

WOLKITE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT



**ASSESSMENT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (THE CASE OF
WOLKITE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS)**

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APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Demelash Shitu,, entitled assessment of conflict management practice (the case of wolkite university college of business and economics), has been submitted to the Department of Management, Wolkite University College of Business and Economics, for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of bachelor of art. This thesis has been accepted as it fulfills the academic standards in accordance with the university's regulations.

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study based at Wolkite University's College of Business and Economics aimed to assess the institution's conflict management practices. Using a combined qualitative and quantitative approach, data were collected from a sample of 50 academic staff members, by using census method. The information was solicited through questionnaires encompassing both open-ended and closed-ended items and was manually analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings suggest a majority of staff members are satisfied with the conflict management strategies in place, indicating the effectiveness and acceptability of these practices within the college. Additionally, the results reveal a positive attitude towards conflict management among a large segment of the workforce. However, a significant portion of the college's employees reported being inadequately informed about collegiate affairs and identified communication deficits as a primary concern. These communication issues, along with task interdependence and interpersonal interactions, emerged as principal conflict catalysts. Moreover, the study demonstrates that collaboration and compromise are the preferred and prevailing methods of conflict resolution at the college. It is recommended that the administration enhance communication channels to ensure comprehensive dissemination of information to staff members. Instituting periodic training on conflict management is also advised to preempt destructive disputes and facilitate the exchange of work-related experiences, knowledge, and skills.

KEY WORDS:

Conflict,

Goal,

Value,

Interaction

,Incomatibility

ACRONYMS

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1.1. Background of the study

Conflict management needs significance attention because managers are known to spend much of their time on handling it. Individuals and groups interact with each other in their day today activity in the struggle for survival and achievements. The interaction that exists among them is a source for the formation of having conflict emotional attitudes, disputes, violence and domination of individual or group interests over sacrifices of other members of the interacting society. So that it makes a state of disagreements between individual and domination of individual or group interest over sacrifices of other members of the interacting society. So that it makes a state of disagreements between individual and group. (Nelson and Quick, 2003).

Fadipe (2000) sees conflict as a form of disagreement in an establishment between two individuals or groups who have cause to interact formally or informally. Similarly, Miller and King describe it as basically a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups over compatible goals. Conflict therefore is a process of incompatible behaviors. It may involve the interference or disruption by one person or group of persons, or in some way or ways which make another action less likely to be effective.

According to Deutsch, conflict inevitably means that people are working against each other, in such a manner that what one wants is incompatible with that which another wants. It could bring about competition in the pursuit of goals. What the competitor gets comes at the expense of others or the job. It is therefore counter-productive, disruptive, unnatural, and produces a deviation from the free flow of events. A major factor that can throw parties into a state of incompatibility is their perception of the issue at hand or issue of interest. There are other factors that can contribute to the creation of conflict in organizations like task interdependence, scarce resources, goal incompatibility, communication failures, individual differences and poorly designed reward system (Mgbekem, S. J.,2004)..

Conflict is a necessary and useful part of organizational life. It is inevitable and an integral part of the process of change. Indeed, it is an aid to cooperation, not an obstacle. There are two sides to conflict, one is destructive and unhealthy and the other has a problem-solving base where those involved are willing to sublimate personality differences, to listen to others' views and to be open and candid to each other, to be supportive and helpful whereas the former defeats cooperation.

Albert asserted that there are productive and destructive conflicts. According to him, "A conflict is said to be positive when it is constructively discussed by the parties and amicable terms for settlement reached". Constructively managed conflict induces a positive performance while poorly managed conflict heats up the environment to bring about 'dislocation of the entire group and polarization, reduced productivity on job performance, psychological and

physical injury, emotional distress and inability to sleep, interference with problem activities, escalation of differences into antagonistic position and malice and increased hostility. Through conflict management a cooperative atmosphere is created for promoting opportunities and movement directed towards non-violent, reconciliation or basic clashing interest.

However, no matter how one looks at conflict, it is important to realize that conflict is one of the best ways in the world to turn the tide and improve unsatisfactory conditions. As a matter of fact, sometimes there may be no real dispute to be managed, but there may be need for greater understanding, cooperation and team work to promote interpersonal harmony and good organizational climate for teaching and learning. Therefore, conflict should not always be seen as something undesirable but rather as a necessary outcome that can bring positive consequences if properly managed. It is against this background that it becomes pertinent to examine conflict management and employees performance in Wolkite University College of business and economics.

1.2 Background of the organization

Wolkite University (WKU) is one of the third generation higher institutions that have been founded in 2012. It is established for the purpose of providing and promoting higher education learning, research, and outreach programs in the country to ensure the realization of the national vision of reaching the level of middle income countries by 2020. The University is located in the Central Ethiopia, in Guraghe zone, 158 km southwest of the capital city, Addis Ababa, on the way to Jimma. In November 2009 the late prime minister, his Excellency Mr. Meles Zenawi, laid the foundation stone of the University in a plain landscape which is quite ideal for academic pursuit. It is situated at Gubreye sub-city, 14 km away from Wolkite town, of the Gubrie-Butajira road. The University began its formal activities at Wolkite town with the appointment of the first president, Dr. Admasu Shibru, in February 2012, while other key officials of the University were appointed later. The University's command-post was stationed at Wolkite town until September 2013 but moved to the main campus then. The University commenced the learning-teaching activities on the premises of the Wolkite polytechnic college at Wolkite town. The first 543 students joined the University in 2011/12 academic year. Enrolling the assigned students, the University started its academic journey with 13 academic programs under three Colleges of Engineering and Technology, College of Computing and Informatics, and College of Natural and Computational science. Currently, the number of colleges has reached seven with one additional school in which a total of 32 academic programs are running.

1.3. Statement of the problem

As long as people working together in organization, conflict is inevitable or unavoidable. This means when peoples work together, the incompatibility of goals, attitudes, emotions or behaviors leads to disagreement or opposition between them. Conflict occurs because people do not agree on goals, issues, perceptions, and people inevitably compete for the scarce resources (Many cullinan, 1996). Regardless of managers leadership or his or her style of management and how well planned organization structure, conflict will occur within an organization (Resnid and Archer, 1983) .so conflict is created at any organization and we cannot eliminate, but we manage it. Generally, it has

been studied to explore the source of conflict, Conflict resolution mechanisms and impact of conflict on employees' performance. However, the assessment of conflict management and conflict management tools. Since there is no study performed on the relation between conflict management strategy and employee performance from the perception of managerial and non-managerial employee of college, it is pertinent to conduct this study. So this study was designed to close the gap by assessing conflict management practice in case of Wolkite University College of business and Economics.

This is why the researcher is planning to conduct the study was raising the following research questions.

- ✓ What are the conflict management tools in the college?
- ✓ What is the significance relationship exist between conflict management strategies and employee performance in Wolkite university college of business and economics?
- ✓ What are the source of conflict in the college and what mechanisms the college use to solve conflict?

1.4 Objective of the stud

1.4.1. General objective

The general objective of the study is to assess the conflict management practice of college of business and economics, at Wolkite University.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

In accordance with the above general objective, the specific objectives are stated as follow. These are:

- ✓ To identify conflict management tools in the college.
- ✓ To describe the significance relationship exists between conflict management strategies and employee performance in Wolkite University College of business and economics.
- ✓ To investigate the sources of conflict and the mechanisms used to solve conflict in the college.

1.5. The scope of the study

Geographically, the study is delimited in the college of business and economics, at Wolkite University. Conceptually, the study is also delimited to the assessment of conflict management tools, significance relationship between conflict management strategies and employee performance, and sources of conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms at Wolkite University College of business and economics.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study stands as a pivotal contribution to the existing body of knowledge on conflict management, particularly within the academic corridors of Wolkite University's College of Business and Economics. By delving into the intricacies of conflict resolution strategies, this research furnishes managerial staff and other professionals at the university with pragmatic solutions to prevailing conflict challenges. The findings are anticipated to be instrumental in enhancing the professional development of individuals, empowering them with essential conflict management knowledge and boosting overall job satisfaction. Additionally, the insights from this study are aimed to fortify the

relational dynamics between superiors and subordinates within the institution, cultivating the requisite skills for the effective dissolution of conflicts and disputes. As a result, it is expected that the academy's organizational efficacy will elevate, supporting the broader mission of academic excellence and harmonious workplace environments.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite the keen approach to this research, it has navigated through a series of impediments that could potentially temper the scope of its findings. A notable constraint faced by the researcher was the reluctance of some participants to divulge comprehensive information or to engage thoroughly with the data collection instruments. During the data gathering phase, a fraction of respondents exhibited a lack of zeal in meticulously completing the questionnaires. There was a particularly discernible disinterest towards open-ended queries which culminated in the non-return of some of the questionnaires. Such factors may introduce a degree of bias or a gap in the collected data, which must be acknowledged as part of the research's limitations.

1.8 Organization of the paper

The study was organized in five chapters. The first chapter deals the introductory part which discusses the basic idea and general pictures of the study. The second chapter dedicated to literature review. The third chapter deals about methodology. The fourth chapter deals analysis and interpretation and the final chapter includes the study by summarizing the main findings and possible recommendations that are useful solving of the existing problem.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition and concepts

While there is no single definition of conflict exists, most definition involves the following factors: there at least two parties or groups, the groups perceive some incompatibility between themselves and the group interacts with each other in some ways (Putnam and Poole, 1987). Conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed by or negatively affected by another party (Wall and callister, 1995, p.517).It is the interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (Rahim, 1992, p.16). In 1984, Bercovitch defines conflict as “a situation which generates incompatible goals or values among different parties. Folger defines as “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals”. In 1979, Cross, etal, defines conflict as “ difference between and among goals, motives, resources and ideas. In 1985 Hocker and Wilmot defines conflict as “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from other party in achieving their goal.” In 2005 Thomas defines conflict as “a disagreement in opinion between people or group, due to difference in attitudes, believes, values, or needs. In the business world, differences in such characteristics as work experience , personality, peer group, environment and situations all lead to difference in personal attitude, believes, values or needs.” Conflict is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings towards each other (Fisher, 1990). The incompatibility or differences may exist in reality or may only be perceived by the parties involved. Nonetheless, the opposing actions or the hostile emotions are very real hallmarks of human conflict. A comprehensive review of the conflict literature yielded this consensus definition; “conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party”. From the above definition, it is obvious that there is no just one practical definition. Each person has an individual way of thinking and behaves differently from others in a similar situation. It can be concluded that conflict can affect everyone to varying extent (leung, 2010).

2.2. The views of conflict

Conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. Because of the wide range of potential differences among people, the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive (Deutsh & Coleman, 2000). It is argued that the definitions of conflict vary so much because attitude towards conflict vary wildly as well. When (Hocker and Wilmot ,1985) conducted a survey in order to identify which association people have with the word conflict the following responses were given destruction, anger, disagreement, hostility, war, anxiety, tension, alienation, violence, completion, threat, heart ache,

pain and hopelessness. Obviously, people view conflict as negative force until the early 1960s, even scientists portrayed conflict as undesirable process that has to be avoided (Simons, 1972). For instance (Hocker and Wilmot, 1985) offered a list of negative assumptions about conflict that are widely held. Harmony is normal and conflict is abnormal, Conflict and disagreement are the same phenomena, Conflict is pathological, Conflict should be reduced, or avoided, never escalated, Conflict can be the result of clash of personality, emotions are different from genuine conflict. On the other hand, some researchers argued that conflict can be seen as positive. (Dietz and Stevenson, 1986) introduced three assumptions that indicate conflict can be positive. Conflict is natural, Conflict is good and necessary, most conflict are based on real difference

Conflict is viewed as natural due to life's uncertainty; conflict is good and necessary because conflict can stimulate innovative thinking, when it is managed in the right way. In 1977 another pair of researchers expresses the view that conflict is positive. (Corwin and Edelfelt, 1977) believe that conflict is acceptable due to the following factors: firstly, conflict is inherent in the fact that authority is problematic and secondly, conflict is promoted by inconsistent goals, success criteria, and heterogeneity of the clientele. These researchers argued that conflict "can improve organization by forcing change and compromise. It challenges assumptions and create discomfort with existing practices." (Wood, 1987) conflicts are an integral part of human's life in all aspect. One cannot avoid conflict in families, at work place. Historically, the following views on are identified.

2.2.1. Traditional View

Traditional view (dominant from the late 19th century until the mide 1940) assumes that conflict is bad, always has a negative impact and leads to decline in performance as the level of conflict increases. Conflict must, therefore, always be avoided. In this view conflict is closely associated with such term as violence, destructions and irrationality. The response in conflict in the traditional view is to reduce. Suppress, or eliminate it.

2.2.2. The behavioral view

The behavioral view, also known as the human relation view (1940- 1970), emerged in the late 1940s and held away through the 1970. It argues that conflict is natural and inevitable in all organization and that it may have either a positive or negative effect, depend on how the conflict is handled. This approach advocates acceptance of conflict and rationalizes its existence.

2.2.3. The inter-actionist view

The newest perspective, the inter-actionist view assumes that conflict is necessary to increase performance. While the behavioral approach accepts conflict, the interactionist view encourages conflict based on the belief that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, too-cooperative organization is likely to become static, apathetic, stagnant and unable to respond to change and innovation. The interactionist school has identified several type of conflict. Task conflict: it related to the content and goal of the work, relationship conflict: it focuses on interpersonal relationships, process conflict: it relates how the work gets done

The integrationists interpret conflict in a totally different way from traditionalist and people with a contemporary view. According to integrationists, conflict can be identified as either dysfunctional or functional. Conflict is a part of people's life and a natural phenomenon in all organization. A low level of conflict will not be harmful for daily operations but will help to create smooth functioning by better understanding the existing issues. Conflict at the desired level can inspire creativity when handling the issues and resolving conflict. Thus, conflict can be positive in working environment, but whenever a critical or major conflict occurs, it should be resolved as an undesired level of conflict can be harmful and dysfunctional for the organization (Leung, 2010).

2.3. Classification of Conflict

Different scholars have tried to classify conflict into various forms. The first classification is the relationship, task and process conflict. There is, however, considerable conceptual overlap between these different forms of conflict (Dirks and Parks, 2003).

2.3.1. Relationship Conflict

This exists when there are interpersonal incompatibilities among group members, including personality clashes, tension, animosity and annoyance (Jehn, 1995). This type of conflict produces negative individual emotions, such as anxiety, mistrust, or resentment (Jehn, 1995), frustration, tension and fear of being rejected by other team members (Murnighan and Conlon, 1991).

2.3.2. Task Conflicts

These are disagreements about the content of a task and work goals, such as distribution of resources, procedures, and interpretation of facts (John, 1995; 1997). Task conflicts include differences in viewpoints, ideas and opinions, and may coincide with animated discussions and personal excitement. In contrast to relationship conflict, findings concerning task conflict are not as conclusive. Task conflict has been associated with several beneficial effects such as improving the use of debate within a team (Jehn, et al, 1999), which results in quality ideas and innovation (Amason, 1996; West & Anderson, 1996) and leads to better service delivery (Tjosvold, Dann & Wong, 1992).

In addition, studies have shown that task conflict can also be associated with several harmful effects, such as job dissatisfaction, lack of team work (Kabanoff, 1991; Jenn, et al, 1997), and increased anxiety (Jehn, 1997)

2.3.3. Process Conflicts

This refers to disagreement about how a task should be accomplished, individuals' responsibilities and delegation (Jehn & Mannix, 2001), e.g. when group members disagree about whose responsibility it is to complete a specific duty. Process conflict has been associated with lower morale, decreased productivity (Jehn, 1997) and poor team performance (Jehn, 1999).

2.4. Nature of organizational conflict

Conflict can take any of several different forms in an organization. According to (Eise, 1994) the more common form of conflict in the organization are:

2.4.1. Interpersonal conflict

Interpersonal conflict refers to conflict between two individuals. This occurs typically due to how people are different from one another. We have varied personalities which usually results to incompatible choices and opinions. It is a struggle which usually arises from contrasting ethics, values, beliefs, etc. between two persons. Inter-personal conflict involves conflict between two or more people, inter-personal conflict are also interdepartmental between management of one department and managers of another (Budding Else, 1994).

2.4.2. Intra personal conflict

It is a conflict an individual experiences within him or her, and causes a person frustration, tension and anxiety (Budding Else, 1994). It is a conflict that occurs solely in the psychological dynamics of the individual's. Conflict within a person is not always easy to identify, but it can become apparent when mood swings are present or depression is evident. It is also apparent when a person has trouble choosing between two or more goals. It is a type of conflict that is psychological involving the individual's thought values, principles and emotions.

2.4.3. Intra group conflict

Inter-group conflict refers to conflict that happens among individuals within team. It arises from interpersonal disagreements or differences in views and ideas with in the same team. It is conflict between two or more members of the same group or team.

2.4.4. Inter group conflict

Inter-group conflict refers to disagreement between two or more groups. Inter-group conflict takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different teams with in an organization. It refers to disagreement between two or more groups within an organization.

2.5. Types of Conflict

So far, it is quite evident that to say that conflict is all good or bad is inappropriate and naive. Whether a conflict is good or bad depends on the type of conflict. Specifically, it's necessary to differentiate between functional and dysfunctional conflicts (www.csupomona.edu).

2.5.1 Functional or Constructive Conflict

The interactionist view does not propose that all conflicts are good. Rather, some conflicts support the goals of the group and improve its performance; these are functional, constructive forms of conflict (www.csupomona.edu). Robbin (2001) defines functional conflict as the conflict that supports the goals of the group and improves its (group's) performance. The argument is that if conflict leads to normal competition among groups and the groups work harder and produce more, it is advantageous to the group and the institution. It is viewed as a confrontation between two ideas, goals and parties that improves employees and organizational performance (<http://www.slideshare.net>).

One of the main benefits of constructive conflict is that it gives its members a chance to identify the problems and see the opportunities. Also, it can inspire to new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2008).

2.5.2. Dysfunctional/Destructive Conflict

There are conflicts that hinder group performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive forms of conflict (www.csupomona.edu). Conflict is inevitable and desirable in organizations, but when not effectively handled, conflict can tear relationships apart and, thus, interfere with the exchange of ideas, information and resources in groups and between departments. Dysfunctional conflict hinders and prevents organizational goals from being achieved (<http://www.slideshare.net>).

Dysfunctional conflict usually hinders organizational performance and leads to decreased productivity. This conflict orientation is characterized by competing individual interests overriding the overall interest of the business. Managers withhold information from one another. Employees sabotage others' work, either intentionally or through subtle, conflict-motivated disinterest in team work (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2008).

2.6. The Conflict Process

Conflict is a process in which one party suggests that its interest is being opposed by another party. As a role, people see only the observable part of conflict – angry words and actions of opposition. But this is only a small part of the conflict process (Meshane and Glinow, 2008). The conflict process consists of five stages.

2.6.1. Potential oppositions or incompatibility

The first step in the conflict process is the presence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict to develop. These cause or create opportunities for organizational conflict to rise. The three conditions cause conflicts are:

Communication: different words connotations, jargon, insufficient exchange of information and noise in the communication channel are antecedent conditions to conflict. Too much communication as well as, too little communication, can lay the foundation for conflict.

Structure: in this context, the term structure is used to include variables such as size, the degree of specialization in the task assigned to members, jurisdictional clarity, goal compatibility, leadership style, reward systems, and the degree of dependence between groups. The size and specialization acts as forces to stimulate conflict. The larger the group and the more specialized its activity, the greater the likelihood of conflict. Tenure and conflict have been found to be inversely related. The potential for conflict tends to be greatest when group members are young and when turnover is high. In defining where responsibility for action lies; the greater the ambiguity is the greater the potential for conflict to surface. Such jurisdictional ambiguity increases inter-group fighting for control over resources and territory.

Personal variables: certain personality types- for example, individuals who are highly authoritarian and dogmatic- lead to potential conflict. Another reason for the conflict is the difference in value systems. Value differences are the

best explanation of diverse issues such as different view of the world, different preferred way of behaving, prejudice, and disagreement over one's contribution to the group and rewards one deserves.

2.6.2. Cognition and personalization

Conflict must be perceived by the parties to it whether or not conflict exists is a perception issue, second step of conflict process. During this stage, the perception of conflict arises between the parties. It is the place in the process where the parties decide what the conflict is about and emotion plays a major role in shaping perception.

2.6.3. Intentions

Intentions are decisions to act in a given way, intentions intervene between people's perception and emotions and their overt behavior.

2.6.4. Behavior

This is a stage where conflict becomes visible. The behavior stage includes the statements, actions, and reactions made by the conflicting parties. These conflict behaviors are usually overt attempt to implement each party's intentions.

2.6.5. Outcomes

The action reaction interplay between conflicting parties result in consequences. These outcomes may be functional in that the conflict results in improvement in the group performance, or dysfunctional in that it hinders group performance. Conflict is constructive when it improves the quality of decisions, stimulate creativity and innovation, encourage interest and curiosity among group members, provide the medium through which problems can be aired, and tensions released and foster an environment of self- evaluation and change.

Conflict is dysfunctional when uncontrolled oppositions breeds discontent, which acts to dissolve common ties and eventually leads to the destruction of the group. Among the more undesirable consequences are a retarding of communication, reduction in group cohesiveness, and subordination of group goals to the primacy of infighting between group members.

2.7. Stage in conflict

In 1967, Pondy developed a process model of conflict which is very useful in understanding how conflict starts and what stage it goes through. Pondy identifies five stages in what he calls a "conflict episode."

2.7.1. Latent conflict

Latent conflict is the stage in which factors exist in the situation which could become potential conflict inducing forces. Four basic types of latent conflict are: Competition for scarce resources, derive autonomy, divergence of goals, role conflict.

2.7.2. Perceived conflict

This is the point or stage at which members become aware of a problem or it is the stage where one party perceives the other to be likely to thwart or frustrate his or her goals. Incompatibility of need is perceived and tension begins as the parties begin to worry about what will happen. At this point, however; no one feels that anything that they are care about is actually being overtly threatened.

2.7.3. Felt conflict

Felt conflict is the stage when the conflict is not only perceived but actually felt and recognized. This is the stage at which parties emotionally involved and begin to focus on differences of opinions and opposing interests, sharpening perceived conflict. Internal tensions and frustrations begin to crystallize around specific, defined issues, and people begin to build an emotional commitment to their particular position.

2.7.4. Manifest conflict

It is a stage when two parties engage in behaviors which evoke responses from each other. The most obvious of these responses are verbal attacks, threats, ultimatums, open aggression, apathy, sabotage, withdrawal, physical attacks and even efforts to destroy the other party at the other end.

2.7.5. Conflict aftermath

The aftermath of a conflict may have positive or negative repercussions for the organization depending upon how the conflict is resolved. If the conflict is genuinely resolved to the satisfaction of all participants, the basis for a more co-operative relationship may be laid. On the other hand, if the conflict is merely suppressed but not resolved, the latent conditions of conflict may aggravated and explode in a more serious form. Conflict aftermath is a direct function of the results of the conflict resolution style adopted and exercised in any given situation.

2.8. Sources of conflict

In order for conflict to occur, certain conditions must exist. These conditions may be outwardly visible, or they may latent and waiting to surface. Therefore, it is imperative to understand these underline conditions that can cause conflict. There are certain antecedents present in most of the time, which make the eventual emergence of conflict very likely (Steven and Mary, 2000).

2.8.1. Goal incompatibility

A common source of conflict is goal incompatibility. As the name implies, goal incompatibility occurs when people or work units have goal that interface with each other. Sometimes we have conflicting goals in our work. For example, one of our managers might tell us that speed is most important goal with costumers. Another manager might say that in depth, high quality service is the top priority. It is sometimes quite difficult to reconcile the two.

2.8.2. Scarce resources

We all need access to resources. Scarce resources generate conflict because scarcity motivates people to compete with others who also need those resources to achieve their objective.

2.8.3. Interpersonal interaction

Interpersonal relationships are the most common sources of work place conflict. Because of their difference in personality, cultural background, moral values and experiences, people will have different views of the same scenario. When they cannot reach an amicable solution in a situation where they have to work together, a conflict is bound to happen. Cultural and racial perceptions can leads to quick conclusions about a particular person which might not be accurate and could cause offense to the other party. Also , because they come from different walks of life, signs and meanings might be different greatly; what could be an innocent gesture in one culture can be very unpleasant in another, and this will cause a lot of tensions especially in a multiracial work place.

2.8.4. Poor communication

Miscommunication and misunderstanding can create conflict even where there are no basic incompatibilities. For example, unclear instructions to employee can cause confusion as to who is supposed to do what, which can leads to conflict.

2.8.5. Subpar performance

when a worker in a department is not pulling his weigh it can leads to conflict within the department, perhaps even escalating into a confrontational situation.

2.8.6. Harassment

Harassment in a work place takes many forms, such as sexual or racial or even the hazing of new employee. Companies that do not have strong harassment policies in place are in effect encouraging the behavior, which can result in conflict.

2.8.7. Change

The implementation of new technology can leads to stressful change. Workers who do not adapt well to change can become overly stressed, which increases the like hood conflict in the work place.

2.8.8. External change

When the economy slides into a recession or a new competitor swoops in and steals some of a company's market share, it can create tension within the company. This stress can leads to conflict between employees and even between upper levels of management.

2.8.9. Task interdependence

Task interdependence is the extent to which activities are dependent on each other, i.e. the degree to which activities are related. There are three levels of interdependence:

Pooled interdependence: is perhaps the loosest form of the three. In this type of interdependence, each organizational department or business unit perform completely separate function. While departments may not

directly interact and do not directly depend on each other, each does contribute individual pieces to the same overall puzzle.

Sequential interdependence: occurs when one unit in the overall process produces an output necessary for the performance by the next unit, i.e. the output of one unit becomes the direct input for another unit. Perhaps the most obvious example of sequential interdependence is an assembly line.

Reciprocal interdependence: is similar to sequential interdependence in that the output of one department becomes the input of the other, with the addition of being cyclical. It is the highest level of interdependence in which work output is exchanged back and forward among individuals or work units.

2.9. The impact of Conflict on organizational performance

When most people hear the word conflict, they think of the term in a negative manner. This assumption is not always true. Surprisingly, conflict can actually be a positive within an organization as it can bring change, improve situation and offer a new solution.

2.9.1. Positive impact of conflict

Conflict is way of confronting reality and creating new solution to the problem. It has the following outcomes: Motivates individuals to do better and work harder. One's talents and abilities come to the forefront in a conflict situation. Satisfies certain psychological needs like dominance, aggression, esteem and ego, and thereby provide an opportunity for constructive use and release of aggressive urges. Provides creative and innovative ideas. For example, employee benefits of the present day are an outcome of the union-management conflict over the past decades. Adds variety to one's organizational life, otherwise work life would be dull and boring. Facilitates an understanding of the problems, people have with one another and leads to better coordination among individuals and departments, in addition to strengthening intra-group relationship. Inspire creativity: - fortunately, some organizations view conflict as an opportunity for finding creative solutions to problems. Conflict can inspire members to brainstorm, while examining problems from various perspectives. Share and Respect Opinions: - As organization members work together to solve conflict, they are more willing to share their opinions with other members of the group. Conflict can also cause members to actively listen to each other as they work to accomplish the organizational goals. Improve future communication:- Conflict can bring group members together and help them learn more about each other. From learning each other's opinion on topics relevant to the organization's growth to understanding each member's preferred communication styles, conflict within an organization can give members the tools necessary to easily solve conflicts in the future (<http://Ezine Articles.com>).

2.9.2. The negative/dysfunctional outcome

Randolph and black burn state some of the negative outcomes of conflict on organizational performance (Randolph, 1990).Information cancellation:- conflict result in information cancellation, that means it stifles the free flow of information within an organization. Distance between group increases: - conflict reduces team's cohesiveness and effectiveness among team members. Conflict can reduce satisfaction and effective acceptance of the team members.

Conflicts affect individual and organizational performance. Resolving conflicts takes a toll on managerial time and energy which could be more productively spent. In a conflict situation, people may promote their self-interests or personal gains at the cost of others or the organization. Intense conflicts over a prolonged period affect individuals emotionally and physically, and give rise to psychosomatic disorders. Conflict may lead to work sabotage, employee morale problems, and decline in the market share of product/service and consequent loss of productivity

2.10. Conflict Management and Resolution

As stated earlier, conflicts are inevitable in life, in organizations or even between nations. It however does have some noteworthy advantages, if handled correctly, as it brings problems out into the open and compels interested parties to find solutions that are acceptable to all. Unfortunately, conflicts that escalate out of control are detrimental to everybody in the equation. Thus, conflict management becomes a necessity). Having the basic skills and knowledge, will go a long way in handling conflict admirably. Several conflict resolution styles have been categorized over the years. According to conflict specialist, Afzalur Rahim's model, five different conflict handling styles can be plotted on a 2x2 grid. High to low concern for self is found on horizontal axis of the grid while low to high concern for others forms the vertical axis. There is no single best style, each has strengths and limitations and subjected to situational constraints.

2.10.1. Integrating/problem solving (high concern for self and other).

Problem solving sometimes called collaboration, seeks to resolve conflict by placing a maximum focus on both groups concerns. In this style, interested parties confront the issue and cooperatively identify the problem, generate and weight alternatives and select a solution. This method seeks to reduce tension through face to face meeting of the conflicting parties. Its primary strength is its longer lasting impact because it deals with the underlying problem rather than merely with symptoms. The primary weakness of this style is that it is very time consuming.

2.10.2. obliging/smoothing (low concern for self)

An obliging person neglects his or her own concern to satisfy the concern of the other party. This style, often called, smoothing or accommodating involves playing down differences while emphasizing commonalities. An accommodating party places maximum emphasis on meeting the needs of other groups, while minimizing its own concern. The primary strength of this style is that it encourages cooperation. Its main weakness is that it is a temporary fix that fails to confront the underlying problem.

2.10.3. Dominating/forcing (low concern for others)

Dominating tends to be a power oriented approach, high concern for self and low concern for others encourages “I win, you loss” tactics. It is an approach which places a maximum focus on meeting one’s own concern, coupled with a minimal focus on meeting the concern of others. Speed is its primary strength. The primary weakness of this style is that it often breeds resentment.

2.10.4. Avoiding/withdrawal (low concern for self and others)

Avoiding is withdrawing from the situation or taking neutral at all costs. This tactics involves either passive withdrawal from the problem or active suppression of the issue. The main strength of this style is that it buys time in unfolding or ambiguous situations. The primary weakness is that the tactics provides a temporary fix that sidesteps the underlying problem.

2.10.5. Compromising (moderate level for both parties)

This is a give and take approach involving moderate concern for self and others. With compromise, there is no distinct winner or loser; and the conflicting parties probably have equally solved the conflict problem. The primary strength of this tactics is that everyone gets some thing, but it is a temporary fix that can stifle creative problem solving.

2.11. Empirical Review

Scholars have performed empirical reviews on conflict management practices assessing their deployment in various organizational settings and their impact on group dynamics and resolution outcomes. Summarized key points from these reviews include:

- ✓ **Variability in Use:** Scholars like Rahim and Bonoma have highlighted that different conflict management styles - avoiding, compromising, accommodating, competing, and collaborating - are variably employed depending on individual preferences, situational factors, and organizational cultures.
- ✓ **Effectiveness of Approaches:** Thomas and Kilmann, creators of a widely used conflict mode instrument, assert that no single conflict management style is universally effective. They suggest suitability varies by context, with integrating (collaborating) often yielding the most sustainable solutions due to its emphasis on mutual benefits.
- ✓ **Influence on Outcomes:** According to studies such as by DeChurch and Marks, the effectiveness of conflict management approaches significantly influences team outcomes, including performance, satisfaction, and the likelihood of conflict recurrence.
- ✓ **Role of Training:** Several studies emphasize the importance of training for enhancing conflict resolution skills within teams. For example, researchers like Cloke and Goldsmith provide evidence that training in

collaborative strategies can lead to more effective conflict resolution than competitive or avoidant approaches.

- ✓ Collaboration and Performance: Empirical work, such as that by Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, and Trochim, often correlates collaborative approaches with higher group performance and innovation, although it is acknowledged that these can be time-consuming processes.
- ✓ Cultural Considerations: Jeanne Brett has researched the effect of culture on conflict management and determined that although there are universal aspects of conflict resolution, cultural nuances significantly affect practice and outcomes.

In summary, empirical reviews by these scholars suggest that conflict management practices require a nuanced application, tailored training, and context-sensitive adoption to be effective, with an underlying agreement that all practices have their place and utility in organizational settings.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study Area

The study would conduct the ASSESSMENT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (THE CASE OF WOLKITE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS) which is found Wolkite University in Gurage Zone.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a descriptive research method because the researcher is interested to get information on the current condition of conflict management and describe the existing condition,

3.3. Sources of data

For This study, the researcher used primary data types regarding the sources of data, primary data collected from all employees from academic staff who existed in the college. From primary data the researcher used questionnaire.

3.4. Method of data collection

The primary data was collected using Questionnaires and (both open –ended and close ended) were distributed for all employees of the study.

3.5. Sampling size and technique

The target population of the research study would be the employees of college of business and economics, at Wolkite University. Since the number of employees is manageable, the researcher has decided to conduct a census study to collect data. This approach involves including all 50 employees at the college. In a census, every member of the population is included in the research, enhancing the accuracy and eliminating sampling error. Given the total population of employees in the college is 50, and considering the comprehensive nature of a census, the entire employee body will be part of the study, ensuring a complete and inclusive data collection process.

3.6 Data analysis

Once data collected from different source, it should be analyzed according to the objective of the study. The data was analyzed and presented by using descriptive statistics, such as table, frequencies and percentage. The analyzed data, then employed to develop appropriate interpretation and draw interim conclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS, INTRPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

In this chapter, the data collected from the questionnaires are analyzed and presented concerning the specific objectives of the study. The foundation of this data analysis is based on the fact that a census approach was initially intended with questionnaires distributed to all 50 employees at the college. giving us an approximate response rate of 100%. This chapter will delve into the insights gathered from these 50 participants and attempt to interpret the findings within the context of the research objectives, acknowledging the slight deviation from a full census.

4.1. Demographic information of the respondent

Table 4.1 Sex of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	37	74%
Female	13	26%
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

The survey data indicates a significant gender imbalance among respondents, with a preponderance of male participants. With 37 male respondents out of a total of 50, they represent 74% of the surveyed group. Female respondents, on the other hand, amount to only 13 individuals, making up 26% of the survey participants.

This implies The workforce is predominantly male, which may reflect broader gender disparities in the institution

Table 4.2 Respondents' age category

Age group	Frequency	Percentage	
20-30 year	20	40%	
30-40 year	27	54%	
40-50year	3	6%	
≥50 year	0	0%	

Total	50	100%	
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Own survey 2025

The majority of respondents in this survey come from the 30-40 year age group, which accounts for 27 individuals or 54% of the total participants. This suggests that the college's workforce is predominantly in the mid-career age bracket, which may reflect a stable workforce with considerable work experience and potentially established in their current roles.

The second-largest group belongs to the younger demographic, the 20-30 year age category, with 20 respondents representing 40% of the total. This illustrates that there is a substantial presence of younger employees at the college, indicating a vibrant infusion of early-career professionals who might bring fresh perspectives and a dynamic energy to the institution.

It is noteworthy, however, that only 3 respondents (6%) are in the 40-50 year age group. This infers a significantly smaller representation of employees who might be approaching the latter stages of their careers. This can be a point of concern for the college if considering succession planning and the transfer of knowledge to younger workers.

Lastly, there are no respondents in the survey who are 50 years or older (0%). This absence could indicate that either there are very few or no employees within this age bracket at the college, or it might underscore a lack of engagement from the senior-most age group in the survey process.

This suggests The workforce is relatively young, with mid-career professionals (30–40) forming the majority. The lack of older employees may indicate a gap in senior experience

Table 4.3 Educational level of respondent

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
Degree	19	38%
Masters	26	52%
PHD and above	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

The table provides insight into the educational qualifications of the survey respondents, and the interpretation is as such:

Degree Holders: With 19 respondents, degree holders constitute 38% of the participant base. This indicates that a substantial portion of the college workforce has completed an undergraduate level of education. These employees potentially fill a variety of roles that may require specialized training but not necessarily a higher degree.

Masters Degree Holders: Representing the majority, 26 out of the 50 respondents have a master's degree, making up 52% of the participants. This is a notably high percentage and suggests that the workforce at this college is highly qualified, with a majority of staff possessing advanced education beyond the bachelor's degree level. This could point to high qualification requirements for roles at the college or a culture that promotes and possibly requires continued education.

Ph.D. and Above: There are 5 individuals with a Ph.D. or higher level of education, which is 10% of the respondents. While they represent the smallest group, having employees with this level of education is significant because it indicates the presence of a highly specialized and research-oriented subset of staff, which is common in academically rigorous environments.

This implies The staff is highly educated, with most having advanced degrees, which aligns with academic institution standards.

Table 4.4.Respondents work experience

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
≤1 year	10	20%
2 year	3	6%
3 year	0	0%
Above 3 year	37	74%
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

Here's an interpretation of the table detailing the work experience of the survey respondents:

Less than or Equal to 1 Year: A relatively small proportion of the survey participants, 20% specifically or 10 out of 50 respondents, have a work experience of up to one year. This suggests there is a fresh influx of employees in the organization—either due to growth, replacement of previous staff, or potentially high turnover rates within the first year of employment.

2 Years: Those with exactly 2 years of work experience account for 6% or 3 respondents, which points to a smaller cohort joining or remaining from the previous year. This decline from the under-one-year category might imply retention challenges post the first year or simply fewer hirings two years ago.

3 Years: Notably, there are zero respondents with exactly 3 years of work experience. This absence could imply that there might have been a hiring freeze three years ago, substantial attrition after the second year, or it could also be an anomaly in the survey data.

Above 3 Years: The majority of respondents, accounting for 74% or 37 individuals, have over 3 years of work experience. This suggests a substantial core of the workforce with longer tenures, possibly indicating job security, employee satisfaction, and effective staff retention practices for more seasoned staff

This implies a stable core of experienced staff exists, but newer employees (≤ 1 year) may need support.

Table 4.5. Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	31	62%
Married	19	38%
Divorced	0	0%
Widowed	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

The given table describes the marital status of respondents in a survey population of 50 people, with the following interpretation:

Single: The majority of the respondents, individuals or 62%, are single. This indicates that the largest portion of the surveyed group has never been married. It could point toward a youthful demographic or perhaps a trend of remaining single among the population. The high proportion of single individuals may have implications for organizational culture, work-life balance preferences, and benefits planning.

Married: Exactly one-third of the respondents, totaling 19 people or 38%, are married. This is a substantial segment of the population but significantly less than the single respondents. Married individuals might have different needs and priorities in terms of benefits, such as family health insurance, and may value work-life balance differently.

Divorced: There are no respondents in the survey who report being divorced, which accounts for 0% of the population. This suggests there may be cultural or demographic reasons why divorce is uncommon or unrepresented in this group.

Widowed: Similarly, there are also no respondents that are widowed, marking another 0% in the survey. Like with divorce, the lack of widowed individuals could be due to the demographic makeup of the respondents, possibly skewing towards a younger age group where widowhood is less common or it might be due to the smaller sample size of the survey.

General Observations: The absence of divorced or widowed individuals could be noteworthy, suggesting either demographic traits of the group or possibly social factors that influence marital stability. However, without knowing the age range and societal context, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions. The predominance of single

individuals may suggest that the organization's workforce consists largely of potentially younger, unmarried individuals or there might be other factors at play that influence marital status.

Overall, the data points towards a workforce that may have fewer family-related responsibilities and possibly more flexibility or individual-focused needs, such as opportunities for personal growth, career advancement, or even work mobility. The interpretation of this data can help inform HR policies, support services, and organizational culture development.

This implies The workforce adjust toward unmarried individuals, possibly reflecting a younger demographic.

Table 4.6. Conflict management tools

6	Conflict management tool used by college	<i>Most frequent</i>		<i>Frequent</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Sometimes</i>		<i>Often sometimes</i>	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
	Avoiding	21	42	16	32	7	14	4	8	2	4
	Compromising	19	38	16	32	8	16	5	10	2	4
	Dominating	7	14	20	40	14	28	6	12	3	6
	Competing	11	22	6	12	17	34	13	26	3	6
	Accommodating	7	14	9	18	22	44	8	16	4	8
	Integrating	3	6	11	22	21	42	8	16	7	14
	Obliging	7	14	20	40	11	22	7	14	5	10

Source, own survey, 2025

The table presents data on the application of various conflict management tools within a college. Here's an interpretation of each tool based on the response categories:

1. Avoiding:

This is the most frequently used conflict management tool, with 21 responses (42%) indicating it as the most common approach. It is also frequently acknowledged by 16 respondents (32%), while a smaller number consider it

an often 7 respondents (14%) or sometimes 4 respondents (8%) used strategy. A marginal group 2 respondents (4%) believes it is an often-sometimes choice.

2. Compromising:

It is considered the most frequent tool by 19 respondents (38%) and frequent by 16 (32%), suggesting a tendency towards finding middle ground solutions. A further 8 respondents (16%) use this tool often, while fewer respondents choose it sometimes, 5 respondents (10%) or as an often-sometimes tactic 2 respondents (4%).

3 Dominating:

Dominating is seen as a frequent approach by 20 respondents (40%), but it is the most frequent for only 7 people (14%). It is often used by a significant number 14 respondents (28%) and sometimes by 6 respondents (12%). Again, a smaller group 3 respondents (6%) see it as an often-sometimes method.

4. Competing:

13 respondents (26%) use competing techniques sometimes, while 17 respondents (34%) do so often. Only 11 respondents (22%) find it the most frequent approach, a frequent approach 6 respondents (12), while 3 respondents (6%) believes it is an often-sometimes choice.

5. Accommodating:

A significant minority see accommodating as a sometimes 8 respondents (16%) or often-sometimes 4 respondents (8%) approach. However, only 7 respondents (14%) consider it a most frequent tool, suggesting it's not the primary method but still utilized.

6. Integrating:

Integrating sees its strongest support in the often category 21 respondents (42%), signifying a balanced approach to conflict management that is utilized regularly. Fewer respondents 3(6%) view it as most frequent, indicating it's a common but not dominant strategy.

7. Obliging:

Obliging is another tool that is often 11 respondents (22%) and sometimes 7 respondents (14%) used, indicating a regular but less dominant strategy. Identical to integrating, only 7 respondents (14%) consider it the most frequent approach.

This implies the college favors non-confrontational strategies (avoiding, compromising) but also uses collaborative approaches (integrating).

In summary, the avoidance tactic stands out as the most frequently employed strategy for managing conflicts, with compromising and dominating also being common but to a lesser extent. Integrating and obliging are regularly used, while accommodating seems to be a less favored method. Competing is not the predominant approach but is still part

of the conflict management toolkit. The data suggest a diversity of approaches within the college's conflict management culture.

Table 4.7. The relationship between conflict management strategies and employee performance in college

No	Question	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		no	%	No	%	N	%	N	%	No	%
7	The relationship between conflict management strategies and employee performance in college										
	The workers are consulting each other in order to resolve conflict	15	30	20	40	8	16	3	6	4	8
	The management are enforcing strict disciplinary rules on worker	7	14	22	44	14	28	7	14	0	0
	There is effective necessary change in process and procedure management	9	18	11	22	14	28	13	26	3	6

Source, own survey, 2025

For the statement "The workers are consulting each other in order to resolve conflict," the most common response is "Agree" with 20 out of 50 respondents, accounting for 40% of the total. Following this, 15 respondents (30%) "Strongly agree," .The following 8(16%) respondent “Neutral”. “Disagree” with 3 out of 50 respondents, accounting for (6%), “Strongly disagree” with 4(8%) out of 50 respondents ."Strongly agree," which together with those who "Agree" shows a consensus (70% collectively)that employee consultation is a key method for resolving conflicts at the workplace.

Regarding "The management are enforcing strict disciplinary rules on workers," the majority of respondents (22 or 44%) "Agree" that there is strong enforcement of discipline.The following7(14%) respondents"Strongly agree," and“Disagree” 7(14%) respondents. The last 14(28 %) respondents “Neutral”.There are no respondents (0%) who "Strongly disagree," which suggests that there might be a general acknowledgment of the management's firm stance on discipline among the workers.

For the statement "There is effective necessary change in process and procedure management," the most frequent “neutral” response (14 respondents or 28%) suggests varied opinions on the effectiveness of changes. However, adding those who "Agree"11(22%) respondents or/and "Strongly agree" 9(18%)reflects that a sizable portion (20 or 40%) of the workforce views changes in process and procedure as effective, pointing towards a positive reception

towards organizational changes. The following 13(26%) respondents “ Disagree” . The last 3(6%) responden "Strongly disagree,"

Each response provides insight into the organizational climate and employee perceptions, which can guide management decisions and areas for improvement like increasing the transparency of process changes or reinforcing the mechanisms for internal consultations.

This implies Consultative approaches are effective, but disciplinary measures may lack transparency or consistency.

Table 4.8.source of conflict management

8	Source of conflict in the college	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Dis agree		Strongly dis agree	
		no	%	No	%	N o	%	No	%	No	%
	There is poor human relation between management and employee	15	30	17	34	7	14	8	16	3	6
	decision making process is centralized and worker non-representation in management	7	14	12	24	20	40	10	20	1	2
	The managements are non-consultation with employee before key decision affecting theme	16	32	14	28	9	18	10	20	1	2
	shortage of resource causes to a conflict in college	15	30	20	40	7	14	6	10	2	4

Source, own survey, 2025

From the responses of 50 employees, it's apparent that poor human relations between management and employees are considered a significant source of conflict, with 15 (30%) employees strongly agreeing and 17 (34%) agreeing with this statement. This suggests there may be room for improvement in the quality of interaction between management and staff.

Regarding decision-making, 7(14%) employees strongly agree decision-making processes being centralized, a total of 12 (24%) employees feel or agree that decision-making processes being centralized and without worker representation contribute to conflicts, though a sizable portion 20 (40%) remain neutral, indicating either a lack of

opinion or awareness of this issue, 10 (20%) employees disagree decision-making processes being centralized, and 1 (2%) employee strongly disagree decision-making processes being centralized

When it comes to managerial consultations with employees before making decisions that affect them, there's a notable split among perceptions, with 16 (32%) strongly agreeing that there's a lack of consultation. This suggests that nearly a quarter of the staff is concerned about not being involved in decision-making processes that impact their work.

Finally, the resources shortage is seen as a conflict source by 15 (30%) employees who strongly agree and 20 (40%) who agree. This highlights resource scarcity as a considerable concern, suggesting that addressing resource availability could be an effective conflict management strategy.

This suggests Resource shortages and poor management-employee relations are primary conflict drivers.

Table 4.9 sources of conflict in the college

What are the source of conflict	Frequency	Percentage
Goal incompatibility	5	10%
Task interdependence	11	22%
Communication problem	5	10 %
Interpersonal interaction	9	18%
Scarce resource	16	32%
Difference in value	4	8 %
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

The adjusted data for 50 employees still display scarce resources as the predominant source of conflict, reported by 16 (32%) employees. This appears to be the most pressing issue as perceived by the staff, indicating that effectively managing and distributing resources could alleviate a significant portion of conflict within the college.

Task interdependence is the second most frequently cited source of conflict with 11 (22%) responses, which suggests that the way tasks are structured and how employees depend on each other to complete these tasks can lead to disagreements and potential conflict.

Interpersonal interaction, with 9 (18%) responses, and goal incompatibility and communication problems, both with 5 (10%) responses each, indicate less prevalent but still notable sources of conflict. Differences in value, although considered the least common source of conflict with 4 (8%) responses, still merits attention as it can have profound effects on how people interact and collaborate.

This implies Competition for limited resources and workflow dependencies fuel conflicts.

Table 4.10 by what mechanism conflict in the college

9. By what mechanism conflict is resolved in the college?	Frequency	Percentage
Dominating	4	8%
Avoiding	6	12%
Collaboration	21	42%
Compromising	13	26%
Accommodation	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

Interpreting the data for 50 employees, collaboration stands out as the primary means of resolving conflicts within the college, with 21 (40%) choosing this method. This suggests a culture that favors working together to find mutually beneficial solutions to problems.

Compromising is the second most common approach, with 13 (26%) adopting this method. It implies a willingness among employees to make concessions in order to reach an agreement that partially satisfies all parties involved.

Avoiding and accommodating each were chosen by 6 (12%) of the employees, indicating that there are those who prefer to either sidestep the issue entirely or give in to the others' needs.

Dominating, the approach that involves imposing one's will on others, is the least favored, with only 4 (8%) indicating its use. This might be a positive sign, indicating a less aggressive approach to conflict resolution

This implies Collaborative methods are valued, aligning with positive conflict outcomes in the college

Table 4.11 Contribution of conflict to the better performance of the college

11. Do you think that conflict has its own positive contribution to the better performance of the college?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	37	74%
No	13	26%
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

Based on the above data, of the 50 employees surveyed, 37 (74%) feel that conflict has a positive impact on the performance of the college. This indicates that a majority of the workforce sees the potential for constructive outcomes from conflicts, provided these are managed effectively. They may view conflict as an opportunity for problem-solving, innovation, and driving organizational change.

On the other hand, 13 (26%) of the employees do not see conflict as having a positive contribution to the performance of the college. This may stem from experiences where conflicts have been poorly managed or resulted in negative consequences, such as decreased morale, productivity, or collaboration.

The results suggest that while there is a recognition among employees that conflict can be beneficial, it is likely contingent on how the conflict is approached and resolved. For the college to harness the positive aspects of conflict, it would need to focus on constructive conflict management strategies that promote open communication, mutual respect, and effective problem-solving.

The implies Most staff view conflict as a catalyst for innovation and problem-solving.

Table 4.12. Form of conflict exist in the college

12. Which form of conflict is exist in the college?	Frequency	Percentage
Interpersonal conflict	25	50%
Intra-group conflict	10	20%
Inter-group conflict	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Sourownsurvey.2025

Interpersonal Conflict is identified as the most prevalent type of conflict with 25 out of 50 (50%) employees acknowledging its presence. Interpersonal conflict involves disputes between individuals and can stem from personal differences, miscommunication, or competition. This suggests that the college should perhaps invest in interpersonal communication training and conflict management skills to mitigate these conflicts.

Intra-group Conflict is noted by 10 out of 50 (20%) employees, indicating challenges within teams or groups. Although less common, such conflicts can still disrupt teamwork and unity, implying a need for better team-building activities or clarifying team roles and expectations.

Inter group Conflict, affecting 15 out of 50 (25.3%) employees, suggests that there may be friction between different departments or groups in the college. This type of conflict can impact cooperation across the college, and strategies to bridge gaps between groups may be beneficial, such as inter-departmental projects or communication forums.

Overall, while interpersonal conflict is the most noted form within the college, the presence of intra-group and inter-group conflicts shouldn't be overlooked. An effective conflict management system to address all types of conflict could lead to improved collaboration and performance in the organization.

This implies Conflicts often arise from individual interactions rather than systemic issues

Table4.13. Types of conflict exist in the college

13. Which type of conflict exists in the college?	Frequency	Percentage
Functional	29	58%
Dysfunctional	13	26%
Both	8	16%
Total	50	100%

Source; own survey, 2025

Interpreting the above table:

Functional Conflict: With 29 employees (58%) indicating functional conflict, this suggests that conflicts within the college are predominantly seen as constructive. These conflicts often arise from differences in ideas and opinions and can lead to healthy debates, resulting in innovative solutions and improvements.

Dysfunctional Conflict: However, 13 employees (26%) believe that dysfunctional conflict exists, which is alarming since such conflict can erode trust, reduce morale, and hamper productivity. It implies that there may be personal animosities or other negative interactions that could be damaging to the college's environment.

Both Functional and Dysfunctional: 8 employees (16%) see both types of conflict occurring, which indicates an awareness that while conflict can drive performance if managed well, it can also have detrimental effects if not addressed properly.

This implies Most conflicts are healthy, but a quarter are harmful in college

4.2. Data analysis and presentation opened-ended questionnaires

The response obtained from employees through opened-ended questionnaires. From questionnaire the respondent about positive contribution of Conflict is a way of confronting reality and creating new solution to the problem. It has the following positive advantages, if it is managed well, it generates creative and innovative ideas, it helps to take correction action, helps to find better and sustainable answer for problem, and it can inspire members to brainstorming, while examining problems from various perspectives. As organization members work together to solve conflict, they are more willing to share their opinions with other members of the group. Conflicting ideas present different views which might contribute to quality of decision and performance. Conflict enables to reach in to common consensus. Communication problems, lack of resources, and interpersonal interaction are some of the sources of conflict in the college. The conflict management of the college is somewhat good but it needs some improvement.

Regarding to how describe the conflict management of the college, the respondent express openly, it can be managed by alternative dispute resolution and it is heavy it can solve by litigation in court procedure.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. MAJOR FINDING, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Summary of findings

As indicated in the previous chapter, the major objective of this research was to assess the conflict management practice the case of Wolkite University at college of business and economics. The specific objectives of the study were: to identify the conflict management tools in the college, to describe the significance relationship exist between conflict management strategies and employee performance in the college, and to investigate the sources of conflict and the mechanisms used to solve conflict. The necessary data was collected by using questionnaire (both open ended and close ended). The data was analyzed by using table, frequency and percentage.

Based on the result of the study, summary of findings were presented as follows:-

- ❖ Regarding conflict management tool used by the college are avoiding, compromising, dominating, competing, accommodating, integrating and obliging. From those conflict management tool of the college avoiding the majority (42%) of respondents feel that most frequently, compromising the majority (32%) of respondent's responses that frequently and dominating the majority (38%) of respondent response that most frequently used by the college and competing the majority (26%) of respondents indicates that sometimes. And accommodating the majority (44%) of respondents feel that often and integrating the large number of respondents (42%) often and obliging the majority (40%) of respondent's shows that frequently the college used.
- ❖ The majority (40%) of the respondents response indicates that the workers are consulting each other in order to solve conflict are agree regarding to the relationship between conflict management strategies and employee performance in the college and the majority(44%) of respondents response shows that the management are enforcing strict disciplinary rules on worker agree and the majority (22%) of respondents response shows that there is effective necessary change in process and procedure management neutral regarding to the relationship between conflict management strategies and employee performance in the college agree.
- ❖ Regarding to sources of conflict in the college due to poor human relation between management and employee the majority (34%) of respondents response indicates that agree, decision making process is centralized and worker non representation in management the majority (40%) of respondents indicates that neutral, the managements are non-consultation with employee before key decision affecting them the majority (20%) of respondents feel that dis agree and sources of conflict in the college are due to shortage of resources causes to conflict in the college the majority (40%) of respondents response shows that agree.
- ❖ The majority (32%) of respondents response indicates that scarce resources are the major source of conflict in the college

- ❖ The majority (42%) of respondents felt that the mechanisms of resolving conflict in the college is appropriate through collaboration.
- ❖ The majority (74%) of respondent's response shows that the conflict has its own positive contribution to the better performance of the college.
- ❖ The majority (50%) of respondent's response indicates that form of conflict exist in the college are interpersonal conflict.
- ❖ The majority (58%) of respondent's fell that types of conflict exist in the college are functional type of conflict.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the result, the researcher tried to draw the following conclusions:

- Regarding conflict management tool used by the college are avoiding and compromising. It implies that the college had been used those conflict management tools to resolve the existing conflict in the college than other conflict management tools.
- There is a relationship between conflict management strategies and employees' performance in the college.
- Regarding to sources of conflict in the college, Poor human relations between management and employees, non-consultation with employees before key decisions affecting them are taken, Poor decentralization of decision making and workers non-representation in management, shortage of resources are sources of conflict in the college and scarce resources are sources of conflict it implies that there is shortage of materials in the college.
- From the finding mechanisms to resolve conflict in the college are collaboration this implies that they views conflict as a problem to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their goals and the goals of the other person. They see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing tensions between two persons and they try to begin a discussion that identify the conflict as a problem and strive to resolve tensions and maintain the relationship by seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person.
- From the finding conflict has its own positive contribution if it is managed properly.it implies that it can inspire members to brainstorm, while examining problems from various perspectives improve future communication by bringing group members together and help them learn more about each other.
- From the finding interpersonal conflict exist in the college it implies that there is conflict between employees themselves in the college.

5.3 Recommendations

Managing conflict involves identifying the problems and finding a solution that is acceptable to both parties involved. Conflict is inevitable in any organization. Because it can be a positive and a negative force management should strive to manage conflict properly. Thus, based on the finding of the research the following recommendations are forwarded:

- ❖ The majority of the employees face conflict in the college. So, it is better manage such conflict properly. To manage conflict effectively the college advised :
 - 1 Identify the sources of conflict whether it is structural, personal or communicational factors.
 - 2 Immediately solve the conflict as soon as it happens.
 - 3 Build continuously cooperation or coordination between employees on how to manage compliance and disagreements.
 4. Establish good communication between employees which helps to build trust and confidence among employees.
- ❖ It is advisable communicate properly all issues to the employee and it should strive to improve its communication style.
- ❖ Before the occurrence of destructive conflict, giving periodical training practice to the employees on the area of conflict is essential. This helps for sharing of experience with each other about their work life, knowledge and skills.
- ❖ The college should promote gender diversity initiatives, such as targeted recruitment and mentorship programs for female staff, to ensure equitable representation.
- ❖ Implement knowledge-transfer programs to bridge experience gaps and ensure continuity. Encourage retention of older employees to diversify perspectives.
- ❖ Leverage this expertise by encouraging PhD holders to lead research initiatives and mentor junior staff. Offer further professional development opportunities for bachelor's degree holders.
- ❖ Provide onboarding programs for new hires to integrate them smoothly and pair them with experienced mentors
- ❖ Reduce overreliance on avoiding/dominating, which may suppress issues. Train staff in collaborative problem-solving to address root causes.
- ❖ Strengthen transparent communication about disciplinary policies and involve employees in conflict-resolution processes
- ❖ Improve resource allocation, decentralize decision-making, and foster open dialogue between staff and management.
- ❖ Prioritize equitable resource distribution and clarify task roles to reduce friction.
- ❖ Institutionalize collaboration through training and formal mediation channels.
- ❖ Offer interpersonal skills training and team-building activities to improve relationships.
- ❖ Address dysfunctional conflicts early through mediation and clarify organizational goals to align perspectives

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APPENDEX
WOLKITE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

Dear respondent, The researcher is a graduate student in department of management. The researcher currently conducting a research on Assessment of conflict management practice (the case of college of Business and Economics, at Wolkite University). You are one of respondents elect to participate in these study. The researcher would kindly requested to complete the questions sincerely and honestly. All the information you provide kept secretly and will not be used for any other purpose except for the intended academic research purpose.

Note: no need of writing name

Put an 'x' mark in the box for closed ended questions and please give brief description for open ended questions.

Part one: general information

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age: 20-30year 30-40year
 40-50year ≥50 year
- 3 .Level of education:
- Degree
- Master PHD and above
- 4 .Experience/year of service:
- ≤1 year 2 year
- 3 year greater than3 year
- 5 .marital statuses:
- Single Married
- Divorced Widowed

Part two: Questions related to the study

Rating scale survey, kindly follow the following categories for question number 1-5

- Most frequent-----5
- Frequent-----4
- Often-----3
- Sometimes -----.2
- Often sometimes-----1

No	Questions	<i>Most</i>	<i>Frequent</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often sometimes</i>
6	Conflict management tools used by the college					
	Avoiding					
	Compromising					
	Dominating					
	Competing					
	Accommodating					
	Integrating					
	Obliging					
No	Question	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
7	The relationship between conflict management strategies and employee performance in college					
	The workers are consulting each other in order to resolve conflict					
	The management are enforcing strict disciplinary rules on worker					
	There is effective necessary change in process and procedure management					
8	Source of conflict in the college					
	There is poor human relation between management and employee					
	decision making process is centralized and worker non-representation in management					
	The managements are non-consultation with employee before key decision affecting theme					

shortage of resource causes to a conflict in college						
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9 .what are the sources of conflict in the college?

Goal incompatibility Interpersonal interaction

Task interdependence scarce resource

Communication problem Difference in values

10. By what mechanism conflict is resolved in the college?

Dominating collaboration compromising

Avoiding Accommodating

11. Do you think that conflict has its own positive contribution?

Yes no

12 .If your answer for question number 11 is yes, list the contribution. _____

13. Which type of conflict exist in the college?

Functional dysfunctional both

14 .which form of conflict exist in the college?

Intra-group conflict

Interpersonal conflict inter-group conflict

Please specify if any others _____

15 .How do you describe the conflict management of the college? _____