnaires for data collection. However, 82 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented 81% overall successful response rates.

Effects of Conflict Resolution Roles on Employee Productivity

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the effect of conflict resolution on employee productivity among flower farms in Nakuru County. The findings are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Conflict Resolution and Employee Productivity

Conflict Resolution	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std	Source: Research Data (2024)
Managers who adopt accommodating roles promote a cooperative and supportive atmosphere. This can enhance teamwork and strengthen interpersonal relationships	45	40	13	2	0	4.2720	.77643	From the finding, 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that managers who adopt accommodating roles promote a cooperative and supportive atmosphere. This can enhance teamwork and strengthen interpersonal relationships with a mean of 4.2720 and Std. Deviation of .77643. Also from the finding, 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that accommodating roles is a valuable strategy to de-escalate the situation and create space for more constructive conversations, 46% agreed, 13% were neutral while 2% disagreed that that accommodating role is a valuable strategy to de-escalate the situation and create space for more constructive conversations with a mean of 4.0080 and Std. Deviation of .92889. From the finding, 35% of the respondents strongly agreed that managers who emphasize collaborative roles are focused on resolving underlying issues, leading to more sustainable and long-term, 48% agreed, 14% were neutral, 3% disagreed while none strongly disagreed that managers who emphasize collaborative roles are focused on resolving underlying issues, leading to more sustainable and long-term with a mean of 4.1520 and Std. Deviation of .77310. From the finding, 43% of the respondents strongly agreed that managers who adopt collaborative roles help build trust among team members since individuals feel their opinions are valued and considered, 39% agreed, 14% were neutral, while 4% disagreed that managers who adopt collaborative roles help build trust among team members since individuals feel their opinions are valued and considered with a mean of 4.1360 and Std. Deviation of .91884. From the finding, 47% of the respondents strongly agreed that compromising roles enable managers to efficiently reach an agreement which can prevent prolonged conflicts that may negatively impact productivity, 44% agreed, 6% were neutral while 3% disagreed that compromising roles enable managers to efficiently reach an agreement which can prevent prolonged conflicts that may negatively impact productivity with a mean of 3.9200 and Std. Deviation of 1.22211. From the finding, 48% of the respondents strongly agreed that compromising roles helps in preserving relationships by acknowledging and addressing the needs of both parties, 34% agreed, 10% were neutral while 8% disagreed that compromising roles helps in preserving relationships by acknowledging and addressing the needs of both parties with a mean of 4.0240 and Std. Deviation of 1.13921. From the finding, 57% of the respondents strongly agreed that compromising helps in preserving relationships by acknowledging and addressing the needs of both parties,
Accommodating is a valuable strategy to de-escalate the situation and create space for more constructive conversations	40	46	13	6	0	4.0080	.92889	
Managers who emphasize collaboration are focused on resolving underlying issues, leading to more sustainable and long-term	35	48	14	3	0	4.1520	.77310	
Managers who adopt collaborative roles help build trust among team members since individuals feel their opinions are valued and considered	43	39	14	4	0	4.1360	.91884	
Compromising roles enable managers to efficiently reach an agreement which can prevent prolonged conflicts that may negatively impact productivity	47	44	6	3	0	3.9200	1.22211	
Compromising roles helps in preserving relationships by acknowledging and addressing the needs of both parties	48	34	10	8	0	4.0240	1.13921	
Compromising helps in preserving relationships by acknowledging and addressing the needs of both parties	57	29	14	0	0	4.4240	.73247	

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29% agreed, 14% were neutral, while none disagreed that compromising helps in preserving relationships by acknowledging and addressing the needs of both parties with a mean of 4.4240 and Std. Deviation of .73247. The study findings are in line with Li, Liu, & Pan, (2020) which revealed that compromising prevents the imposition of one-sided solutions, ensuring that the concerns and perspectives of both employees and managers are taken into account.

Employee Productivity

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County. The findings were as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Employee Productivity

	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std
The organization has defined mechanisms of promotion which increases productivity	53	47	0	0	0	4.5920	.87709
The organization retains well experienced and talented employees	52	48	0	0	0	4.5960	.83689
Organizations offers incentives to employees which increases productivity	49	51	0	0	0	4.5440	.85293
Employees are satisfied with their work which enhances productivity	47	53	0	0	0	4.4480	1.02277
High-performing employees are more likely to be satisfied with their work and less likely to leave the organization.	45	55	0	0	0	4.4000	.92457
High-performing employees are more likely to be creative and innovative in their work, leading to new ideas and improved processes for the organization	42	58	0	0	0	4.5120	.93512

Source: Research Data (2024)

From the finding, 53% of the respondents strongly agreed that the organization has defined mechanisms of promotion which increases productivity while 47 % agreed that the organization has defined mechanisms of promotion which increases productivity with a mean of 4.5920 and Std. Deviation of .87709. From the finding, 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that the organization retains well experienced and talented employees while 48% agreed that the organization retains well experienced and talented employees with a mean of 4.5960 and Std. Deviation of .83689. Further, from the finding, 49% of the respondents strongly agreed that organizations offer incentives to employees which increases productivity while 51% agreed that organizations offer incentives to employees which increases productivity with a mean of 4.5440 and Std. Deviation of .85293.

In addition, the finding indicated that 47% of the respondents strongly agreed that employees are satisfied with their work which enhances productivity while 53% agreed that employees are satisfied with their work which enhances productivity with a mean of 4.4480 and Std. Deviation of 1.02277. Moreover, the study indicated that 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that high-performing employees are more likely to be satisfied with their work and less likely to leave the organization while 55% agreed that high-performing employees are more likely to be satisfied with their work and less likely to leave the organization with a mean of 4.4000 and Std. Deviation of .92457. Lastly, according to the finding 42% of the respondents strongly agreed that high-performing employees are more likely to be creative and innovative in their work, leading to new ideas and improved processes for the organization while 58% agreed that high-performing employees are more likely to be creative and innovative in their work, leading to new ideas and improved processes for the organization with a mean of 4.5120 and Std. Deviation of .93512. The study findings are in line with Crumpton, (2019) which concluded that high-performing employees often possess a deep understanding of their roles and the organization's objectives. This knowledge allows them to approach challenges with a problem-solving mindset, contributing to innovative solutions.

Correlation Analysis

The study sought to establish the correlation between conflict resolution roles on employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County. The findings of the study are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Conflict Resolution Roles on Employee Productivity

Employee Productivity

Conflict Resolution Roles	Pearson Correlation	.643**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	82

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data (2024)

As indicated in Table 3, the study indicates that there was a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation between conflict resolution roles on employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County (r=0.643; p<0.05). This implies that better conflict resolution roles enhance employee productivity among flower farms in Nakuru County. Conflict resolution roles promote a collaborative culture. Employees are more likely to work together when they feel that conflicts can be resolved constructively, leading to increased productivity in team-based tasks.

Multiple Regression Coefficients

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.038	.145		.260	.796
1 Conflict Resolution Roles	.233	.081	.245	2.877	.006

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 4 shows the overall significant test results for the hypothesized research model. The interpretations of the findings indicated follow the following regression model.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1$$

Therefore,

$$Y = 0.038 + 0.233 X_1$$

According to the intercept (β_0), when the independent variable is held constant, the value of employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County is 0.038. In addition, holding all the other factors constant, a unit increase in conflict resolution roles would lead to a 0.233 improvement in employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County.

V. DISCUSSION

In summary, based on the analysis, the findings revealed that managers who adopt accommodating roles promote a cooperative and supportive atmosphere. This can enhance teamwork and strengthen interpersonal relationships. The findings also revealed that managers who emphasize collaborative roles are focused on resolving underlying issues, leading to more sustainable and long-term. Further, the study revealed that compromising roles enable managers to efficiently reach an agreement which can prevent prolonged conflicts that may negatively impact productivity. Moreover, the findings revealed that compromising helps in preserving relationships by acknowledging and addressing the needs of both parties. Compromising prevents the imposition of one-sided solutions, ensuring that the concerns and perspectives of both employees and managers are taken into account.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that there was a moderate positive and statistically significant correlation between conflict resolution roles on employee productivity in flower farms in Nakuru County (r=0.643; p<0.05). This implies that better conflict resolution roles enhance employee productivity among flower farms in Nakuru County. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that managers should engage in continuous learning and development programs to enhance their conflict resolution roles, particularly in areas relating to employee conflict. The study also recommended that flower farm owners and executives should invest in training programs that specifically focus on enhancing conflict resolution roles of managers.

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