

**INFLUENCE OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON SERVICE  
DELIVERY AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: A CASE OF UNIVERSITY OF  
ELDORET, KENYA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Evans Kiprotich and my children Lesley, Stacey & Brianna, parents, Mr. & Mrs. Mulwa for their encouragement, financial, moral and spiritual support during the writing of this research thesis.

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## ABSTRACT

Service delivery in public universities is critical, however the frequent go-slows, strikes, and riots disrupt academic calendars and undermine teaching and learning. Management of conflict in organizations is one of the major tasks facing managers today in public universities. The study addresses the persistent problem of conflicts in public universities in Kenya, particularly at the University of Eldoret. The research problem, therefore, is to determine how different conflict management strategies (avoidance, collaboration, compromise) affect service delivery in public universities. The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of conflict management strategies on service delivery at University of Eldoret. The objectives of the study were to establish the effect of avoidance strategy of conflict management on service delivery, explore the effect of collaborative conflict management strategy on service delivery, investigate the effect of compromise conflict management strategy on service delivery and assess the measures for enhancing conflict management and their likely influence on service delivery. The study is guided by contingency theory and Theory of Human Service Delivery, which holds that there is no one best way to manage an organization; rather, strategies should be contingent on situational factors. Methodologically, the use of an explanatory mixed-method approach reflects a pragmatist research philosophy, where both qualitative and quantitative data are combined to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The target population was 718 employees comprising of top management, a middle cadre and junior staff/support staff from which a sample size of 256 respondents was selected using Yamane's formula. The sample size was selected using purposive, stratified and random sampling procedures. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, with the results presented in figures and tables. The qualitative data collected was thematically analyzed. Findings revealed that avoidance, collaboration and compromise conflict management strategies account for 64.4% ( $R^2 = .644$ ). The collaboration ( $\beta=0.568$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and compromise strategy ( $\beta=0.684$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) conflict management strategy had the significant positive effect on service delivery. Moreover, avoiding strategy ( $\beta= -0.160$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) had the significant negative effect on service delivery. The study concludes that collaboration and compromise as conflict management strategies are essential for improving service delivery at the University of Eldoret. In contrast, the avoiding strategy was found to have a significant negative impact on service delivery. Consequently, the study emphasizes the need to focus on collaboration and compromise while recognizing the adverse effects of avoidance on organizational performance. It is recommended that the management of the University of Eldoret consistently adopt these conflict resolution approaches, as they are effective in managing disputes and enhancing employee productivity. Collaboration and compromise strategies positively and significantly improve service delivery while avoidance strategy negatively affects service delivery. A comparative study across different universities in Kenya to assess whether similar patterns hold in other contexts.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Avoidance style:** A pattern of behavior characterized by the neglect of organizational conflict often results in a lose-lose outcome. This style reflects a low level of concern for both oneself and others, indicating a tendency to avoid or withdraw from addressing conflict issues
- Compromising style:** The negotiation process involves both parties conceding something they desire to obtain something they value more. Compromise often takes place in win-lose scenarios, where a fixed amount of resources or benefits must be divided, resulting in one party gaining at the expense of the other.
- Collaboration:** Strategy that ensures everyone wins as both parties agree to meet each other's needs willingly
- Conflict Management Strategies:** Refer to methods that may be utilized to control, or resolve conflicts, such as avoidance, collaboration and compromise.
- Conflict Management:** This is the ability to identify and respond fairly and appropriately to prevent, control, or resolve conflicts.
- Conflict:** Refers to a disagreement between the principal and teachers or among teachers due to differing interests, thoughts, views and principles.
- Service delivery:** Is getting services as effectively and quickly as possible to the intended recipient.

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CMS</b>	:	Conflict management system
<b>CUE</b>	:	Commission for University Education
<b>SPSS</b>	:	Statistical package for social science
<b>NACOSTI</b>	:	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
<b>PSC</b>	:	Public Service Commission
<b>SERVQUAL</b>	:	Service Quality

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Overview**

The study sought to determine the influence of conflict management strategies on service delivery at the University of Eldoret. This chapter introduces the study by highlighting the background of the study from which the global, regional and local perspectives of the conflict management strategies and service delivery was presented. The issue that has driven this investigation is presented, along with the aims of the study and the proposed research hypotheses. Moreover, the chapter covers the justification, significance, as well as the study's scope and limitations. The chapter is important to this study as it lays down the basis and rationale for conducting the rest of the study.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

The study assumes that the way conflicts are managed at the University of Eldoret significantly shapes the quality, efficiency, and reliability of service delivery. When conflicts are resolved quickly, fairly, and collaboratively, staff morale improves, disruptions reduce, and services become more efficient. On the other hand, poor conflict management leads to strikes, go-slows, and dissatisfaction, which disrupt services. Contextual factors like leadership style and resources may influence how strong this relationship is.

Performance is crucial for any organization, as it determines its ability to maintain operations both currently and, in the future, (Nazir & Islam, 2017). Employees play a vital

role in transforming organizational plans into finished products that generate income for the firm. Yunita and Saputra (2019) define employee performance as the collective efforts and actions involved in fulfilling operational tasks to convert organizational strategies into market-responsive products. Key indicators of employee performance include low turnover rates, high retention rates, minimal absenteeism, motivated staff, and efficient use of resources.

According to Khoreva and Wechtler (2018), high-performing employees deliver quality work, provide efficient and timely services, and effectively recycle resources and materials. These individuals tend to be creative and innovative, demonstrating passion for their work while actively seeking opportunities to enhance their skills and contribute to the organization's growth. Yunita and Saputra (2019) view employee performance as a collaborative process that fosters a shared understanding among staff regarding the goals of the organization. It involves aligning the entity's objectives with agreed-upon performance measures by employees (Kaur & Kaur, 2017).

In government agencies and departments, employee behavior significantly influences performance, as these organizations are charged with delivering services to the public. Engaged and satisfied employees are more likely to adhere to established values and structures, enabling them to work diligently to meet or exceed organizational targets. Ultimately, performance is reflected in efficient service delivery, achieving established goals, the responsible and accountable utilization of resources, and fostering a positive

workplace environment characterized by collaboration, low levels of resource waste, and high-quality output.

In today's corporate environment, the workforce is increasingly diverse, leading to a rise in workplace conflicts due to varying perspectives and personalities (Terason, 2018). Management is responsible for meeting set targets, and high employee performance is crucial for achieving these goals; however, conflicts can negatively impact this performance. Therefore, it is essential for management to implement effective strategies for managing workplace conflicts to prevent declines in productivity (Kathimba & Anyieni, 2018).

Organizations must recognize and address potential conflicts, as unmanaged disputes can hinder the achievement of their objectives. Research by Ester, Augustine, and Osunsan (2020) suggests that conflict resolution strategies positively influence employee performance, recommending that these strategies be integrated into performance management practices. Commonly used conflict resolution methods include suppression, forcing, smoothing, compromise, avoidance, structural changes, collaboration, accommodating, third-party intervention, cooperation, democratic processes, job rotation, and confrontation.

In the context of higher education, universities serve as vital institutions for promoting educational goals worldwide. They play a critical role in supplementing service delivery, especially when public universities cannot accommodate the increasing number of students

seeking higher education. In Kenya, private higher education institutions have emerged to help bridge the gap between student needs and the capacities of public universities. However, the quality of service provided by these universities remains a significant issue affecting student satisfaction and warrants thorough investigation in this study. Exploring the relationship between service quality and satisfaction in the educational sector is crucial for understanding how to enhance the overall learning experience for students and improve institutional effectiveness.

### **1.2.1 Service Delivery**

Service delivery is a complex process that involves efficiently and effectively providing services and products to the target customers, clients, or citizens. This intricate operation comprises a series of interconnected stages, each essential for meeting the recipients' needs and expectations with the highest level of satisfaction (Nwokike *et al.*, 2021). A critical aspect of service delivery is thorough planning and strategizing. By thoroughly understanding customer demands and preferences, service providers can tailor their offerings to meet those needs precisely, thereby enhancing the overall customer experience. This tailoring necessitates coordinated efforts among various teams and departments to ensure that services and products are delivered seamlessly. Service delivery is closely linked to organizational performance, encompassing the fulfillment of goals and objectives related to customer, employee, and investor satisfaction.

In the global context, the importance of quality service delivery in higher education has grown significantly for many nations. For example, a 2012 study by Daniel Beaumont from

the Manchester University School of Business found that three of the top fifteen universities worldwide are located in the UK, while the remaining twelve are situated in the US and Japan. This research highlights that the UK is home to some of the best universities globally, largely due to the quality of services they provide to students, which has gained international recognition (Daniel, 2012). In Australia, the USA, and Canada, public institutions' service delivery is shaped by the political structures in place, as the nature of policies and service arrangements reflects the governance and civic frameworks of each jurisdiction (Wanna, Butcher & Freyens, 2010). Australia, for instance, has increased its funding for education and other critical areas such as health care, along with enhancing incentive payments to institutions that demonstrate improvements in service delivery.

In Africa, service delivery in higher education is a significant concern for students across many countries. As competition escalates among higher education institutions to attract qualified students and establish high academic profiles, there is a growing emphasis on addressing service quality issues (Pang, 2016). This raises important questions about whether quality improvement processes have effectively enhanced core educational outputs, particularly in the African context (Paul, 2014). The higher education sector in Africa is experiencing notable growth, with enrollment in tertiary education increasing from fewer than 200,000 students in 1970 to around 10 million today. Prominent universities in countries such as Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda are recognized as leaders on the continent according to the 2016 Times Higher Education rankings.

Despite these advancements, numerous challenges persist within the education sector across various nations, particularly concerning poor service delivery. Reports from students indicate that inadequate services often stem from issues such as understaffed faculty and insufficient infrastructure. Furthermore, research suggests that students in Africa tend to pay more for educational services compared to their peers in developed countries, yet they receive inferior service quality (Paul, 2014). This disparity underscores the urgent need for reforms and improvements in the higher education sector to enhance service delivery and meet the rising expectations of student.

Many African countries have faced significant challenges in recognizing the value of education, a sentiment echoed by influential leaders such as Nelson Mandela, who famously remarked, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” (Paul, 2014). Unfortunately, initiatives aimed at developing educational systems that embody such philosophies have been hindered by adverse economic conditions, poor governance, political instability, corruption, and ineffective leadership. Public universities in particular are the most affected in the region, leading many students to prefer private universities in pursuit of their educational goals (Paul, 2014).

Developing countries, including Kenya, struggle to maintain the necessary quality standards for education. The Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya has repeatedly closed campuses and halted the accreditation of several universities due to the offering of unapproved programs. This has created significant pressure on higher education

in Kenya to enhance its value and quality in educational delivery (Caleb, Maureen & Ibrahim, 2011). The CUE has conducted numerous inspections to assess the status of higher learning institutions, ensuring that students have access to optimal study environments. The current focus is on improving educational value, emphasizing continuous enhancement, addressing stakeholder interests, and increasing student satisfaction. In a competitive academic environment where students have multiple options, it is essential for educational institutions to explore factors that will attract and retain students effectively. Institutions aiming to maintain a competitive edge in the future will need to seek innovative strategies for fostering strong relationships with their students (Zeithaml, 2014).

Kenya's higher education system has significantly expanded, now comprising 70 universities (CUE, 2015). The growing demand for higher education prompted the government to establish the CUE in 1985 via an Act of Parliament (The University Act Cap 210B) to regulate the growth and quality of higher education. Although the previous Commission for Higher Education (CHE) primarily focused on chartering and issuing interim authority letters, it lacked effective oversight of the quality of services provided by universities. Consequently, the CUE was enacted in 2013 to replace the CHE and has since aimed to implement changes that enhance service quality for students in the country.

### **1.2.2 Conflict Management Strategies**

Herrity (2022) describes conflicts as struggles that arise from active disagreements over opinions or interests, emphasizing the importance of effectively navigating and resolving these issues. While conflict is not uncommon in the workplace and is not inherently

negative, it can be a necessary component for maintaining healthy relationships. Disagreements among coworkers often occur, and addressing these conflicts promptly is crucial to prevent escalation. Since human interactions frequently lead to conflicts, it is essential to employ professional responses that incorporate effective conflict-resolution strategies.

Conflict management involves the process of mitigating the destructive aspects of conflicts while enhancing their constructive features (Onyejiaku, Ghasi, and Okwor, 2018). It does not simply mark the end of a dispute but represents a continuous effort to minimize negative impacts while fostering positive outcomes. This reflects the idea that conflict arises from divergent opinions and clashes of interests between individuals or groups (Okoli *et al.*, 2017). According to Wanyonyi, Kimani, and Amuhaya (2015), conflict is a complex and unavoidable aspect of both human and organizational interactions. The characterization of conflict as either good or bad depends largely on how it is addressed.

When conflict arises within an organization, it is essential to resolve it appropriately to prevent escalation, which could harm both the organization and the involved parties (Onyejiaku, Ghasi, and Okwor, 2018). Poorly managed conflict can lead to detrimental effects such as increased employee turnover. The significance of conflict management is undeniable, as it plays a crucial role in achieving favorable outcomes (Okoli, Okeke & Nuel-Okoli, 2017). Therefore, exploring conflict management strategies is vital for fostering sustainable commitment within organizations. These strategies are the methods employed to navigate conflicts and enhance productivity, including avoidance,

compromise, and collaboration. Avoidance represents a lose/lose approach where both parties withdraw from the issue, while compromise seeks a middle ground that satisfies all parties involved. Collaboration, on the other hand, ensures that everyone wins as both parties agree to meet each other's needs willingly (Currie *et al.*, 2017). Through utilizing these techniques, organizations can improve their conflict resolution processes and create a more harmonious work environment.

Historically, workplace conflict has been perceived as unwelcome and something to avoid in Western countries, particularly in the United Kingdom; however, recent data reveals a significant shift in this mindset, as organizations are now more willing to address conflicts early and informally (CIPD, 2015). In the United States, the 1990s marked a transition from avoidance to confrontation regarding conflict resolution, largely influenced by societal changes and the introduction of open system theory (MacDonald, 2016). This evolution highlights a growing recognition of the importance of addressing conflicts proactively to foster healthier workplace dynamics.

In various international contexts, approaches to conflict management differ distinctly. In China, the emphasis primarily lies in managing conflicts with external stakeholders, often resolved through the judicial system. Research identifies six critical components that contribute to conflict and its resolution: project characteristics, aspects of conflict, conflict proceedings, client reactions, actions by key representatives, and the consequences of conflict (Min *et al.*, 2018). Conversely, in India, trust emerges as a fundamental element, with mediation identified as a preferred method for promoting organizational fairness and

improving employee relations within the conflict management process (Sahoo and Sahoo, 2019).

Furthermore, studies in Bangladesh highlight the adverse effects that workplace conflicts can have on harmonious interactions and overall employee performance in private commercial banks (Hossain, 2017). In Kosovo, the use of an integrative conflict management strategy by management is prevalent, suggesting that the chosen strategy can significantly influence employee perceptions of their supervisors (Mustafa, Berani, and Berisha, 2019). In the Middle East, particularly within the construction industry, contract issues frequently lead to disputes, often resulting in project delays and increased costs, typically resolved through the court system (Awwad *et al.*, 2016). Lastly, research in Thailand demonstrates that effectively managing conflicts in public sector sports firms positively impacts both job satisfaction and overall organizational performance (Terason, 2018). These varied approaches underscore the complexity of workplace conflict and the necessity for tailored conflict management strategies that consider cultural and contextual factors.

In sub-Saharan Africa, conflict resolution has become a critical focus for human resource managers over the past two decades. Igbinoba (2016) notes that in Nigeria, management now dedicates twice as much time to resolving employee disagreements compared to a decade ago. A study by Alajekwu and Alajekwu (2017) explored how effectively managed disputes can enhance employee performance in Nigerian universities, finding that conflicts among school administrators, teaching staff, students, and non-teaching staff significantly

harm employee performance. Furthermore, the use of avoidance as a conflict resolution technique was shown to correlate negatively with performance.

Focusing on Kenya, it is evident that outdated organizational practices persist, including rigid hierarchical structures, restricted labor divisions, vague job descriptions, limited employee participation in organizational processes, and authoritarian project management styles. These methods have been identified as contributors to conflict within the workplace (Olang, 2017). Increasing demonstrations for better working conditions have negatively impacted public organizations' ability to deliver services and subsequently affected project outcomes (Manyenga, 2016). This is particularly evident in various industrial actions by teachers and doctors, who have raised complaints about their working conditions, resulting in delays and inadequate service delivery in public hospitals and schools.

In local settings, research by Kagwiria (2019) examined various conflict management strategies adopted by organizations, revealing that approaches such as third-party intervention, open communication, compromise, and negotiation significantly improve performance. Additionally, Francis (2018) focused on conflict management styles in public hospitals in Nyeri County, concluding that strategies like compromising, dominating, and avoidance can lead to better employee performance. Overall, these studies underscore the importance of adopting effective conflict management approaches that not only mitigate disputes but also foster a more collaborative and productive work environment.

A study conducted by Agusioma (2018) aimed to evaluate the impact of staff conflict resolution on employee performance at the Kenyan Public Service Commission (PSC), concluding that effective dispute resolution positively enhances employee performance. Similarly, Mwaniki and Muathe (2021) explored the effects of organizational conflict management strategies on employee performance in selected public universities in Kenya, finding a strong positive relationship between negotiation, mediation, teamwork, and employee outcomes. Their research suggests that public university administrators in Kenya should implement a combination of these conflict management approaches to achieve optimal results in resolving disputes.

Effective conflict management is crucial for creating safer and more supportive educational environments. Conflicts typically arise when differing perceptions or opinions clash (Bano, Ashraf, & Zia, 2013). According to Shanka and Thuo (2017), conflict induces tension and discomfort due to the fear of uncertainty, making the situation undesirable for all parties involved. While conflict can disrupt the teaching and learning process, if addressed thoroughly and managed effectively, it has the potential to promote cooperation between educators and school administrators, ultimately fostering a more harmonious educational setting.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Employee performance is a crucial component of every organization, as it significantly impacts overall service delivery (Agusioma, 2018). Achieving high levels of performance among university employees in Kenya poses a considerable challenge for management

(Ibua, 2017). Over the years, persistent strikes and go-slows among staff have severely affected service delivery in higher learning institutions, disrupting academic activities as university employees' protest against poor working conditions, inadequate pay, and understaffing, among other grievances.

Universities consist of diverse individuals with varying needs, interests, aspirations, and personalities, all of whom have different expectations from the institution. This group includes students, academic and non-academic staff, management, unions, and other stakeholders. As they carry out their responsibilities, university management frequently encounters conflicts with students and staff. Individual differences among stakeholders often result in friction that undermines efficiency and effectiveness, which, in some cases, can lead to institutional closures. Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in any organization, and public universities are no exception.

The absence of clearly defined procedures for managing conflicts in tertiary institutions raises concerns about maximizing positive outcomes while minimizing negative impacts. Mismanagement of university politics, combined with a lack of effective dispute management strategies such as avoidance, compromise, and collaboration, can exacerbate tensions. Competition among various interest groups for power and authority can further contribute to disruptions, occasionally leading to the cancellation of academic sessions. Such instances highlight the detrimental effects of poor conflict management, which can result in inefficiencies, particularly in academic performance.

In 2015, conflicts between students and management at the University of Eldoret escalated, resulting in the university's closure for several months. This situation underscored the importance of implementing effective conflict management strategies during critical periods. Given the inevitability of organizational conflicts in university settings due to the diverse and dynamic workforce, it is essential to empirically investigate how various conflict management techniques, such as avoidance, collaboration, and compromise, impact service delivery at the University of Eldoret.

#### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to determine the effects of conflict management strategies on service delivery at the University of Eldoret.

#### **1.5 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives;

- (i) To establish the effect of avoidance conflict management strategy on service delivery.
- (ii) To explore the effect of collaborative conflict management strategy on service delivery.
- (iii) To investigate the effect of compromise conflict management strategy on service delivery.

## **1.6 Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>: Avoidance conflict management strategy has no significant effect on service delivery
- H<sub>02</sub>: Collaborative conflict management strategy has no significant effect on service delivery
- H<sub>3</sub>: Compromise conflict management strategy has no significant effect on service delivery

## **1.7 Justification of the Study**

Management within an organization is responsible for meeting established targets, which requires that each employee performs at a high level; however, conflicts can adversely affect this goal. Therefore, it is crucial for management to develop effective strategies for addressing workplace conflicts in order to minimize the risk of poor performance (Kathimba & Anyieni, 2018). Conflict can disrupt the teaching and learning processes in public universities, but with proper management, it can lead to constructive cooperation between staff and university administration. While employee conflict is an inevitable part of organizational dynamics, if handled effectively, it can serve as a catalyst for positive change, enhancing employee satisfaction and contributing to the institution's success in service delivery. Conversely, unmanaged conflict can significantly negatively impact employee performance. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the influence of conflict management strategies on service delivery at the University of Eldoret.

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

The study will be significant as it will provide university management with valuable insights into the underlying causes of conflicts and effective strategies for managing these situations. By understanding the nature of conflicts and their triggers, university administrators can implement positive conflict resolution techniques that enhance communication and collaboration among staff and students. This understanding will aid in the efficient administration of the university, ultimately leading to a more harmonious working environment and improved service delivery.

Additionally, the findings could inform policy development in conflict management, fostering a culture of proactive resolution rather than reactive measures, which can contribute to the overall success of the institution. The study will be used by the policy makers who are mainly in the Ministry of Education, to identify the weak policy areas and laws pertaining conflict management strategies in the higher education. They will get insightful data that will enable them to come up with better and well-advised laws that will ensure quality service delivery in public universities enhanced. This will benefit the management and employees of universities in terms of clear policy on conflict management. The findings will build on the existing literature which may be referred to by the future researchers on the field of conflict management.

### **1.9 Scope of the Study**

This research was conducted at the University of Eldoret. There are 32 public Universities in Kenya since not all could be studied the researcher picked on University of Eldoret. In

the content scope, the study focused on conflict management strategies used at the university, specifically avoidance, collaborative, and compromise strategies. In the methodological scope, descriptive research design was employed in the study. The study used questionnaires and interview schedules to collect primary data from the respondents. The sample size comprised of 220 university employees, including top management, middle cadre, and junior/support staff. The study was conducted between October and December 2015.

### **1.10 Limitations of the Study**

The data was collected using a questionnaire as the research tool. A major limitation encountered was the sensitivity of the information sought regarding conflict management strategies at the university. To curb these issues, the researcher sought permission from the university of Eldoret, management before conducting the study. The researcher also used the approval letter from the university that outlined the information sourced and the purpose stated as for academic purposes only. There were assurances of anonymity of the respondents as no names or labels were needed when filling the questionnaire. The researcher assured the respondents of anonymity and the confidentiality of information they give and would only be used for academic purposes.

The researcher had no way to verify the honesty of the responses given by the participants. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher encouraged the participants to respond honestly and assured them that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes and to fulfill the study's objectives. The researcher faced difficulties accessing top management

at the university, which was a critical area under investigation. To overcome this challenge, the researcher contacted them via mobile phone and email.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter presents a review of related literature on the influence of conflict management strategies on service delivery. The chapter entails the, conceptual review, theoretical review and the conceptual framework for the study. Furthermore, it presented the empirical review of related literature. The chapter also highlighted the critique of the reviewed literature and research gaps.

#### **2.2 Concept of Service Delivery**

Al Ariss, Cascio, and Paauwe (2014) state that organizations implement various strategies to assess performance, which can be categorized into five key areas: operational performance (including service delivery), financial performance, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and learning and growth. In contrast, Abuya and Shale (2018) along with Barkhuizen, Welby-Cooke, Schutte, and Stanz (2014) assert that a corporation's financial performance is typically evaluated based on metrics such as overall profitability, competitive position, market share, profit enhancement, and sales volume growth. Similarly, operational performance is measured through factors such as timeliness, productivity, quality improvement, overall performance quality, production efficiency, and waste reduction. Additionally, Thunnissen and Gallardo-Gallardo (2015) highlight that employee satisfaction is determined by aspects such as morale, professional growth, and productivity.

Service quality refers to the assessment of how delivered services address clients' expectations. Businesses, organizations stress on assessing the quality of services provided to their clients to effectively identify problems or challenges, improve services, and conduct a better evaluation of customer satisfaction. According to Ismail and Yuan (2016), service quality is construed to be a comparison between performance and expectations. Service quality is a multi-faceted construct that aids current businesses in developing competitive advantage and differentiation. Effective and well-developed service quality is characterized by five dimensions, which include reliability, tangibility, empathy, assurance, and responsiveness.

El Saghier (2015) posits that service quality is associated with perceptions of the overall excellence of the service provided. Thus, this study will utilize the SERVQUAL model, which encompasses five key dimensions: empathy, tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and assurance. This model has been applied by various service providers across different industries to effectively assess their facilities and the capabilities of employees in meeting consumer expectations (Teck-Hong and Yong-Kean, 2012).

In today's competitive business landscape, an organization's success is largely determined by its ability to consistently meet client expectations. Minb and Huu (2016) highlight that customer satisfaction is a primary goal for businesses seeking to establish enduring relationships with their clientele. Supporting this notion, Yarimoglu (2014) asserts that service quality is evaluated by identifying gaps in aspects such as service delivery, communication, customer knowledge, overall quality, and organizational policies. This

comprehensive approach emphasizes the importance of not only meeting but exceeding customer expectations to foster loyalty and enhance business performance.

According to Yarimoglu (2014), the tangibles based on the SERVQUAL model entail physical facilities, the physical appearance of employees, and equipment. Randhir (2018) observed that this dimension is utilized in monitoring whether the hotels offer appealing facilities. The tangible is comprised of observable elements by the clients because they are applied by firms to show appearance and excellence (Minb & Huu, 2016). In this regard, the tangible features include the appearance of personnel, equipment, and physical facilities. Similarly, Teck-Hong and YongKean (2012) argued that the tangibles can enhance consumer satisfaction if hotels have appealing facilities and presentable employees that exude a “wow” effect.

According to Minb and Huu (2016), reliability entails accurate performance and dependability that contribute to customer satisfaction. In the scenario of the present study, the SERVQUAL model was utilized to determine whether hotels provided services as promised. In support, Yarimoglu (2014) the service quality model emphasizes the behaviour of people and pleasantness. Reliability entails the ability of a firm to ensure that the services offered are accurately and timely to the customers. Similarly, Jiang and Zhang (2016) and Teck-Hong and Yong-Kean (2012) argued that for services to be reliable; companies should have the knowledge and well-trained staff, handle concerns and complaints promptly, deliver a service as promised, and perform services conveniently.

According to Yarimoglu (2014), the responsive component of service quality is anchored on providing prompt service. This means the timeliness of offering services, quick response to client needs; the workers willingness to avail services that ensure end-user satisfaction. Palmer (2014) and Randhir (2018) reported that responsiveness ensures that clients are given prompt services. Responsiveness in the hospitality industry can be evaluated by focusing on the capability of employees to give personal attention to customers, willingness to clarify inquiries from clients, and to be available when needed by customers (Cho *et al.*, 2018; Teck-Hong & Yong-Kean, 2012). Therefore, understanding the association between responsiveness and service quality is paramount in improving the quality of the service in the hospitality industry.

The assurance dimension of service quality requires workers to inspire confidence and courteousness alongside knowledge and trust (Randhir, 2018). According to Peng and Moghavvemi (2015), clients often feel safe when undertaking various transactions within a company or organization due to the assurance of quality. The employees need to be understanding and reassuring. Similarly, Peng and Moghavvemi (2015) emphasized that assurance entails employees' courtesy and their capabilities to effectively assist clients to realize needs. In this regard, assurance was fostered through safe places for customers, building confidence, and convenient service delivery. In support, Naik *et al.*, (2010) and Teck-Hong and Yong-Kean (2012) observed that firms ought to give priority to client related concerns to promote security and create a positive perception toward service quality in their companies.

According to Ismail and Yunan (2016), empathy calls for individualized attention from a firm's employees towards clients. In agreement, Palmer (2014) and Randhir (2018) reported that the company needs to exhibit the capability to care about enhancing client satisfaction based on the services offered. Moreover, empathy revolves around the attention and care offered by an organization to its clients. In the hospitality industry, satisfaction with service quality significantly depends on the attention and concern showed by employees (Teck-Hong and YongKean, 2012; Minb and Huu, 2016).

Effective communication and synchronization among different entities are vital to maintaining harmony within the service delivery process, minimizing disruptions, and maximizing efficiency. Alongside these efforts, service providers must also focus on quality assurance, implementing rigorous standards and checks to ensure that the services and products delivered consistently meet high-quality benchmarks. This dual focus on effective coordination and quality assurance is essential for cultivating customer satisfaction and the long-term success of any service-oriented organization.

### **2.3 Concept of Conflict Management Strategies**

Conflict management is a complex and dynamic process designed to address disagreements constructively while aiming to reduce the negative impacts of conflict and harness its potential benefits (Osabiya, 2015). This approach acknowledges that conflict, while typically viewed as harmful, can also serve as a catalyst for positive change and development in various settings, including interpersonal relationships, organizations, and societies. A comprehensive and structured approach to conflict management is needed to

mitigate disputes and encourage positive behavioral changes. This process entails a systematic method for identifying and addressing the root causes, observable symptoms, underlying dynamics, and the potential for transforming conflicts into opportunities for growth.

Abioro, Odunlami, and Ekpudu (2019) define conflict management methods as a set of measures aimed at mitigating conflict, and in some cases, fostering necessary conflict. Conflict resolution is a managerial process including the formulation of strategies and procedures aimed at efficiently resolving conflict situations. Neskertin and Porterfield (2016) argued that conflict management serves to enhance comprehension of the issue at hand, facilitate the attainment of resolutions, and foster a collective effort towards consensus-building and the cultivation of a sincere dedication to decision-making. The ability to channel this energy into constructive accomplishments for all parties engaged in the dispute may lead to the transformation of conflict into a collaborative discovery and problem-solving resolution.

Promoting open communication, empathy, and understanding plays a crucial role in conflict management, enabling a constructive and effective approach to conflict resolution and the development of positive relationships. Longe (2015) noted that the communication processes utilized within an organization can lead to disagreements and discord among various stakeholders. Conflicts are inherent in the workplace, particularly when individuals vie for power, authority, job positions, recognition, and job security. While workplace conflict is unavoidable, effective management and leadership should focus on managing

these conflicts rather than merely resolving them, ensuring that workplace functionality is maintained.

Conflicts can have detrimental effects on productivity, leading to disruptions such as slowdowns and potentially violent incidents that may harm employees. Therefore, it is essential for management to implement measures to contain conflicts and prevent escalation. Organizations should establish processes for conflict resolution and implement systems to mitigate the likelihood of future disputes. Adetunji and Adetunji (2018) refer to these actions as management strategies, which can include methods such as avoidance, collaboration, accommodation, competition, negotiation, and confrontation.

Additionally, research by Prause and Mujtaba (2015) highlights several commonly employed workplace conflict management strategies, including competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, and compromising. These strategies can be utilized in various combinations to effectively address conflicts within the workplace. Managers must choose the most suitable strategy based on the nature and severity of the conflict to achieve a mutually acceptable solution. By adapting their approach to the specific circumstances of each conflict, leaders can better pave the way for resolution and foster a more harmonious work environment.

The avoidance strategy is evident in certain organizations and is often referred to as conflict avoidance. Oluwakemi (2016) suggests that this approach should be employed when the issue at hand is minor or when more urgent matters demand attention. Avoidance is

advisable in scenarios where satisfying one's concerns is unlikely, when the potential disruption from addressing the issue outweighs the benefits of resolution, when others are better suited to handle the conflict, when the matter reflects deeper underlying problems, when addressing the issue would require excessive time, or when the circumstances are not conducive for discussing the conflict. Additionally, avoidance may be used when more time is necessary to gather information and prepare before tackling the matter.

When adopting avoidance as a strategy, individuals may withdraw and remain silent about the conflicts involved. Mahony and Klaas (2016) argue that avoiding conflicts leads to unresolved issues, resulting in a high likelihood of the same problems recurring. This strategy serves as an inadequate substitute for effective problem-solving, as it prevents valuable ideas from surfacing, which could contribute to lasting solutions. Essentially, avoidance involves efforts to prevent conflicts from emerging by either ignoring the issues or imposing a solution to suppress them.

However, Ajike *et al.*, (2015) point out that avoidance can be a reasonable approach in situations involving trivial matters or when dealing with hostile individuals to avert escalation into violence. Moreover, it might be necessary when additional information is required or when time is needed to thoughtfully analyze the situation for a better solution. While avoidance may be suitable for minor conflicts or to quickly address potentially serious issues, it carries the risk of leaving underlying problems unaddressed, allowing the conflict to resurface later. Over time, consistent avoidance can accumulate unresolved issues that may eventually culminate in a more significant crisis.

Collaborative Strategy is designed to address all interested in conflict to resolve such disputes. This strategy further suggests the need consider all parties involved in conflict into a consensus. Furthermore, collaboration is advantageous when an individual seeks to share responsibility rather than assuming full accountability. Lastly, collaboration strategy is essential for cultivating long-term relationships that are necessary for sustained success (Oluwakemi, 2016).

The collaborative strategy entails engaging with conflicting parties to achieve a win-win outcome beneficial to both sides. This approach focuses on understanding the underlying interests and factors of all involved, allowing participants to navigate animosity and foster long-term relationships built on trust (Currie, Gormley, Roche & Teague, 2017). It is an effective strategy for management in the workplace, particularly when both parties are assertive and willing to discuss their interests and seek compromises. This cooperative attitude encourages each individual to contribute to a shared solution that both parties can support.

Adekunle, Abimbola, and Ehimen (2019) note that collaboration involves working together to achieve mutually satisfactory results or a win-win solution that is accepted by all parties. This approach prioritizes integrating ideas from various stakeholders to find a solution that meets everyone's needs. In the context of the Nigerian local government system, collaboration can be particularly valuable during policy formulation, development projects, or the resolution of community issues, highlighting its significance in enhancing collective decision-making and fostering positive relationships among stakeholders.

Accommodation Strategy is the strategies used to address the underlying causes of a dispute and to guarantee that all affected parties are appeased and aligned in their perspectives. Additionally, this technique is seen suitable in situations when there is a need for a temporary solution to be implemented or when the individuals involved have a collectively meaningful objective. Altuntaş (2017) highlights that in a team setting, one party may concede to the demands of another, particularly when it is determined that one side is at fault. However, caution is necessary when this concession is made solely to maintain harmony or avoid further conflict, as it may lead to dissatisfaction and unresolved issues. Excessive accommodation to the demands of the more assertive party can skew the conflict resolution process, resulting in one party dominating while the other contributes little or nothing (Ayub, AlQurashi, Al-Yafi & Jehn, 2017). This strategy may be appropriate when one party possesses expertise, experience, or specific skills necessary to handle a particular situation, allowing them to take the lead effectively. Successful outcomes depend on good cooperation and clear communication between the parties.

The accommodating strategy involves one party yielding to the other's demands, typically used when maintaining peace and harmony is paramount or when the issue is viewed as minor. In contrast, negotiation focuses on bringing together conflicting teams to have open discussions about grievances and express their perspectives regarding how they wish to be perceived within the organization. Constructive communication is vital during negotiations, providing a platform for adjusting both people and systems to address past issues and shape a more favorable future. The system should establish clear protocols for whom to approach when conflicts arise, preventing issues from festering and facilitating

prompt resolutions (Currie *et al.*, 2017). This strategy also encompasses managing conflicts that emerge between employees and their employers or managers. The negotiation process itself involves articulating demands, proposing counter-demands, and utilizing tactics like threats and bluffing until both parties arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement (Ramirez-Marin, Olekalns & Adair, 2019).

The confrontation strategy emphasizes open and direct communication regarding feelings, perceptions, and issues that lead to conflicts. This approach focuses on addressing specific issues and behaviors of the other party rather than their character or personality traits. Organizational management utilizes this strategy to identify the root causes of conflicts, assess the productivity of the situation, and mitigate tensions. According to Mahvar, Farahani, and Aryankhesal (2018), effective confrontation requires that all relevant details be openly discussed, with both parties acknowledging the existence of the problem and collaboratively determining a path to resolution. This strategy allows for a thorough examination of the underlying issues, fostering solutions that produce enduring outcomes. Furthermore, Hu (2020) points out that confrontation in decision-making enables all parties to conduct comprehensive assessments and gather detailed information related to the issue, facilitating well-informed decisions. An informed decision-making process involves not only confronting all sources of information but also evaluating various alternatives before arriving at a final decision. This collaborative approach enhances the functioning of the organization and promotes a sense of ownership over the decisions made, ultimately leading to improved individual and organizational outcomes.

Compromise Strategy entails a willingness on participating parties to peacefully resolve the disagreement without attributing victory or defeat to any party. Oluwakemi (2016) stated that, it is advisable for organizations to employ compromise strategy but do not justify the potential disruption caused by more assertive strategies. Compromise can significantly enhance relationships between opposing parties by balancing the interests of both sides and facilitating negotiations that lead to mutually acceptable solutions. In conflicts, this strategy allows each faction to gain something while also conceding certain demands (Hussein, Hassan, and Al-Mamary, 2017). The effectiveness of compromise is most apparent when equal power dynamics and shared goals exist between the parties, ensuring that no single opinion is imposed over the other. Additionally, compromise can be particularly advantageous in time-sensitive situations, helping resolve conflicts swiftly without delving into deeper issues.

The Global Human Capital Report on Workplace Conflict (CPP, 2019) describes compromise as a mature method of conflict resolution, where the proverbial "cake" is evenly divided, allowing all parties to satisfy their needs to some extent. This approach not only helps mitigate the stress associated with the emotional aspects of conflict management but also aims for a quick and equitable resolution, albeit it may not fully satisfy all parties involved. Tetteh and Obuobisa-Darko (2016) concur, noting that compromises often lead to temporary solutions rather than permanent fixes, especially when compared to integrating strategies, which provide more durable resolutions through a balance of assertiveness and cooperation. Ultimately, the compromising strategy requires both parties to make concessions to find common ground, ensuring that while neither side may receive

everything they desire, both walk away with something valuable. This method is particularly effective when the parties involved hold relatively equal power and can engage in constructive negotiation.

#### **2.4 Effect of Avoidance Conflict Management Strategy on Service Delivery**

Globally, a study conducted by Abdullah (2015) in Pakistan examined the impact of conflict management on the effectiveness of the Ministry of Higher Education. This research aimed to identify the factors that lead to interpersonal conflicts and to assess the conflict management strategies employed within the ministry. The findings revealed that the avoidance strategy had detrimental effects on organizational effectiveness, as it resulted in delayed responses to conflict-inducing factors, which exacerbated existing issues. Consequently, the study recommended that the Ministry of Higher Education adopt alternative conflict resolution methods to enhance its overall effectiveness. While this research established a link between conflict management and organizational effectiveness, the current study seeks to explore the relationship between conflict management and service delivery in public universities.

Regionally, Alajekwu and Alajekwu (2017) conducted a study focused on how effective conflict management can enhance employee performance in Nigerian universities. Using a descriptive research design, the study surveyed 1,200 participants from public universities in southeastern Nigeria, employing a questionnaire with 22 questions on a Likert scale. The data demonstrated reliability, yielding a coefficient of 0.78. The results indicated that conflicts arising among school administrators, teaching staff, students, and non-teaching

staff significantly negatively impacted employee performance. Furthermore, the use of avoidance as a conflict resolution technique was found to correlate negatively with employee performance. Notably, participants in this study were selected using a stratified random sampling method.

In a related Kenyan study, Agusioma (2018) investigated the effects of staff conflict resolution on employee performance at the Kenyan Public Service Commission (PSC) using a mixed methods design. The study focused on managers at various levels within the commission, gathering primary data from 141 participants selected through stratified proportionate random sampling. A questionnaire facilitated the data collection, with both descriptive and inferential analyses performed using SPSS 21. The regression analysis revealed a strong positive impact of staff participation in conflict resolution on employee performance, indicating that effective dispute resolution enhances overall organizational performance. Unlike Agusioma's study, the current research adopts a descriptive research design. Finally, Kagucia and Poipoi (2014) investigated the effect of avoidance conflict resolution strategies on employee performance in Kenyan public universities, concluding that while avoidance strategies can positively influence performance when dealing with trivial matters, a more collaborative or integrative approach is preferable for more significant issues to foster better outcomes. These insights collectively underscore the importance of effective conflict management strategies in enhancing employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness.

## **2.5 Effect of Collaborative Conflict Management Strategy on Service Delivery**

Lee and Bonk (2014) examined the practical issues and concerns related to collaborative learning in the workplace. Their study aimed to identify these challenges, revealing that the use of collaborative tools is increasingly important, as is the concept of collaboration itself. The research identified five major issues related to organizational collaboration, including the factors that should be considered when selecting and implementing collaborative tools. It found that conflicts among employees are not inherently unavoidable; rather, they are a natural product of complex organizations. When disputes are resolved properly, organizations can enhance their performance by efficiently utilizing their resources and achieving their goals. However, unmanaged conflicts can negatively impact both employee productivity and satisfaction. Timely conflict resolution can boost staff satisfaction and improve the overall performance of an organization.

In a similar vein, Hidayanto and Setyady (2014) explored how the use of collaborative tools impacts group performance among university students. Their research focused on the technology characteristics that motivate students to engage with collaborative tools and how these tools affect group collaboration. The study included 196 respondents from the Faculty of Computer Science, and its findings showed that the perceived ease of use and usefulness of collaborative tools encouraged their adoption. The nature of collaborative learning also played a significant role in this process, with the study confirming a positive impact on team performance. Organizations should prioritize conflict resolution to enhance their performance levels. While conflict is often viewed negatively, it can serve as a valuable resource for positive change if handled effectively.

Further, Kumar, Subramanian, and Arputham (2018) investigated the relationship between sustainability collaborative strategies and supply chain performance, revealing that misalignment in joint planning and resource sharing affects various aspects of the triple bottom line (TBL) through dynamic capabilities (DC). The study emphasizes the need to strengthen DCs when collaboration does not align with its intended goals, as misalignment can harm both DCs and TBL performance. Effective conflict management incorporates all factors necessary for resolution, acknowledging that not all disputes can be settled but that learning to handle them reduces the chances of escalation into unproductive confrontations. In conflict resolution, collaboration is essential, requiring active listening and the identification of common ground to ensure mutual understanding.

The findings from Jirgba, Eriba, and Achor (2018) indicate that a peer collaboration learning strategy positively affects student achievement in basic science. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the study involved data collection through the Basic Science Achievement Test (BSAT), demonstrating that peer collaboration enhances academic performance compared to traditional methods. The importance of collaboration lies in its capacity for creative problem-solving without sacrificing essential interests. Successful collaboration is facilitated by cooperation, open dialogue, and shared resources, leading to mutually beneficial outcomes. Assbeihat (2016) found that collaboration significantly enhances team member performance compared to individual efforts. The findings underscore the crucial nature of effective conflict resolution in managing a successful organization, as a lack of a clear strategy can result in hostility, low morale, and competing agendas, ultimately hindering performance. Consequently, collaborative conflict

management emerges as an effective approach for restoring harmony and fostering productivity.

Adim and Ihunda (2018) explored the relationship between collaboration strategy and employee performance in oil-producing companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study aimed to understand how collaboration strategies influence employee performance within the oil sector. A cross-sectional survey methodology was employed, and primary data was collected using structured questionnaires distributed to five operational oil companies in Port Harcourt. From a population of 345 respondents, a sample size of 181 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. The study employed the Cronbach Alpha coefficient to assess the internal reliability of the instruments, with all items scoring above the acceptable benchmark of 0.70. The analysis and hypothesis testing utilized descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings indicated a positive correlation between collaboration strategies and employee performance, leading to the recommendation that collaboration should be leveraged as a valuable tool for dispute resolution and enhancing teamwork and cohesion among employees.

In a related study, Kalei (2018) investigated the influence of collaborative strategies on employee performance within insurance companies in Homa Bay County, Kenya. As workplace conflict and its management have become increasingly prevalent in modern organizations, this research highlights the importance of understanding how conflict resolution affects employee productivity. Utilizing grounded conflict process theory, the

researcher gathered data from financial advisors, applying proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. The quantitative data analysis, using both descriptive and inferential statistics, revealed that collaborative strategies positively impact employee performance. The study concluded that employing collaborative strategies, including integration and joint decision-making, empowers employees to take ownership of their choices, ultimately enhancing their productivity.

## **2.6 Effect of Compromise Conflict Management Strategy on Service Delivery**

Compromising involves identifying a middle ground where all parties find satisfactory solutions through collaboration. Jaden (2015) noted that this strategy is beneficial when the ultimate goal is to achieve a fair distribution among all involved. However, it often leads to temporary solutions, which may not fully address the underlying issues. The principles of compromise rely on mutual accountability among all parties, thereby fostering conflict management skills within the organization. Anono (2018) found that employing a compromising strategy allows organizations to quickly reach a consensus, helping to maintain productivity and promoting an equitable distribution of power, which facilitates an inclusive decision-making process.

In a study conducted by Aoun, Mubarak, and Hasnan (2020) on conflict management and employee performance among industrial firms in Lebanon, a quantitative approach was utilized, focusing on employees from a furniture dealership. The analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics, alongside Pearson correlation and regression techniques. The results demonstrated that while conflict management has a constructive and significant impact on employee performance, the correlation was relatively weak. This

study differentiates itself by combining both quantitative and qualitative data for triangulation, focusing on employees at a public university.

Alhamali (2019) investigated how different conflict management styles affect team performance across twenty universities, utilizing questionnaires and analyzing data through SPSS and AMOS. The findings revealed that integrating, obliging, and compromising strategies positively impacted team performance, whereas avoidance and dominance showed detrimental effects. The research recommends that organizations should prioritize cooperative strategies, such as the integrating approach, instead of simply ignoring conflicts or imposing solutions. Tumwebaze, Wandiba, and Osunsan (2020) similarly examined conflict resolution strategies at the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), finding that compromise significantly influenced employee performance, followed by third-party intervention. They recommended implementing these higher-ranking strategies over negotiations, yet also noted that their study employed only quantitative analysis, while the current research focuses on negotiation, accommodation, and compromise strategies in the context of Kenyan public universities.

According to Ndulue (2016), the compromising approach has been a popular strategy for resolving conflicts within organizations, offering somewhat effective yet often temporary solutions. This method can be particularly effective in situations that require quick fixes to complex issues, where maintaining the organization's well-being is critical, or when there is parity in power among conflicting parties. Saiti (2015) asserts that the compromising strategy not only encourages employees to be cooperative but also empowers them to

manage conflicts independently. Overall, seeking a middle ground remains a common attitude adopted by management when implementing conflict management strategies, reflecting the need for balanced and inclusive approaches in organizational setting.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

Theoretically, the study hinges on the Contingency Theory popularized by Fred Fiedler in the year 1964 and Human Service Delivery theory proposed by Greene (2011).

### **2.7.1 Contingency Theory**

Contingency Theory by Fiedler (1964) is referred to as the human relations movement, since it focuses on the examination of the human aspect of work. It involves the analysis of the factors that precede and follow an individual's work environment, as well as the acquired associations they have developed from past experiences. Moreover, proponents of behaviorism believed that enhancing comprehension of human behavior inside the workplace, including aspects such as motivation, industrial conflict expectancies, and group dynamics, might lead to improved employee performance (*Anrep, 1936*).

Contingency theory, as articulated by Rahim (2002), stands as a cornerstone of modern management and is widely recognized within management disciplines. This theory posits that organizations must formulate clear decisions and actions that align with specific defined environments, facilitating a suitable match for desired outcomes (Islam & Hu, 2012). However, firms operate in dynamic environments fraught with uncertainties, making it challenging to develop fully effective plans that yield the expected results.

Rahim (2002) adapted this theory to conflict management by suggesting that in situations characterized by low decision quality and acceptance, a dominating style may be more appropriate, while a high decision quality and acceptance situation may justify the use of an integrating style. The theory implies that there is no universally optimal method for decision-making or leadership; instead, the choice of action is contingent upon internal and external conditions. Successful decision-making is asserted to depend on these influencing factors (Pugh, Hickson, Hinnings, & Turner, 1971; Khandwalla, 1973).

Zhenzhong Ma (2007) criticized advocates of the contingency approach for not recognizing the variability in individual knowledge, which can complicate the selection of a particular theory. Conversely, Rahim (2002) and Keaveney (2008) argued that the applicability of any specific conflict management theory is influenced by the circumstances at hand, and a particular style is deemed appropriate if it effectively addresses the conflict. The current study adopted contingency theory, rooted in the principles of systems design, as it acknowledges that there is no single best way to organize. The effectiveness of any organizational structure depends on the context in which the organization operates, particularly concerning the relationships between employees and management. This theory also underscores that conflict management strategies can vary significantly based on the organizational conditions leading to conflicts. Consequently, management must carefully choose conflict resolution techniques according to the prevailing circumstances and desired outcomes (Cole & Kelly, 2011). This theory is particularly relevant to the current research as it examines how contingent variables such as conflicts impact service delivery.

According to Rahim (2002), conflict is a prevalent occurrence in business environments, often manifesting between management, workers, or other groups within an organization. The author asserts that, conflict is an inherent aspect of such settings. The underlying premise is that, no universally applicable or optimal approach to organizational management. Moreover, it suggests that an organizational or leadership style that proves beneficial in some circumstances may not provide same success in other contexts. In other words, managers use several strategies to effectively handle disputes inside a company. Alternatively, individuals may choose to use a range of tactics, including avoidance, compromise, adaptability, and teamwork, in order to effectively manage and resolve conflicts. In conflict situations, individuals tend to choose behavioral strategies that align with their specific identity type, which is manifested throughout the occurrence of the conflict.

Critics of the theory contend that it does not effectively explain what actions should be taken when there is a mismatch between the leader and the situation. Additionally, they point out that the theory fails to clarify why certain leaders succeed in specific situations while struggling in others (Lazarus, 2014). In the context of organizational conflict management, this theory posits that the selection of conflict management techniques depends on the contextual factors of the conflicts that emerge (Toku, 2014).

Conflict behavior is contingent upon the respective functions of workers within the organizational structure and their positioning within the conflict scenario. In summary, this idea says that conflict is inherently negative and may be effectively mitigated. The

selection of the most suitable strategy depends on various factors, including the parties involved in the conflict, the timeframe, and the organizational context. Hence, it is essential for managers to accurately recognize and comprehensively comprehend the prevailing circumstances prior to selecting the most suitable approach for conflict management.

### **2.7.2 Theory of Human Service Delivery**

The theory was proposed by Greene (2011) and it contains systems and agencies that offer professional human services such as education, social welfare and mental health services. The services demand direct interaction between the service providers and clients and thus measured the effectiveness of the offered services and its quality (Greene & Kropf, 2011). Effective service delivery is dependent on the worker and for the individual to performance such duties they must showcase certain personal attributes that include proper communication, aspects of patience, care and concern for the welfare of the clients. The case is dire when it comes to service-based companies and service industry as performance largely depends on quality, capabilities, and efficiency of the human resources.

Service delivery is about identifying the problems that customers or the market or the public has and employing problem solving mechanisms by human capital. First is to identify the problem and find mechanisms for intervention to resolve the issue. This calls on the human behavior to be responsive to the issue, have sufficient skills, knowledge, and experience to handle the issue and learning allows for the people to avoid the same issues and problems (Greene & Kropf, 2011).

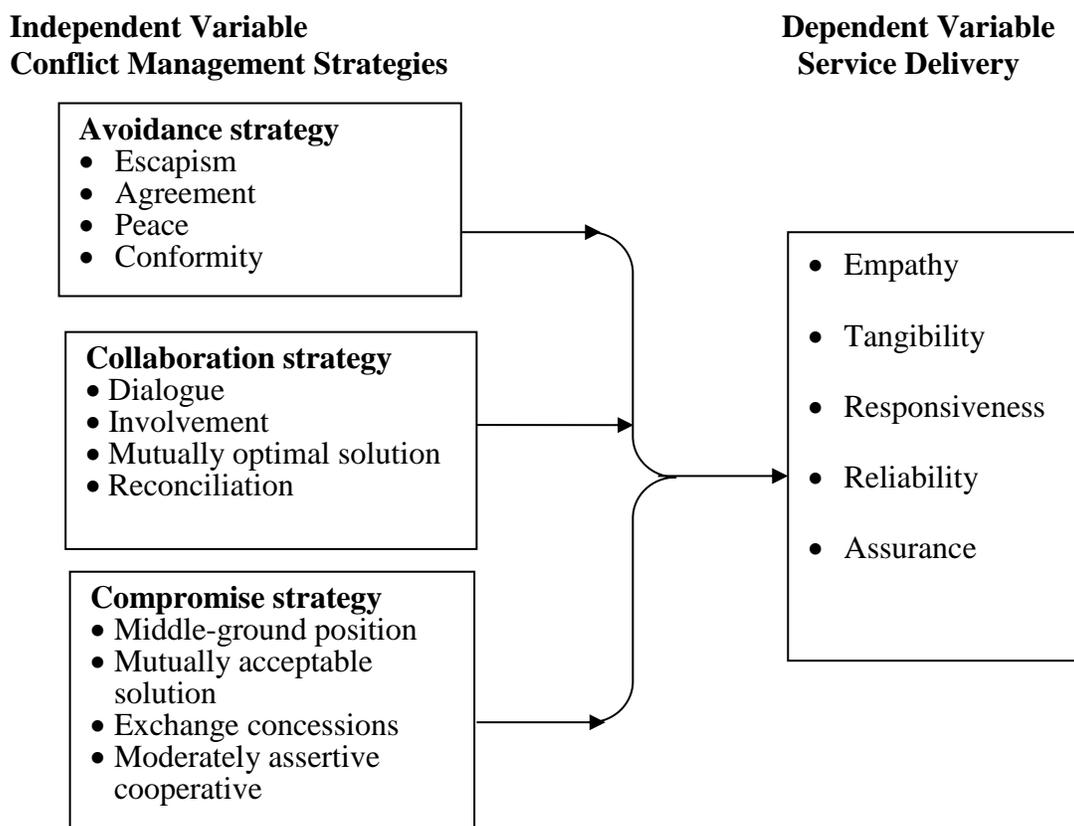
The theory is critiqued as being unrealistic and impractical to realities in organizations, as the stated systems cannot account for human behaviors and dispensation. For employees of an organization to perform, there is need to consider the working conditions, the mental and health condition and elements that deal with work-life balances for the employees. Bloom and Farragher (2010) noted that in most instances productivity of the employees has strong ties to working conditions and the disposition of the employee. The theory assumes that attitudes of employees and work situation co-workers have direct consequences to outcome, but still fail to consider the client or the market acceptance or refusal of products and the worker-client relations.

According to Thyer, Dulmus and Sowers (2012) understanding the behavior and motivations that dictate their activities will led to provision of high-quality services. The theory is of beneficial to organizations that seek to solve conflict management problems and improve service delivery as it exposes the motivation and measures of human behavior. This theory is relevant in this study by exposing how best to incorporate the employee's behavior and the modification of their behaviors in such a manner as to improve delivery of services to the general public. The theory anchored the dependent variable of the study on service delivery.

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

In the conceptual framework shows the relationship between conflict management as the independent variable and service delivery which is the dependent variable. In this conceptual framework the independent variable comprised of the avoidance, collaboration

and compromise strategies of conflict management, while the dependent variables consisted of empathy, tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, and assurance as shown in figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**

*Source:* Researcher, 2015

## 2.9 Empirical Review

In their investigation of conflict management and organizational effectiveness in Nigeria, *et al.*, (2021) aimed to determine the impact of compromising and collaborating strategies on client and customer satisfaction. They employed a descriptive survey research design, focusing on a population of 15 firms and 200 employees, ultimately sampling 120

employees. Regression analysis was utilized to test the hypothesis, which indicated a positive relationship between conflict management and organizational effectiveness within Nigerian firms. The researchers recommended that organizations adopt conflict management strategies to help mitigate conflicts.

Similarly, Amaeshi *et al.*, (2021) conducted a study using a descriptive survey research design to examine the effects of conflict management on the performance of organizations, surveying a sample of 166 academic staff in Nigeria. They employed descriptive statistics to analyze the data and utilized the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation to test the hypotheses, revealing that conflict management strategies had a significant positive influence on organizational performance. The findings emphasized the crucial roles of power, culture, style, and goals in resolving organizational conflicts. Consequently, it was advised that private university administrators create additional communication channels with employees to gather timely feedback on organizational policies and prevent conflicts of interest.

Meanwhile, Mwaniki and Muathe (2021) explored the impact of conflict management approaches, including negotiation, mediation, collaboration, and avoidance, on employee performance at Kenyan public universities. Using a descriptive research approach, they selected a sample of 160 participants from the designated public university population through stratified and simple random sampling. The data gathered were analyzed using SPSS, applying both descriptive and inferential statistics (ANOVA and regression analysis). The study found a strong and significant positive correlation between

negotiation, mediation, teamwork, and employee performance in the selected public universities. Conversely, avoidance was identified as having a negative and significant effect on employee performance. The results concluded that while negotiation, mediation, and collaboration positively influenced employee performance, avoidance had detrimental effects. Therefore, the study recommended that public university administrators in Kenya adopt a combination of conflict management approaches to effectively resolve organizational conflicts.

Yusuf and Ibrahim (2019) conducted a survey research design to examine conflict management tactics and administrative effectiveness in tertiary institutions within the Sokoto metropolitan area. The study's population consisted of students from eight local tertiary institutions. A sample of 168 academics from four of these institutions was selected as respondents, and multiple regression analysis was utilized to analyze the data. The results indicated a correlation between conversation, competition, prevention, and communication, and their impact on administrative effectiveness. The authors recommend that higher education institutions institutionalize dialogue as a conflict resolution strategy, as it fosters collaboration among team members, promotes understanding of diverse perspectives, enhances performance, and mitigates crises.

In another study, Adilo (2019) explored the relationship between conflict management strategies—such as negotiation, joint consultation, collective bargaining, and alternative dispute resolution—and organizational performance. This research employed a survey technique, focusing on five breweries. The data were analyzed using frequency tables and

percentage analyses, with regression analysis testing the hypotheses. The findings showed a significant positive relationship between all the conflict management strategies investigated and organizational performance. Therefore, the study suggests that managers implement these strategies to effectively resolve workplace conflicts.

Nwadike (2019) utilized a survey research method to assess the impact of accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, and compromising strategies on organizational performance among employees of Nigerian Breweries Plc in the South-East region of Nigeria. The sample consisted of 337 participants, with data analyzed using the Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression analysis via SPSS version 21. The results indicated that accommodating, compromising, and collaborating strategies positively influenced organizational performance, while the avoiding strategy had a significant negative effect. Based on these findings, organizations are encouraged to adopt collective bargaining in conflict management to enhance problem-solving efficacy, and to pursue inclusive collaboration while involving union leadership and employee representatives in critical decisions affecting the workforce.

Lastly, Osakede *et al.*, (2018) investigated stakeholder participation in conflict management at Lagos State University and Adekunle Ajasin University in Ondo State, focusing on changes since their respective establishments and the effectiveness of conflict management boards at these institutions. Employing a survey study design, the research sampled 500 respondents, consisting of 280 from LASU and 220 from AAUA. The data were analyzed using percentage calculations and the Chi-square non-parametric technique.

Findings revealed that conflict management had fostered stakeholder involvement in decision-making and conflict resolution at the selected universities. Furthermore, the conflict management boards at LASU and AAUA demonstrated significant advancements in crisis management and peacebuilding. The study advocates for robust and effective conflict management practices that enable stakeholder participation in institutional decision-making.

Chiekezie, Dibua, and Chima (2016) employed a survey research method to explore the relationship between conflict management and the performance of selected tertiary institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study aimed to assess the extent to which arbitration enhances academic performance and how dialogue could mitigate the frequent closures of these institutions. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources, and hypotheses were tested using Pearson's product-moment correlation. The findings indicated that effective conflict management significantly influences the performance of tertiary institutions. Consequently, the study recommended the adoption of strategies such as arbitration and dialogue, proper authority utilization, adherence to regulations, appropriate institutional structuring, establishment of effective communication networks, and fostering meaningful stakeholder participation in conflict resolution.

Sakiyo and Mohammed (2016) examined staff perceptions of conflict management practices within Nigerian tertiary institutions. The researchers utilized a survey research method, analyzing research questions through frequency counts and mean statistical techniques, while employing analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test hypotheses. The data

revealed that educational administrators in these institutions implement various conflict management tactics—such as integrating, competing, compromising, smoothing, and avoiding—in their interactions with students. The report advises educational administrators to be judicious when selecting conflict resolution strategies for their staff.

In another study, Kehinde, Ijimakinwa, Adesanya, and Ojo (2018) investigated conflict management in selected universities in southwestern Nigeria. Using both primary and secondary data sources—including structured questionnaires, interviews, published journals, newspapers, magazines, and online content the sample consisted of 500 respondents (280 from Lagos State University and 220 from Adekunle Ajasin University). The data were analyzed using percentage methods and the Chi-square non-parametric technique. Findings indicated that conflict management has encouraged stakeholder involvement in decision-making and conflict resolution at the selected universities, and that the conflict management boards at LASU and AAUA have made notable progress in crisis management and peacebuilding.

Akinde (2019) conducted a study on labor relations and the crisis of human capital development, exploring its implications for academic calendars and annual leave in Nigerian universities. Data were collected randomly from 137 lecturers across 37 universities in the country's six geopolitical zones. The analysis revealed that unresolved conflicts between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (FGN-ASUU) are a significant factor disrupting academic calendars, leading to extended academic sessions and complicating staff access to annual leave. While only

21.9% of respondents experienced regular leave, most had either none or irregular annual leave despite at least ten years of service. Furthermore, for 34.3% of respondents, the deferment of annual leave was not acknowledged at their institutions, and 68.6% reported health decline as one of several negative impacts of not utilizing their annual leave.

Olayemi (2019) examined the impact of empowering academic staff on service delivery in Nigerian universities. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study focused on all academic staff from the University of Ibadan and Lagos State University. A simple random sampling technique selected 150 academic staff from each institution, resulting in a total sample of 300. A questionnaire, which demonstrated a reliability value of 0.82, served as the research instrument. Hypotheses were tested using multiple regression and independent T-tests. The findings indicated that factors such as training, promotion, incentives, job recognition, and job security collectively enhance service delivery in Nigerian universities, with job recognition being identified as the strongest predictor. Furthermore, the results revealed a significant difference in academic staff empowerment between federal and state universities, as well as a notable difference in service delivery across these institutions.

Uzor and Emma (2020) conducted a study on labor conflict management and its effect on the performance of federal universities in Southeast Nigeria. The research utilized a descriptive survey design with a population of 11,025 staff members, from which a sample size of 386 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and were analyzed using simple percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Z-tests, and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with

the assistance of SPSS version 23. The study found a significant relationship between the consistent upward review of wages and the quality of teaching in federal universities in Southeast Nigeria.

Shimawua (2020) investigated the effects of industrial union strikes on the performance of public universities in Nigeria. Adopting a sample survey approach, the study employed Z-tests for analysis. The findings highlighted various issues in industrial relations within the Nigerian university system, including the lack of education among some labor leaders, rigid relationship structures, poor communication, management and government interference in union matters, frequent trade disputes, underfunding, and insufficient teaching facilities. The study also identified political factors as contributing to industrial disputes, which negatively affect student academic performance and productivity in Nigeria's economic sector.

Omodu (2021) explored the challenges of collective bargaining in Nigeria, drawing lessons from South Africa. This sample survey revealed that collective bargaining is essential in any industrial relations framework, as it facilitates regulated flexibility. The study established that collective bargaining promotes cooperation and mutual understanding between workers and management by providing a structured approach to addressing industrial relations issues without resorting to strikes or lockouts.

## **2.10 Knowledge Gap**

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between employee conflict and employee performance. For instance, Francis (2018) investigated conflict management styles and their impact on employee performance in public hospitals in Nyeri County. Similarly, Kagwira (2019) studied workplace conflict management strategies and their effect on the performance of the telecommunications industry in Kenya. Ayinde, Bolarinwa, Alarima, Kazeem, and Kareem (2021) researched the effects of workplace conflict on employees' job performance at the Ogun State Agro-Service Corporation (OGASC). Additionally, Olang (2017) examined how conflict management influences the organizational performance of Stima Sacco Society Limited. However, none of these studies focused on the productivity of non-academic staff in public universities. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in the literature by assessing the various strategies used to manage and resolve conflict specifically within the University of Eldoret in Kenya.

## **2.11 Summary**

The literature review presented in this chapter clearly demonstrates that perceptions of conflict significantly influence the conflict management styles employed by managers when addressing disputes within organizations. Various styles of conflict management that can be utilized for conflict resolution were examined. Specifically, three key strategies were highlighted: avoidance, collaboration, and compromise.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to describe the methodology and procedures adopted in carrying out the study. In the chapter, the research identified the research design, research location, target population, sampling and sampling technique, data collection techniques, reliability and validity of instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis and presentation.

#### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

This study was based on pragmatic research paradigm whose approach applies pluralistic means of acquiring knowledge about a phenomenon. Creswell (2013) supports this and stated that, pragmatism makes it possible to work within the positivist and interpretivist paradigm, hence allowing the usage of multiple ways to answer research questions at hand. Mixed methods research design used in this study strongly goes in line with pragmatic views of tackling issues with a view of acquiring in-depth information. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) also support this method and hence point out that it helps in answering questions which cannot be answered by qualitative and quantitative approaches alone. Indeed, mixed methods provide the opportunity for presenting a greater diversity of divergent views. A major advantage of using the mixed methods research in this study was to enable the researcher to answer confirmatory questions with regard to the research problem in question through the administration of closed ended questionnaires and interviews.

According to Best and Kahn (2007) closed ended questions yield quantitative data while interviews, observations and open-ended questions yield qualitative data which describe changes. Rating scales used in questionnaires provided quantitative data. This mixed method approach focusing on the value-based and action-oriented dimensions of each of the different inquiry and philosophical world views gave the ground on which methods and analysis decisions were made. Quantitative research has typically been directed at theory verification, while qualitative research has typically been concerned with theory generation.

### **3.3 Research Design**

According to Saunders *et al.*, (2019), research design is defined as general plan which answers study enquiry by specifying methods and processes utilized to obtain data and analyses it. This study utilized a sequential explanatory design, which involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data first, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Priority was typically given to quantitative data, and the two methods were integrated during the interpretation phase. The subsequent qualitative data collection aimed to provide a detailed examination of the quantitative results. Creswell (2013) notes that two fundamental methodologies characterize research and complement one another: qualitative and quantitative methods. While qualitative methodology offers in-depth analysis and explanations, quantitative methodology provides the empirical data needed to achieve essential objectives.

In mixed methods research, researchers usually structure their procedures to include quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. This can also be done in reverse, with qualitative data preceding the quantitative. Findings are often presented in two distinct phases, each with its own headings. The primary purpose of this sequential explanatory design is to use qualitative results to clarify and interpret the findings of the predominantly quantitative study. One of the main strengths of this design is its straightforward nature, as the steps are organized into clear, distinct stages.

A questionnaire was utilized to gather quantitative data, from which inferences were drawn following statistical analysis. Interviews provided qualitative data, which were analyzed through content analysis and presented in narrative form. According to Best and Kahn (2016), closed-ended questions generate quantitative data, while interviews, observations, and open-ended questions yield qualitative data that describe changes. The study employed triangulation, combining both quantitative and qualitative data during the thematic analysis process.

### **3.4 Study Area**

The research was carried out at the University of Eldoret, one of the 32 public universities in Kenya, located approximately 9 km along the Eldoret-Ziwa road within Eldoret town, Uasin Gishu County. Originally established in 1984 as a teachers' training college, it was renamed Moi Teachers' Training College to provide Diploma Science Teacher training. In 1990, due to a double intake crisis, the college became part of Moi University and was

renamed Chepkoilel Campus, focusing on various Natural, Basic, and Applied Science programs.

In August 2010, the campus was elevated to University College status through Legal Notice No. 125 of 13 August 2010, becoming Chepkoilel University College, a Constituent College of Moi University. After receiving its charter in 2013, it was renamed the University of Eldoret. Additionally, there is no existing evidence of a similar study being conducted at Kenyan universities, suggesting that this study provides a comprehensive and diverse perspective on the issues under investigation. Access to informants in this public university was considered significantly easier compared to counterparts in other higher education institutions.

### **3.5 Target Population**

A population is defined as the complete collection of elements that share observable characteristics, from which researchers aim to draw conclusions about individuals (Cooper and Schindler, 2018). The target population of this study comprised of 718 administration staff consisting of 20 top management, 200 middle management and 498 junior support staff.

### **3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The sample size refers to a subset or smaller group derived from the total population available for study. This selected smaller group serves as a representative of the target population for the characteristics under investigation. The sampling procedure, as defined

by Cooper and Schindler (2018), involves the method used to obtain samples from the chosen population.

### 3.6.1 Sample Size

The sample size was calculated using using Yamane's formula (1967) which yield a sampled of 256 as shown below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n is the sample size,

N is the population size,

e is the level of precision.

$$n = \frac{718}{1 + 718 (0.05)^2} = \frac{718}{2.8}$$

$$n = 256$$

### 3.6.2 Sampling Techniques

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), a sampling technique is a systematic approach for selecting a sample from a designated population for study. From a target population of 718 employees the study used proportionate stratified random sampling to select a sample size of 256 respondents comprising of 6 top managers, 72 middle managers and 178 Junior staff/ support staff as summarized in Table 3.1. To determine the sample, the researcher employed stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling methods.

Initially, the stratified sampling technique was utilized to categorize the population into strata based on specific categories or cadres, with each category forming a distinct stratum. In stratified random sampling, the population is segmented into smaller groups, known as strata, from which a sample is randomly selected. The population was grouped into three strata namely; top level management, middle level and low-level management levels. The stratification enabled the researcher to capture the key population characteristics in the sample, allowing proportional representation of each sub-group in the overall population, these reducing errors in sample estimation. (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Stratified sampling was deemed suitable because it allows the researcher to adequately represent not only the overall population but also important sub-groups within it.

Top management comprises University council, University Senate, Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, the two Deputy Vice Chancellors and Chief registrar were selected using a purposive sampling method, Non probability sampling techniques was appropriate for the study it helped easily identify respondents with the required information on the study which involves which was fitting for the study as it provided a representative sample of the target population being examined. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, involves selecting cases or participants based on specific predetermined criteria or characteristics relevant to the research topic (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013). For middle level management and junior/support staff comprising Deans, Directors, and Departmental Heads, simple random sampling was employed. This method was chosen as a primary sampling technique because it ensures that each respondent has an equal opportunity of being included in the sample. This approach was considered appropriate for

the study due to its cost-effectiveness and efficiency in administration. Junior cadres staff comprising of subordinate's staff, cleaners, drivers, administrators and other support staff were selected using simple random sampling techniques.

**Table 3.1: Sampling Frame**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Top management	20	6
Middle management	200	72
Junior staff/support staff	498	178
<b>Total</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>256</b>

Source: Researcher, 2015

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

The study collected primary data were collected for study using employed. Willig and Rogers (2017) describe primary data as the initial early materials to the problem being researched. The main research instruments that were used in this study comprise of questionnaire and interview schedule. The Questionnaires were administered to middle management and support staff in the University of Eldoret. Interview schedule was used to collect information from top management in the University of Eldoret.

#### **3.7.1 Questionnaire**

Questionnaires consist of a set of questions that elicit responses from research participants in various ways. In this study, a self-administered structured questionnaire was utilized to gather data. This method was considered ideal for data collection due to its cost-effectiveness and practicality, especially given the size of the study's population

(Denscombe, 2014). The questionnaire was designed in alignment with the research objectives. It included structured questions that utilized a Likert scale, providing respondents with options from which they could select the response that most accurately reflected their position on the issues presented (Cooper and Schindler, 2018).

A five-point Likert scale was employed for the majority of the questions, with the exception of the section focused on the firm's background information. Respondents were asked to express their views on an attitude continuum that included options such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, indicating their level of agreement with each statement. This design aimed to target specific objectives within the study. The closed-ended questions provided precise information, reducing potential bias and facilitating data analysis. The questionnaires were distributed to middle management and support staff.

### **3.7.2 Interview Schedule**

Orodho (2008) suggests that individuals are often more inclined to communicate verbally rather than in writing, leading them to provide data more readily and comprehensively during interviews compared to questionnaires. This approach ensures that responses are reliably collected, facilitating meaningful comparisons. The interviewer possessed significant skill in conducting interviews, utilizing effective strategies to draw out responses (Tight, Hughes & Blaxter, 2006). A structured interview schedule was employed to collect information from the top management.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument**

#### **3.8.1 Pilot Study**

A pilot test is a procedure used to evaluate a data collection instrument before conducting the main research activity (Cooper and Schindler, 2018). In this study, the pilot test targeted respondents from categories similar to those involved in the main research. Consequently, the pilot was carried out among employees at Kisii University, a public institution that shares characteristics with the study area.

As noted by Cooper and Schindler (2011), a pilot study should encompass 10% of the calculated sample size for the research. Therefore, 25 respondents were randomly selected from each category specified in the population for the pilot testing. The purpose of the pilot study was to allow the researcher to determine the reliability and validity of the instrument, making modifications as necessary, and to facilitate familiarity with the administration of the questionnaires, ultimately improving the instruments and procedures. Pre-testing assists in identifying any issues within the research tool that need to be addressed before the main study.

#### **3.8.2 Validity**

Validity refers to a preliminary qualitative assessment of research instruments designed to evaluate their accuracy and suitability for obtaining the intended data for the study (Cooper and Schindler, 2018). To determine the validity of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted with a group of 20 respondents from Kisii University, which also justified the inclusion of specific content. The study utilized both content and construct validity.

To ensure content validity, discussions took place with experts during the questionnaire development phase to confirm that the measures included a sufficient and representative set of items related to the content being studied. The content validity of the instrument was assessed by the researcher through expert judgment, which involved reviewing the items with supervisors, department lecturers, and colleagues from Moi University. Additionally, the responses from participants were aligned with the research objectives. Face validity was established by evaluating whether the questions, at first glance, seemed to measure the intended construct in accordance with the research objectives.

Construct validity evaluates what the construct is intended to measure. This validity was upheld by linking the constructs to the theoretical framework from which they originated. The items in the questionnaire were restricted to those operationalized within the conceptual framework, guided by relevant variables, indicators, and supported by the literature review. The researcher carefully assessed each item to ensure it measured the intended concepts accurately. Input was also sought from supervisors regarding the instrument.

### **3.8.3 Reliability**

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), reliability refers to the extent to which scores are free from random errors. To assess the reliability of the instrument used in this study, the test-retest method was employed. Questionnaires were administered to 20 employees at Kisii University during the pilot study. The researcher utilized Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the consistency of the questionnaire items. The reliability of the research instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.

In this study, avoidance yielded a Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of 0.708, while collaboration and compromise had coefficients of 0.780 and 0.778, respectively. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher is generally considered indicative of strong internal reliability for the instruments. Field (2013) suggested that when the value exceeds 0.7, the item is deemed reliable and suitable for inclusion in the research tool, indicating that all items collectively demonstrated reliability.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

Prior to the actual data collection process, permission was obtained from the School of Postgraduate Studies at Moi University to facilitate the application for a research permit from the National Commission for Science and Technology Innovation. This permit was then submitted to the university's management for approval. The researcher conducted interviews with top management, each lasting approximately five minutes, which were audio recorded. For middle management and junior staff, questionnaires were distributed using the drop-and-pick method. A two-week period was allowed for respondents to complete the questionnaires. The intended participants were notified in advance of the data collection date, and the researcher confirmed the specific date for administering the questionnaires. Follow-up calls were made to address any queries, contributing to a higher response rate.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Data analysis involved condensing the collected data into a more manageable size, allowing for interpretation through the development of summaries, identification of

patterns, and application of statistical techniques to examine relationships between variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The appropriate analytical methods were determined based on the research design utilized and the nature of the gathered data. Prior to analysis, the collected data was checked for completeness and accuracy, then cleaned and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

The research generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically, drawing from the themes that emerged in response to interview questions. Thematic analysis was conducted using content analysis (computer-aided), where specific codes were assigned to identify themes.

Quantitative data was categorized, coded, and entered into SPSS (Version 26) for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed, with results presented in tabular and graphical formats, such as pie charts and bar graphs, accompanied by analytical and narrative descriptions. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize, visualize, and interpret data meaningfully, revealing emerging patterns. The findings were presented using tables and graphs.

Inferential statistics were applied to examine the relationships between conflict management strategies and service delivery. This included correlation analysis and regression analysis. The strength of relationships was assessed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, which ranges from +1 to -1, with +1 indicating a strong

positive correlation and -1 indicating a strong negative correlation. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was specifically utilized to evaluate the strength of relationships between variables. Correlations can be either positive or negative.

To model the relationship among independent variables, multiple regression analysis was conducted. This parametric statistical method was applicable as the data met specific assumptions (Field, 2009): the data was on an interval scale, exhibited a linear relationship, followed a normal distribution, and identified outliers were omitted. The multiple regression analysis also applied to test the hypotheses. Multiple regression model assumed the following equation:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

**Where:**

$Y$  = Performance

$A$  = Constant Term

$\beta_1, \beta_2$  and  $\beta_3$  = Coefficients of determination of the independent variables

$X_1$  = Avoidance

$X_2$  = Compromise

$X_3$  = Collaboration

$\epsilon$  = Error term

### **3.10.1 Diagnostic Tests**

The researcher conducted diagnostic tests before doing the regression analysis. The study conducted the linearity, Normality Test, autocorrelation, multicollinearity and Heteroscedasticity.

#### **Normality Test**

Montazeri and Grané (2016) indicate that normality tests assess the distribution of data to confirm it is not skewed. A histogram is utilized to evaluate the kurtosis and skewness of the data, while a normal probability plot (PP plot) can also be useful at times (Tokdar & Martin, 2019).

#### **Linearity Test**

Linearity test was conducted to determine whether there is linear relationship in the variables of the study. This was done graphically using the normal P-P plot with the findings and the interpretation was done basing on the layout of the data points.

#### **Multicollinearity**

Multicollinearity is a test used to determine whether the independent variables are highly correlated. Disatnik and Sivan (2016) describe multicollinearity as a condition in which there exists an exact (or nearly exact) linear relationship among two or more input variables; it measures the degree of correlation rather than simply indicating its presence or absence. The presence of multicollinearity can be identified by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values, as well as the eigenvalues from the correlation

matrix. Typically, a VIF value below 10 and a tolerance value above 0.2 indicate that multicollinearity is not an issue in the dataset (Winship & Western, 2016).

### **Heteroscedasticity**

This test is particularly useful in linear regression or when conducting time series analysis, as it helps describe the variances of errors across the model at various points in time (Klein, Gerhard, Büchner, Diestel & Schermelleh-Engel, 2016). In the context of heteroscedasticity, one key assumption is that the variance is homogeneous and that errors in the model are evenly distributed (Huang, Jia, Guo, Williams, Shi, Wei & Cao, 2017). The study employed QQ plots to assess heteroscedasticity; if the plots reveal a distinct pattern, it indicates that heteroscedasticity is present and could compromise the validity of the statistical tests performed.

### **3.11 Ethical Consideration**

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the Postgraduate Department at Moi University authority to conduct research. This authority letter was then used to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) to conduct the study. The researcher presented both the introductory letter and the research permit to the targeted institutions to seek permission for the research. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before the questionnaire was administered. Consent was given voluntarily, without any coercion, and participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any point. The researcher

also ensured that the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were maintained throughout the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the effects of conflict management on service delivery at the University of Eldoret. It highlights the data presentation, analysis and interpretation of the result based on the administered questionnaires and the in-depth interviewing. The data analysis was based on the study objectives from which the analysis of data presentations, interpretations and discussion were done. The chapter is organized as follows: back ground information, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression.

#### **4.2 Response Rate**

Data was gathered from employees across different categories at the University of Eldoret. Out of the 250 distributed questionnaires, 220 were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 88%. This response rate is considered highly satisfactory, aligning with Nyamjom's (2013) assertion that a response rate of 75% or higher is deemed excellent and representative of the target population. The high rate of successful returns was largely attributed to the self-administration method employed by the researcher, which allowed for more efficient and direct data collection.

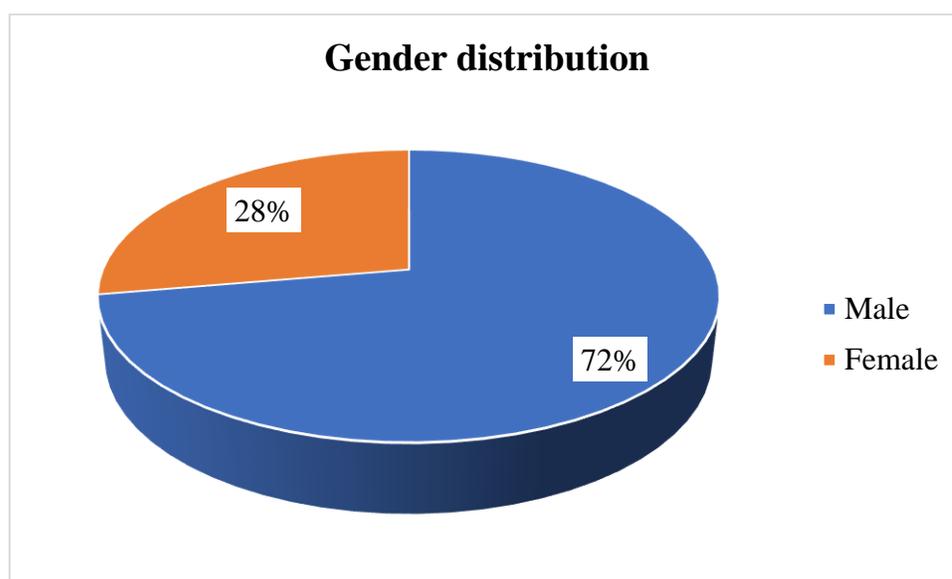
#### **4.3 Demographic Information**

Demographic information about the respondents based on gender, age and education level were sought. The information sought ensures there was gender, age and education level

diversity of respondents. This ensured that all gender, age and education level were represented in the study and to ascertain whether the respondent's demographic information affected the quality of responses, and if there was a link of the responses in relation to the influence of conflict management strategies on service delivery in the institution.

#### 4.3.1 Gender of Respondents

The gender of the respondents was sought as summarized and presented in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents**

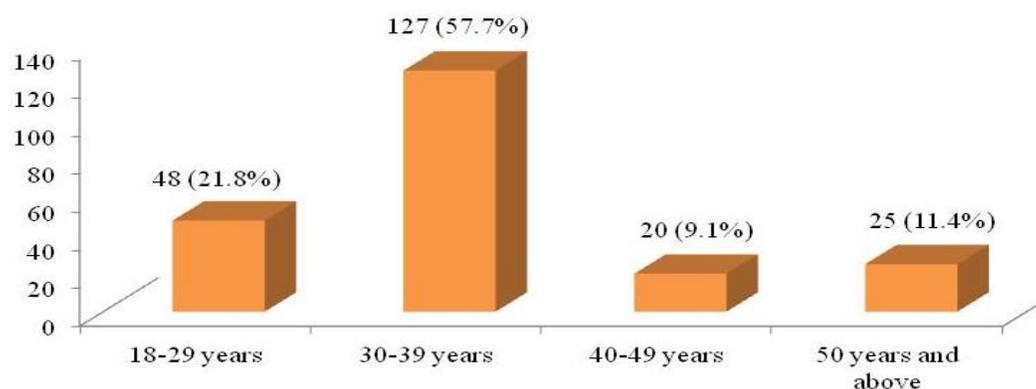
*Source: Researcher, 2015*

The findings showed that majority of respondents 159 (72%) were males and 61 (28%) of the employees were female. From the findings there was gender disparity in the distribution of employees in University of Eldoret. The overwhelming number of males may likely have impact on the structure or prevalence of certain strategies of managing conflicts as

researchers have posited that gender can influence conflict management strategies (Adebile and Ojo, 2011). There have been conflicting studies on the effect of gender on conflict management.

### 4.3.2 Age of Respondents

The study sought to establish the age of respondents as shown in Figure 4.2.



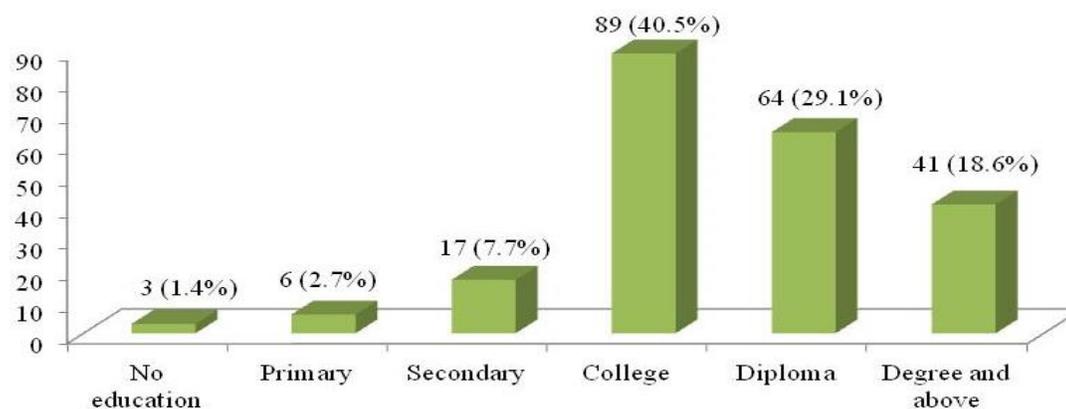
**Figure 4.2: Age of Respondents**

*Source: Researcher, 2015*

From the general information based on the ages of the respondents, it was found that 48% of the respondents were between 18-29 years old, 57% were between 30 and 39 years old, 9.1% were between 40 and 49 years old, 11.4% of the respondents were 50 years old and above. These findings indicated that 78.2% of employees working in University of Eldoret were above 30 years. The age-status background variable recorded among the participants showed that most employees were above the age of 30 years.

### 4.3.3 Education Level

The study sought to establish the education level of the respondents and findings regarding this were summarized and presented in figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3: Education Level**

*Source: Researcher, 2015*

From the findings in 89 (40.5%) of the respondents had university qualifications with 64(29.1%) had diploma. Of concern was the fact that 3 (1.4%) of the employees had no formal education, while 2.7% having had attained only primary education and 7.7% had secondary which is considered basic. From the study most of the employees 88.2% had above college education level. The education level of employees helps establish their level of understanding of the tasks assigned, their understanding of workplace policies of which conflict management falls.

The data indicated that the study participants were predominantly young male and female employees with strong educational backgrounds who had been employed at the institution for a considerable period. They were also aware of the existence of workplace conflicts

within their organization. This finding aligns with the research by Saranya (2016) and Idua (2017), who reported similar demographic characteristics among their respondents, including representation from both genders, individuals in their productive years, solid educational qualifications, and experiences of conflicts in their workplaces.

#### **4.4 Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics were used to give meaningful description of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires. Responses were elicited on a 5-point likert scale of 1-5 where: 1–strongly disagree; 2–disagree; 3-neutral; 4-agree; 5-strongly agree. Analysis of the response mean scores was conducted on the continuous scale <1.5 represents strongly disagree; with 1.5-2.5 disagree; while 2.5-3.5 given neutral; with 3.5- 4.5 being agree and finally >4.5 represented strongly agree.

##### **4.4.1 Service Delivery**

The dependent variable in the study was service delivery. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements related to service delivery using a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, were employed to summarize the responses, which are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Service Delivery**

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Physical facilities, equipment and personnel are adequate	Freq	39	123	58	0	0	3.91	0.66
	%	17.7	55.9	26.4	0	0		
The institution's employees are able to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	Freq	33	129	58	0	0	3.89	0.63
	%	15	58.6	26.4	0	0		
The employees of the institution are willing to help consumers (including students) and provide prompt service	Freq	46	118	56	0	0	3.95	0.68
	%	20.9	53.6	25.5	0	0		
The employees of the institution have adequate knowledge, are courteous and are able to inspire trust and confidence	Freq	90	78	46	6	0	4.15	0.84
	%	40.9	35.5	20.9	2.7	0		
The employees of the institution are caring and offer individualized attention to its customers (including students)	Freq	96	46	57	21	0	3.99	1.04
	%	43.6	20.9	25.9	9.5	0		
<b>Service Delivery</b>							<b>3.78</b>	<b>0.55</b>

*Source: Researcher, 2015*

Most of the respondents 162(73.6%) agreed that physical facilities, equipment and personnel are adequate and 58(26.4%) undecided ( $M=3.91$ ;  $SD=0.66$ ). Majority of the respondents 162(73.6%) agreed that the institution's employees are able to perform the promised service dependably and accurately and 58(26.4%) undecided ( $M=3.89$ ;  $SD=0.63$ ). Most of the respondents 164(74.5%) agreed that employees of the institution

are willing to help consumers (including students) and provide prompt service, 56(25.5%) were undecided ( $M=3.95$ ;  $SD=0.68$ ).

Majority of the respondents 168(76.4%) agreed that employees of the institution have adequate knowledge, are courteous and are able to inspire trust and confidence, 46(20.9%) undecided and 6(2.7%) disagreed ( $M=4.15$ ;  $SD=0.84$ ). Most of the respondents 142(64.5%) agreed that the employees of the institution are caring and offer individualized attention to its customers (including students), 21(9.5%) disagreed and 57(25.9%) were undecided ( $M=3.99$ ;  $SD=1.04$ ).

The study's findings revealed that the responses to the five statements related to service delivery had an overall mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.55. This indicates that the majority of respondents agreed with the statements used to assess service delivery in public universities. These findings was supported by interviews of university management that there were establish mechanisms used to handle conflict. This implies that there are set rules and regulations regarding conflict and conflict management in the institution.

Furthermore, it binds the managers and their supervisors because they are able to discuss and agree on a common solution to a problem. This was an indication that the management at the university appreciated the value of conflict resolution strategies as a way of bringing about harmonious relationships.

The manager six revealed that;

*“Conflict management rules and regulations builds an environment of tolerance, especially if the parties involved are able to solve the issues amicably” and “it binds the managers and their supervisees because they are able to discuss and agree on a common solution to a problem”*

Manager three revealed that;

*“There was established method of handling conflict situations at the university. Measures put in place to enhance conflict management. The conflict management methods have been highlighted in the employee hiring manual”*

The employees were able to provide services dependably and accurately, because they were knowledgeable, courteous and able to inspire trust and confidence. When staff are productive, they achieve more within a specified time.

#### **4.4.2 Avoidance Strategy of Conflict Management**

The first objective of this study was to determine the impact of avoidance as a conflict management strategy on service delivery. Respondents were prompted to rate their level of agreement with questions regarding the conflict avoidance strategy using a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, were applied to summarize the responses, which are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Avoidance Conflict Management Strategy**

Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std.Dev.
I avoid unpleasantness	Freq.	56	86	20	36	22	3.54	1.3
	%	25.5	39.1	9.1	16.4	10		
My withdrawing from conflict situation	Freq.	89	102	29	0	0	4.27	0.68
	%	40.5	46.4	13.2	0	0		
Avoiding being put on the spot	Freq.	17	174	26	3	0	3.93	0.5
	%	7.7	79.1	11.8	1.4	0		
Avoiding taking position that may create controversies	Freq.	48	28	92	52	0	3.33	1.07
	%	21.8	12.7	41.8	23.6	0		
Avoidance gives me ability to prepare and collect facts	Freq.	51	128	41	0	0	4.05	0.65
	%	23.2	58.2	18.6	0	0		
<b>Avoidance Conflict Management Strategy</b>							<b>3.82</b>	<b>0.49</b>

*Source: Researcher, 2015*

Most of the respondents 142(64.6%) agreed that they avoid unpleasantness, with 58 (26.4%) disagree and 20(9.1%) undecideds ( $M=3.54$ ;  $SD=1.30$ ). Majority of the respondents 191(86.9%) agreed that withdrawing from conflict situation and 29(13.2%) undecideds ( $M=4.27$ ;  $SD=0.68$ ). Most of the respondents 191(86.8%) agreed that avoiding being put on the spot, with 3(1.4%) disagree and 26(11.8%) were undecided ( $M=3.93$ ;  $SD=0.50$ ).

Majority of the respondents 92(41.8%) were undecided that they often avoid taking position that may create controversies, with 76(34.5%) agreed and 52(23.6%) disagreed ( $M=3.33$ ;  $SD=1.07$ ). Most of the respondents 179(81.4%) agreed that avoidance gives

them ability to prepare and collect facts and 41(18.6%) were undecided ( $M=4.05$ ;  $SD=0.65$ ).

From the findings of the study, it was evident that responses to the 5 statements used to explain avoidance strategy had an overall mean of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 0.49. This show that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements used to measure avoidance conflict management strategy in public universities.

From the study majority of the respondents believed that they avoid unpleasantness to themselves, withdrawal from the conflict situation hoping that disagreement will eventually disappear. As a conflict management strategy they believed avoiding being put on the spot and often avoid taking positions that may create controversies. They usually withdraw from an issue or give up goals and relationship involving conflicts.

This agrees with the interview results the university management used avoidance strategy in conflict management as manager one stated that:

*The use of avoidance strategy was necessary when management want to buy time to consider an issue in detail before responding. Furthermore, some staff who did not want to confront their managers used avoidance with the hope that issue would sour itself out with time.*

Managers two stated that:

*“Avoidance conflict management strategy should not be used, if the conflict deals with an issue that is of immediate concern. Since, it deals with short term solutions, but fails to provide a permanent long-term solution to the underlying conflict and it will re-occur again in another form”.*

Avoiding conflicts, or escapism, does not provide a permanent solution, as these conflicts are likely to resurface later. Management echoed this sentiment, asserting that neglecting to address conflicts can hinder the achievement of long-term organizational goals. The avoidance strategy negatively affects service delivery by allowing unresolved conflicts to fester. This technique prioritizes more pressing or critical issues instead of confronting conflicts directly. However, steering clear of minor disputes can enhance an employee's performance, as the avoidance strategy allows individuals time to better prepare and gather information before taking action.

#### **4.4.3 Collaboration Conflict Management Strategy**

The second objective of the study was to assess the impact of collaboration as a conflict management strategy on service delivery. To accomplish this, respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with questions regarding collaboration as a conflict management strategy using a five-point Likert scale. The findings are detailed in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Collaboration Conflict Management Strategy**

Statement		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
Going along with the suggestion of co-workers	Freq.	4	112	38	58	8	3.21	0.98
	%	1.8	50.9	17.3	26.4	3.6		
Trying to investigate the issue with my co-workers to find a solution that is acceptable to all	Freq.	11	154	55	0	0	3.8	0.51
	%	5	70	25	0	0		
Trying to reconcile our differences and search for a win -win solution	Freq.	0	96	32	79	13	2.96	1.02
	%	0	43.6	14.5	35.9	5.9		
Trying to use a neutral third party to help reach a solution	Freq.	17	174	26	3	0	3.93	0.5
	%	7.7	79.1	11.8	1.4	0		
Trying to get all issues of concern out in the open immediately	Freq.	49	119	52	0	0	3.99	0.68
	%	22.3	54.1	23.6	0	0		
<b>Collaboration Conflict Management Strategy</b>							<b>3.77</b>	<b>0.52</b>

Most of the respondents 116(52.7%) agreed that going along with the suggestion of co-workers, with 66(30%) disagree and 38(17.3%) undecided ( $M=3.21$ ;  $SD=0.98$ ). Majority of the respondents 165(75%) agreed that trying to investigate the issue with my co-workers to find a solution that is acceptable to all and 22(25%) undecided ( $M=3.80$ ;  $SD=0.51$ ). Most of the respondents 96(43.6%) agreed that they trying to reconcile our differences and search for a win -win solution, with 92(41.8%) disagree and 32(14.5%) were undecided ( $M=2.96$ ;  $SD=1.02$ ). Majority of the respondents 191(86.8%) agreed that they tried to use a neutral third party to help reach a solution, with 26(11.8%) were undecided and 3(1.4%)

disagreed ( $M=3.93$ ;  $SD=0.50$ ). Most of the respondents 168(76.4%) agreed that they tried to get all issues of concern out in the open immediately and 53(23.6%) were undecided ( $M=3.99$ ;  $SD=0.68$ ).

From the findings of the study, it was evident that responses to the 5 statements used to explain collaboration strategy had an overall mean of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 0.52. This show that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements used to measure collaboration conflict management strategy in public universities. From the study majority of the respondents believed that going along with the suggestion of their co-workers, trying to investigate the issue with them to find a solution that is acceptable to all. Trying to reconcile differences and search for win-win solution, using of neutral third party and trying to get all issues of concern in the open immediately as a conflict management strategy.

This finding concurs with interview results that collaboration were notable the willingness to accommodate diverse suggestions, corporation among the employees to resolve conflict, as well as being open to reach a solution.

Manager four stated that:

*“Through collaborating all parties feel understood and valued, collaboration helps in achievement of mutual optimal outcomes in conflict resolution given its focus on building relations and integrating solutions. This strategy requires a give-and-take*

*attitude and cooperation between the employer and employees during the management of the conflict”*

This was affirmed by the opinions of Manager six that:

*“Conflict is treated as a problem for which both employer and employees are interested in finding a mutually acceptable solution. Embracing dialogue in managing conflicts results into positive outcomes in turn leading to better service delivery”*

The collaboration emphasizes that the conflicting parties should be willing and prepared to meet each other demands in full and that the collaborating conflict management style provides a suitable way to bring together the different insights of individuals on the various problem perspectives and the end result can be an unwavering commitment to the decision made from all the parties.

#### **4.4.4 Compromise Strategy of Conflict Management**

The third objective of this study was to establish the effect of compromise strategy of conflict management on service delivery. To achieve this objective, the respondents were asked to rate on five-point Likert scale their level of agreement on questions related to the effect of compromise strategy of conflict management. The findings are shown in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Compromise Conflict Management Strategy**

		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
Using give and take so that compromise may be reached	Freq.	51	128	41	0	0	4.05	0.65
	%	23.2	58.2	18.6	0	0		
Negotiation with co – workers so that compromise may be reached	Freq.	97	57	59	7	0	4.11	0.91
	%	44.1	25.9	26.8	3.2	0		
Openness to any bargaining process that leads to compromise	Freq.	39	40	105	36	0	3.37	0.96
	%	17.7	18.2	47.7	16.4	0		
Trying to find a fair combination of gains and losses for all	Freq.	0	138	72	0	10	3.54	0.72
	%	0	62.7	32.7	0	4.5		
<b>Compromise Conflict Management Strategy</b>							<b>3.58</b>	<b>0.43</b>

Most of the respondents 179(81.4%) agreed that using give and take so that compromise may be reached and 41(18.6%) undecided ( $M=4.05$ ;  $SD=0.65$ ). Majority of the respondents 154(70%) agreed that negotiation with co-workers so that compromise may be reached with 59(26.8%) undecided and 7(3.2%) disagreed ( $M=4.11$ ;  $SD=0.91$ ). Most of the respondents 105(47.7%) were undecided that openness to any bargaining process leads to compromise, with 79(35.9%) agreed and 36 (16.4%) disagreed ( $M=3.37$ ;  $SD=0.96$ ). Majority of the respondents 138(62.7%) agreed that they tried to find a fair combination of gains and losses for all, with 72(32.7%) were undecided and 10(4.5%) disagreed ( $M=3.54$ ;  $SD=0.72$ ).

From the findings of the study, it was evident that responses to the 4 statements used to explain compromise strategy had an overall mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 0.52. This shows that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements used to measure compromise conflict management strategy in public universities. This finding agrees with interviews that compromise conflict management strategy was used in public universities. The employees believed that compromise is a conflict management strategy, negotiating with co-workers, being open to any bargaining process that leads to compromise and a fair combination of gains and losses for both parties.

Manager 04 pointed out that;

*“Conflict management using compromise was a familiar way of handling conflicts at the university, given that the University staff comprises people of various backgrounds, education and experience”.*

However, this concurs with manager 05 that:

*“Compromise is a good strategy and was used at the university to handle conflicts but within the set rules of engagement”.*

Manager 06 noted that

*“Most employees would favor the compromise strategy of conflict management even though it is unpopular strategy”*

This agrees with Kagwiria (2019) that compromising strategies has a positively significant impact on performance. Compromise approach may provide a temporary solution while still looking for a win-win situation, and compromise emphasizes something that is frequently overlooked in personal and commercial interactions. On the other hand, Abazeed (2017) found that compromise has a major impact on organizational commitment in his study. Compromising conflict management style attempts to resolve a conflict by identifying a solution that is partially satisfactory to both parties but completely satisfactory to neither of the parties. This strategy requires both sides to give up something in order to gain something better. It is usually used in situations where parties are fairly equal in status and neither side puts forward too many demands.

#### 4.4.5 Measures Enhancing Services Delivery

The fourth objective of this study was to identify measures for enhancing service delivery. To achieve this objective the respondents were asked to rate in five point likert scale their level of agreement on questions related to measures for enhancing service delivery. The results are presented in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Measures Enhancing Services Delivery**

	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Timeliness			96	43.6	32	14.5	79	35.9	13	5.9	2.96	1.02
Effectiveness	106	48.2	63	28.6	51	23.2					4.25	0.81
Efficiency	106	48.2	78	35.5	36	16.4					4.32	0.74
Quality	50	22.7	42	19.1	128	58.2					3.65	0.83
Reliability	39	17.7	85	38.6	96	43.6					3.74	0.74

*Source: Researcher, 2015*

From the study 96(43.6%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that timeliness was a strategy for enhancing service delivery ( $M=2.96$ ;  $SD=1.02$ ). Majority 169(76.8%) of the respondents agreed on effectiveness in service delivery and 51 (23.2%) of the respondents disagreed ( $M=4.25$ ;  $SD=0.81$ ). The study findings suggested that majority 184(83.7%) of the respondents believed that efficiency was a strategy for enhancing service delivery and only 16.4% were undecided ( $M=4.32$ ;  $SD=0.74$ ).

Similarly, 92(41.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that quality was a strategy for enhancing service delivery and majority 58.2% were undecided ( $M=3.65$ ;  $SD=0.83$ ). Finally, 124(56.3%) of the respondents agreed that reliability was a strategy for enhancing service delivery and 43.6% were undecided ( $M=3.74$ ;  $SD=0.74$ ).

From the study employees believed that timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency and quality/reliability was a strategy for enhancing service delivery. Employee's productivity is the measurement of the amount of time and effort staff spends working against the resultant output; if the resultant output reflects and compensates the inputs, the staff is said to be productive, thus it has a significant impact on an organization's revenue.

In addition, on the extent to which conflict management affects service delivery, managers three noted that;

*“If the parties involved do not agree, they will spend a lot of time arguing and in trying to solve the problem. It does to a high extent, for instance, if the conflict is between a supervisor and a supervisee, the supervisee will often feel inferior”*

On the measures the institution should put in place to enhance conflict management and service delivery Managers one responses were;

*“The conflict management methods have been highlighted in the employee hiring manual. Occassionally, the organization organizes outings to encourage togetherness and hardwork”*

From these findings, it is clear that there are set out guidelines on conflict as well as conflict resolution within the institution and majority of the employee prefer following these rules and regulations other than exercising their own mechanisms to resolve conflict. On the other hand, apart from ensuring that the conflict and conflict management aspects are highlighted in the employees’ manual, the institution also encourages teamwork through organizing social outings for the employees.

#### **4.5 Correlation Analysis**

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to measure the strength and direction of the association between avoidance, collaborative and compromise conflict management strategy on service delivery in university of Eldoret summarized and presented in table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Correlation Analysis**

Strategy		Service delivery	Avoidance	Compromise	Collaboration
Avoidance	Pearson Correlation	.453**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
Compromise	Pearson Correlation	.683**	.687**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
Collaboration	Pearson Correlation	.592**	.336**	.294**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=220

*Source: Researcher, 2015*

There was a significant positive and weak relationship between the avoidance conflict management strategy and service delivery at the University of Eldoret ( $r = 0.453$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.00$ ). This suggests that an increase in the avoidance conflict management strategy led to improvements in service delivery. This finding aligns with Kagucia and Poipoi (2014), which indicates that avoidance conflict resolution strategies impact employee performance, as well as with Kagucia (2014), who reported a positive correlation between avoidance and worker performance.

Additionally, there was a significant positive and strong relationship between the compromise conflict management strategy and service delivery at the University of Eldoret ( $r = 0.683$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ). This indicates that enhancements in the compromise conflict management strategy contribute to improved service delivery at the institution. This finding supports Kagwiria (2019), that the moderate performance of Garissa Level Five

Hospital in Kenya can be attributed to the relatively effective use of compromise strategies in conflict management. Managers consistently sought temporary solutions, while striving for cooperative resolutions during conflict management meetings, emphasizing the importance of finding compromise solutions.

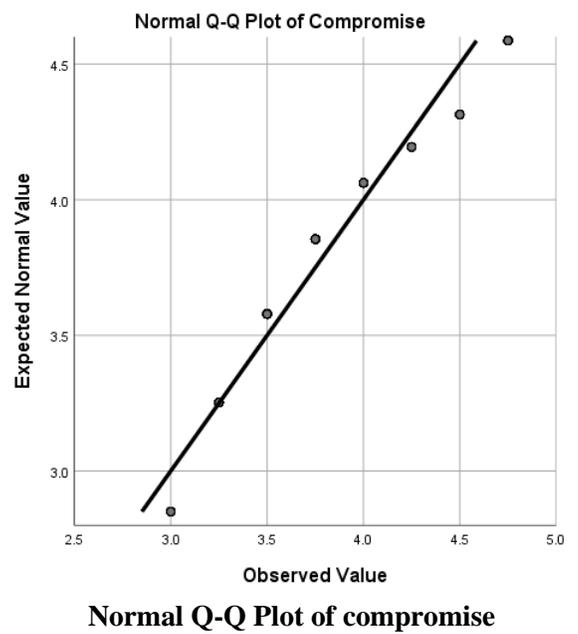
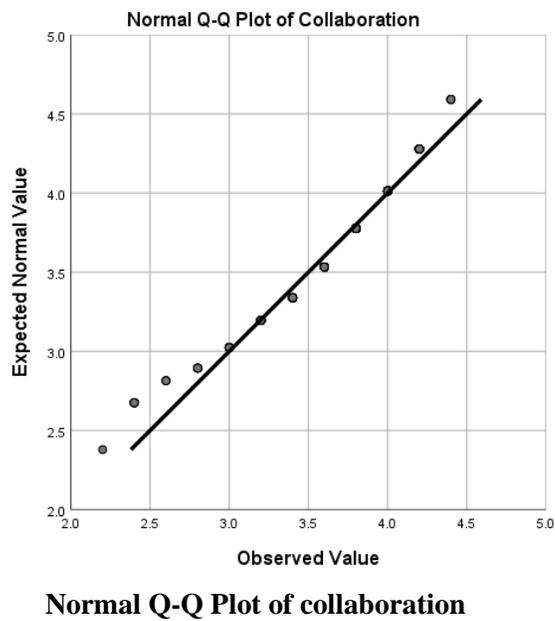
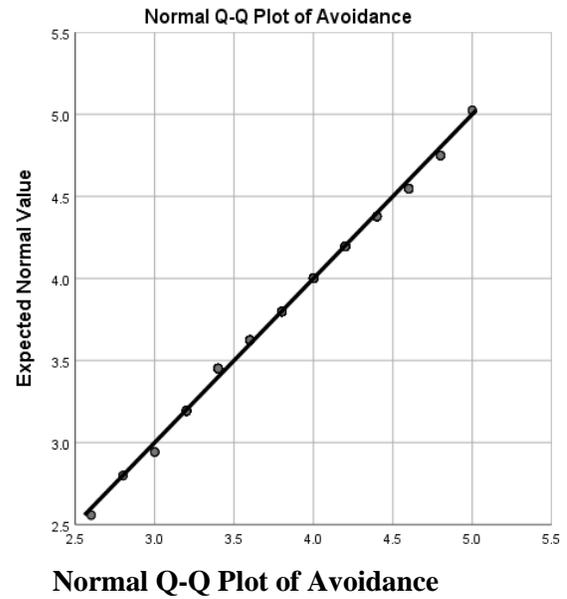
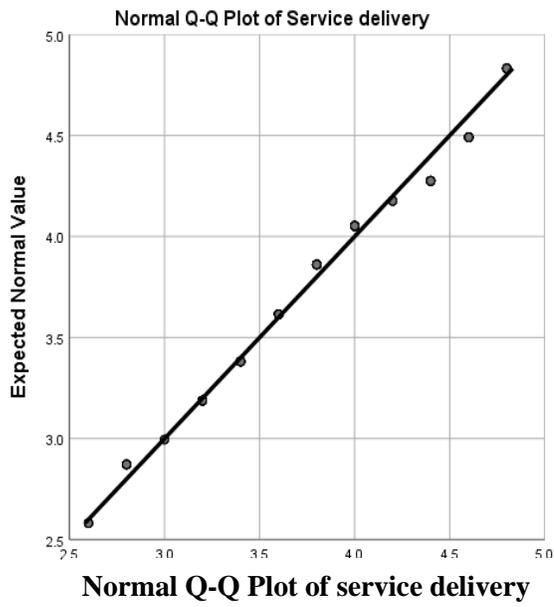
The study's results revealed a significant positive relationship between the collaboration conflict management strategy and service delivery at the University of Eldoret ( $r = 0.592$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.00$ ). This indicates that an increase in the collaboration between employer and employee improves service delivery. These results are consistent with findings from Toku (2014) and Longe (2015), who also identified a positive and significant relationship between collaboration conflict management techniques and employee performance. Overall, the study found that the most influential factor related to service delivery at the University of Eldoret was the compromise, followed by the collaboration conflict management strategy, as evidenced by the highest correlation coefficients.

#### **4.6 Assumptions of Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis was utilized to examine the direct relationships between conflict management strategies and service delivery. Before conducting the tests, the assumptions of regression were reviewed. It has been noted that regression analysis, particularly multiple regression, is most effective when certain assumptions are met (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2013). These assumptions include homoscedasticity, autocorrelation, linearity, multicollinearity, and normality.

#### **4.6.1 Normality Assumption Test**

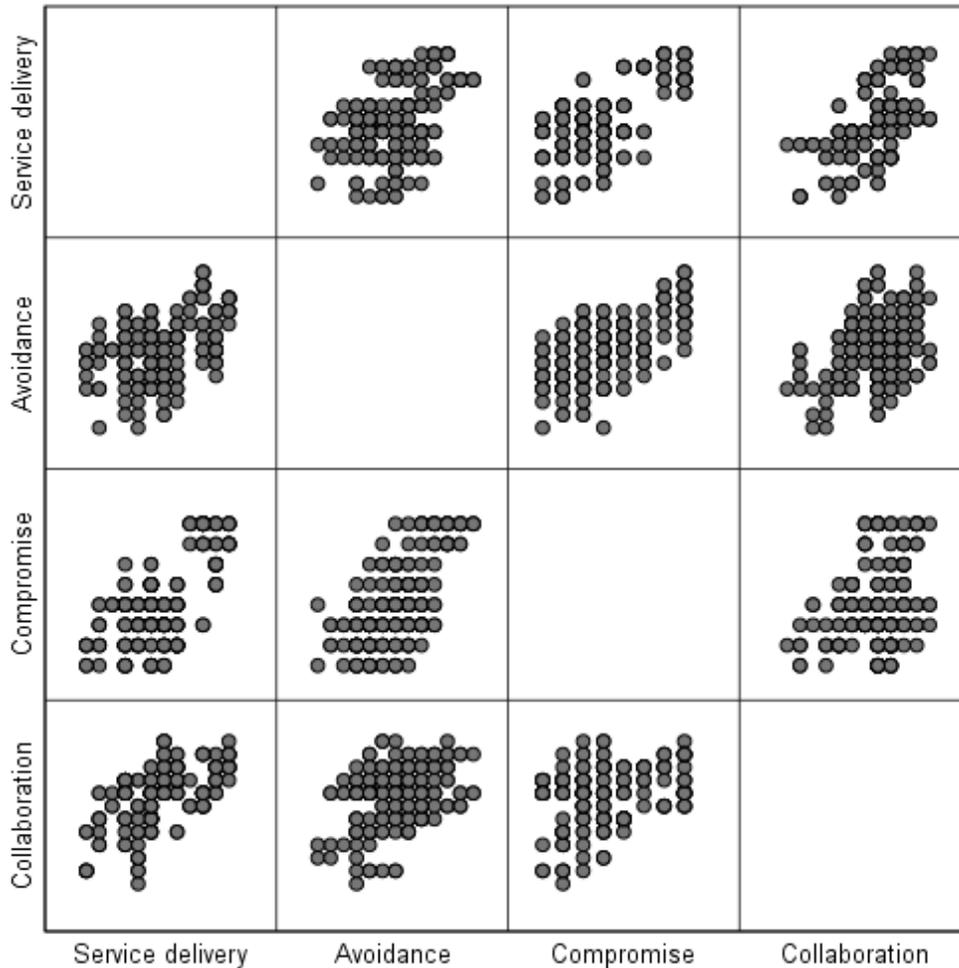
The distribution of data across the five constructs was assessed for normality using quantile–quantile (Q-Q) plots. According to Loy, Follett, and Hofman (2015), Q-Q plots are effective for highlighting non-normal aspects of distributions, making them particularly suitable for normality testing. Normality is indicated in a Q-Q plot when the plotted data for a given variable aligns along a diagonal line typically associated with a normal distribution. The normal Q-Q plot presented in Figure 4.4 illustrates that the data points remained close to the diagonal line throughout the distribution. As a result, the data regarding avoidance, compromise, collaboration, and service delivery demonstrated a normal distribution.



**Figure 4.4: Normal Q-Q Plot**

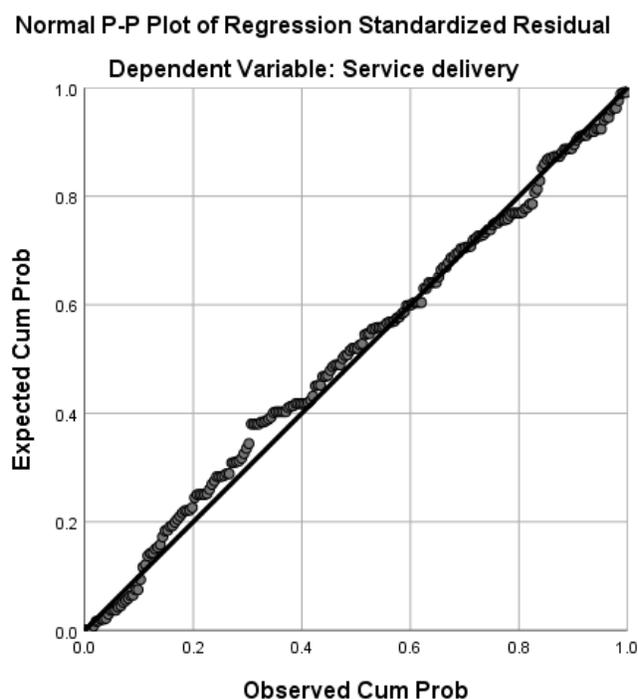
#### 4.6.2 Linearity Assumption Test

Bivariate scatter plots were utilized to assess the degree of linear relationships among the study variables. The linearity of the variables was confirmed when elliptical or oval scatter plots were generated, as depicted in Figure 4.5 Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) identify linearity as one of the key assumptions underlying regression analysis. Bivariate scatter plots are more effective in illustrating linearity than Pearson correlation, which only captures the linear aspect of the relationship.



**Figure 4.5: Linear Relationship of Variables**

Linearity refers to the assumption that there exists a straight-line relationship between two variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Testing for linearity was considered essential since it is a prerequisite for regression analysis. A thorough examination of the residual plots and scatter plots using statistical software revealed both linear and curvilinear relationships (Keith, 2006; Osborne & Waters, 2002). The residual plots, which displayed the standardized residuals against the predicted values, were utilized to assess the linearity of service delivery, the dependent variable, as illustrated in Figure 4.6.

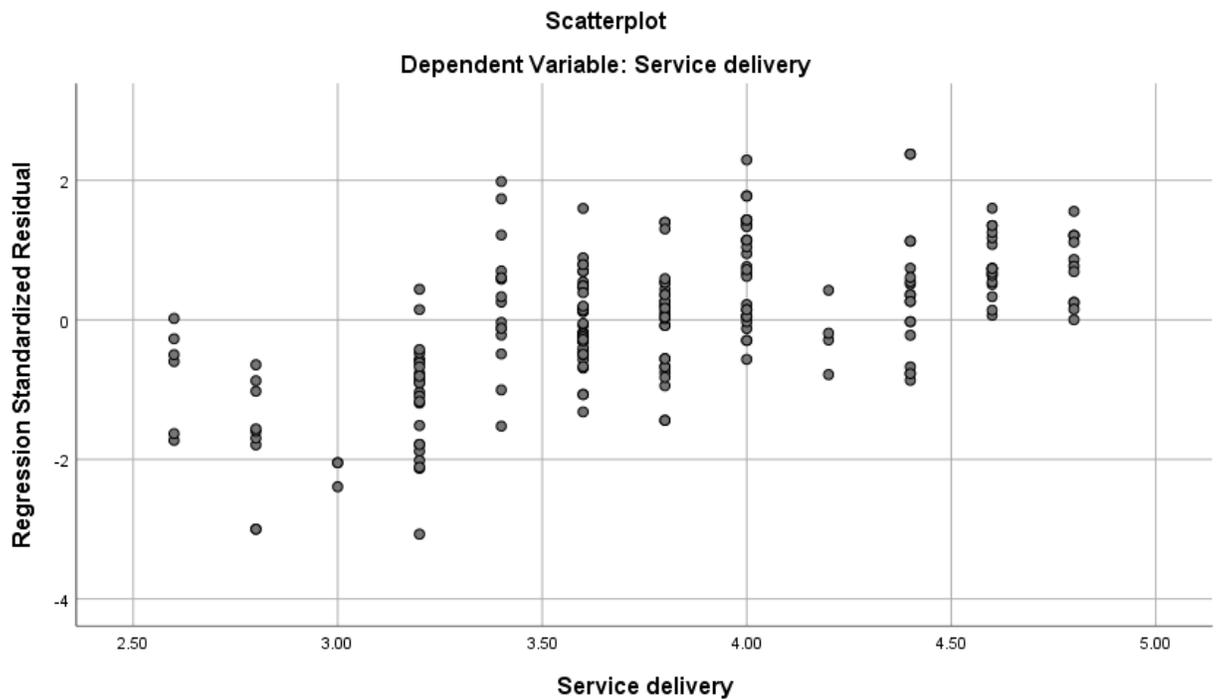


**Figure 4.6: Linearity**

#### **4.6.3 Homoscedasticity Assumption Test**

Homoscedasticity pertains to multiple regression analysis and, as stated by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), assumes that the variability of scores for the dependent variable is consistent across different levels of the independent variables. The assumption of homoscedasticity

was evaluated using the standardized residual scatter plot (Figure 4.7). To meet this assumption, the variables were expected to generate oval or elliptical scatter plots. The results presented in Figure 4.6 show that oval scatter plots appeared in all cells, indicating that the homoscedasticity requirement was not violated.



**Figure 4.7: Homoscedasticity**

#### 4.5.4 Autocorrelation Assumption Test

As noted by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), autocorrelation refers to the correlation among regression residuals. The assumption of independence of errors is breached when factors such as time and distance influence the order in which cases are collected. Therefore, the independence of errors was assessed using the Durbin-Watson statistic, which measures autocorrelation in errors when the order of cases is taken into account (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The presence of autocorrelation (independence of errors) was evaluated through the Durbin-Watson (DW) statistics. According to Hair *et al.*, (2013), regression analysis requires that residuals be independent from one another. A Durbin-Watson statistic within the range of  $1.5 < d < 2.5$  indicates a lack of autocorrelation (Verbeek, 2012). In this analysis, the critical values of  $1.5 < d < 2.5$  were applied to inspect for autocorrelation. The results shown in Table 4.7 indicate that the overall Durbin-Watson statistic was  $d = 2.204$ , falling between the two critical values and confirming the absence of autocorrelation.

**Table 4.7: Autocorrelation Test**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
1	2.204 <sup>a</sup>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Collaboration, Compromise, Avoidance

b. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

**4.6.5 Multicollinearity Assumption Test**

To assess multicollinearity, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was utilized to evaluate the extent to which the variance of an estimated regression coefficient increases due to correlation among the predictors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). A common guideline suggests that a VIF value should be less than ten, and the tolerance level should be greater than 0.2 (Keith, 2006; Shieh, 2010). The results in Table 4.8 show that all VIF values were below the acceptable threshold, indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue in the study. This was supported by the study's VIF values, which were all below 5, and the lowest tolerance value of 0.2, both of which are well under the cut-off points of 10 and 0.2, respectively. Consequently, the assumption of multicollinearity has not been violated.

**Table 4.8: Collinearity Statistics****Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Avoidance	.509	1.966
	Compromise	.524	1.910
	Collaboration	.879	1.137

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

**4.7 Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between one dependent variable and multiple predictor variables (Hair *et al.*, 2006). The summary of regression coefficients was then utilized to clarify the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This analysis was employed to test the three null hypotheses. The coefficient of determination (R square) served as an indicator of explanatory power, illustrating how well the independent variables account for variations in the dependent variable. Adjusted R square was also used to determine the explanatory power of the independent variables while excluding the dependent variable. Additionally, the F statistic (ANOVA) was applied to evaluate the model's goodness of fit. Overall, the regression coefficient summary provided insights into the relationship dynamics between the dependent and independent variables.

### 4.7.1 Model Summary

A multiple regression model was used to explore the relationship between conflict management strategies (avoidance, collaboration and compromise) on service delivery as shown in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.802 <sup>a</sup>	.644	.639	.32946

a. Predictors: (Constant), Collaboration, Compromise, Avoidance

Multiple regression analysis was conducted, revealing that the coefficient of determination (R squared) was 0.644. This indicates that 64.4% of the service delivery at the University of Eldoret can be attributed to conflict management strategies. The adjusted R-square value of 0.639 suggests that, excluding the constant variable, the conflict management strategies accounted for a 63.9% change in service delivery. The remaining percentage of the variation is attributed to other factors not included in the model.

### 4.7.2 Analysis of Variance

The analysis of variance was used to test whether the model could significantly fit in predicting the outcome than using the mean as shown in (Table 4.10).

**Table 4.10 : Analysis of Variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.370	3	14.123	130.118	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	23.445	216	.109		
	Total	65.814	219			

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

b. Predictors: (Constant), Collaboration, Compromise, Avoidance

The results,  $F(3, 216) = 130.118$ ,  $P = 0.000$  at 0.05 significance level, demonstrate that the model was statistically significant to predict the effect of conflict management strategy on service delivery. This indicates that the regression model used in the investigation has a high degree of goodness of fit.

### 4.7.3 Regression Coefficients of Service Delivery

Additionally, the  $\beta$  coefficients for conflict management strategies, as independent variables, were derived from the model to test the study's hypotheses. The t-test was employed to determine whether the conflict management strategies as predictors significantly contributed to the model, as illustrated in Table 4.11. It provided estimates of the  $\beta$ -values and the contribution of each predictor to the overall model.

**Table 4.11: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.216	.224		-.963	.337
	Avoidance	-.160	.063	-.143	-2.517	.013
	Compromise	.684	.059	.649	11.563	.000
	Collaboration	.568	.055	.449	10.367	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

From the findings obtained from the regression coefficients in Table 4.12, the regression model is given as;

$$Y = -0.216 + -0.160X_1 + 0.684X_2 + .568X_3 + \varepsilon$$

**Where:**

Y = Service delivery, X<sub>1</sub> = avoidance, X<sub>2</sub> = compromise, X<sub>3</sub> = collaboration, ε = error term

Based on the equation provided, if the three predictor variables (avoidance, compromise, and collaboration) are held at a constant level of zero, the service delivery at the University of Eldoret would be -0.216. Overall, the results of the regression analysis indicated that compromise and collaboration had a positive correlation with service delivery, as evidenced by beta coefficient values of 0.684 and 0.568, respectively. In contrast, avoidance was negatively related to service delivery, indicated by a beta coefficient value of -0.160, with all p-values being less than 0.05. The t-test associated with the β-values

was significant, showing that conflict management strategies as predictors made a meaningful contribution to the model.

#### **4.7.4 Hypotheses Testing**

The study hypothesized that the avoidance conflict management strategy would have no significant effect on service delivery. However, the findings demonstrated a negative significant impact of avoidance on service delivery ( $\beta_1 = -0.160$  and  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). Consequently, an increase in the avoidance conflict management strategy resulted in a decrease in service delivery at the University of Eldoret by 0.160, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ). It was concluded that avoiding conflict management strategies negatively affects service delivery at the University of Eldoret, indicating a significant inverse relationship between avoidance strategies and service delivery.

In relation to the hypothesis that collaboration conflict management strategy would not significantly affect service delivery, the findings displayed a positive significant effect ( $\beta_2 = 0.568$  and  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). An increase in the collaboration strategy resulted in an improvement of 0.568 in service delivery at the University of Eldoret. Since the  $p$ -value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that the collaboration conflict management strategy has a positive impact on service delivery.

Regarding the hypothesis that the compromise conflict management strategy would have no significant effect on service delivery, the findings revealed a positive significant impact

( $\beta_3 = 0.684$  and  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). A unit change in the compromise strategy produced a positive change of 0.684 in service delivery at the University of Eldoret. Given that the  $p$ -value for compromise was below 0.05, the significance level indicated a meaningful relationship between the use of compromise conflict management strategies and service delivery. Thus, a strong positive and significant relationship exists between the application of the compromise strategy and service delivery in the University of Eldoret, Kenya. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) was rejected, and an increase in the compromise strategy led to an improvement in service delivery by 0.684. This suggests that the compromise conflict management strategy positively influences service delivery at the University of Eldoret.

Overall, the compromise strategy ( $\beta = 0.684$ ,  $t = 11.563$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ) exhibited the most significant positive effect on service delivery. The collaboration conflict management strategy followed closely as the second most significant influence ( $\beta = 0.568$ ,  $t = 10.367$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). In contrast, the avoidance strategy had the least significant negative effect on service delivery ( $\beta = -0.160$ ,  $t = -2.517$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ). This supports the findings of Mwaniki and Muathe (2021), which noted that negotiation, mediation, and collaboration positively impacted employee performance, while avoidance had a negative effect.

The multiple regression model indicated an  $R^2$  value of 0.644, meaning that avoidance, collaboration, and compromise conflict management strategies account for 64.4% of the variation in service delivery at the University of Eldoret. These findings suggest that conflict management strategies significantly affect service delivery. This aligns with

Tumwebaze *et al.*, (2020), who concluded that effective conflict management positively influences employee performance, with compromise being the most statistically significant factor, followed by third-party intervention, while negotiation had a less significant overall impact. In light of these results, it is recommended to prioritize the high-scoring methods of collaboration and compromise over negotiation interventions.

## **4.8 Discussion of Findings**

### **4.8.1 Avoidance Strategy of Conflict Management and Service Delivery**

The study findings indicated that the avoiding conflict management strategy, which involves avoiding unpleasantness, withdrawing from conflict situations, avoiding being put on the spot, avoiding taking positions that may create controversies, and using avoidance to prepare and collect facts, had a significant negative effect on service delivery. This strategy prevents timely resolution of conflicts, allowing issues to escalate and reducing effective communication and collaboration. It leads to important issues being ignored, undermining transparency and accountability, and resulting in employee disengagement and decreased job satisfaction.

Furthermore, reliance on avoidance fosters a culture of fear and reluctance to address issues directly, undermining trust and openness within the organization and stifling creativity and innovation. Consequently, while avoidance may provide temporary relief, it ultimately hampers service delivery by fostering a toxic work environment and hindering

Avoiding conflict management strategies negatively affects service delivery at the University of Eldoret. This finding aligns with Abdullah (2015), who noted that avoidance

leads to delayed responses to factors contributing to organizational conflicts, exacerbating the issues.

Furthermore, it concurs with Alajekwu and Alajekwu (2017) that found a negative correlation between the use of avoidance conflict resolution techniques and employees' performance, supporting the idea that avoidance hampers effective conflict resolution and service delivery. These findings contrast, Agusioma (2018) highlighted that staff participation in conflict and dispute resolution had a strong positive impact on the performance of staff at the Kenyan Public Service Commission (PSC). This study concluded that effective dispute resolution improved employee performance, emphasizing that proactive conflict management plays a favorable role in enhancing staff and organizational performance. This perspective suggests that avoiding conflict management strategies may miss opportunities for constructive engagement and resolution, ultimately affecting service delivery negatively.

#### **4.8.2 Collaboration Conflict Management Strategy and Service Delivery**

The results revealed that the collaboration conflict management strategy, characterized by practices such as accepting co-workers' suggestions, investigating issues together to find mutually acceptable solutions, reconciling differences to achieve win-win outcomes, using neutral third parties when needed, and addressing all concerns openly and promptly, had a significant positive effect on service delivery. Collaboration fosters open communication and mutual understanding among team members, which helps to address and resolve conflicts effectively. This concurs with Mwaniki & Muathe (2021) that by involving all

parties in the problem-solving process and working towards solutions that benefit everyone, collaboration enhances trust and cooperation within the team. This improved teamwork contributes to more efficient and effective service delivery.

Additionally, collaboration encourages a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution. By investigating issues together and utilizing neutral third parties when necessary, teams can ensure that all perspectives are considered and that solutions are fair and balanced. This agrees with Amaeshi, *et al.*, (2021) and Yusuf and Ibrahim (2019) that inclusive approach not only resolves conflicts but also prevents issues from escalating, thereby maintaining a positive and productive work environment.

Furthermore, the emphasis on addressing all concerns openly and promptly ensures that potential problems are tackled before they become major obstacles. This agrees with Nwokolobia *et al.*, (2021) that proactive approach minimizes disruptions and keeps operations running smoothly, which directly enhances service delivery. Overall, the collaborative conflict management strategy's focus on open communication, inclusiveness, and fair problem-solving leads to improved team dynamics and more effective service outcomes.

The study found that collaboration conflict management strategy had a positive significant impact on service delivery. This agrees with Assbeihat (2016) and Echaabari, Adim, and Ihunda (2018) that collaboration positively influences team performance and productivity. Their studies indicate that effective conflict resolution through collaboration enhances

overall performance, reinforcing the positive impact on service delivery observed in the study. Furthermore, it concurs with Kalei (2018) that collaboration improves employee performance through joint decision-making and integration, which supports the observed positive effect on service delivery. However, it agrees with Jirgba *et al.*, (2018) that collaboration works best when there is room for debate and low levels of disagreement, which may not always be present.

#### **4.8.3 Compromise Conflict Management Strategy and Service Delivery**

The findings indicate that the compromise conflict management strategy—characterized by mutual concessions, negotiation with co-workers, openness to bargaining processes, and striving to achieve a fair balance of gains and losses—had a positive and significant effect on service delivery. This is because compromise fosters a collaborative approach to conflict resolution, encouraging all parties involved to find common ground and work towards mutually acceptable solutions. By engaging in compromise, individuals and teams are able to address and resolve conflicts in a way that considers the needs and concerns of all stakeholders. These findings agree with Anono (2018) that compromise facilitates finding quick middle ground, which helps maintain productivity and encourages equal sharing of power among parties.

As a result, conflicts are resolved more effectively, leading to improved working relationships and a more harmonious work environment. Moreover, compromise helps in balancing competing interests and reducing potential disruptions that can arise from unresolved disputes. When team members feel that their concerns are acknowledged and

addressed, they are more likely to be satisfied with the outcomes and remain engaged in their work. This aligns well with the observed positive effect on service delivery, as compromise promotes a collaborative environment that can lead to improved outcomes.

The study found a strong positive and significant relationship exists between the application of the compromise strategy and service delivery in the University of Eldoret, Kenya. The compromise conflict management strategy positively influences service delivery at the University of Eldoret. This agree with, Tumwebaze *et al.*, (2020) that compromise had a substantial influence on employee performance, which supports the positive impact on service delivery reported in the study.

This concurs with Alhamali (2019) that while compromising has substantial positive impacts on team performance, it is one of several strategies contributing to overall performance. This implies that while compromise is beneficial, it may not be a standalone solution and should be considered alongside other strategies. This finding contrast Aoun *et al.*, (2020) that while conflict management, including compromise, had a constructive effect on employee performance, the correlation was weak. This contrasts with the strong positive effect on service delivery reported in the study, indicating that the impact of compromise may vary in strength.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings of the study, the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made. The chapter was based on specific objectives of the study. Finally, it presented the suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The summary of the findings was presented with respect to objectives of the study.

##### **5.2.1 Effect of Avoidance Conflict Management Strategy on Service Delivery**

The first objective of the study was to establish the effect of avoiding conflict management strategy on service delivery. Majority of the employees used avoidance conflict management strategy by avoiding unpleasantness to themselves, withdrawal from the conflict hoping that disagreement will eventually disappear, avoiding being put on the spot and often avoid taking positions that may create controversies. When employees keep off from conflicts chances of their performance being affected negatively were low.

Additionally, reduction of conflicts through ease of agreement between employees shortens conflict management duration. Not many saw obedience of employees to their seniors as a good way of reducing conflicts on the other hand quite a huge number supported that peaceful co-existence of employees led to improved performance. Correlation results indicated that there was a significant effect of avoidance conflict

management strategy ( $r=0.453$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.00$ ) on service delivery in university of Eldoret. From regression model there was a negative significant effect of avoiding conflict management strategy on service delivery ( $\beta_1= -0.160$  and  $p\text{ value} <0.05$ ). An increase in avoiding conflict management strategy led to a decrease in service delivery at University of Eldoret. Avoidance conflict management strategy negatively affects service delivery. This implied that application of avoidance conflict management technique negatively influenced the service delivery in university of Eldoret.

### **5.2.2 Effect of Collaborative Conflict Management Strategy on Service Delivery**

The second objective of the study was to establish the effect of collaboration conflict management strategy on service delivery. Majority of the employees used collaborating conflict management strategy by believing that going along with the suggestion of their co-workers, trying to investigate the issue with co-workers to find a solution that is acceptable to all, trying to reconcile differences and search for win-win solution, using of neutral third party and trying to get all issues of concern in the open immediately. Reconciliation was key in resolving conflicts and yields improved employee performance as this resolve's conflicts in a peaceful manner. Trust is needed between the parties involved in conflict management process and lack of trust leads to prolonged duration of conflict management. Correlation results showed that there is a significant effect of collaboration conflict management strategy ( $r=0.592$ ,  $p\text{ value} =0.00$ ) on service delivery in university of Eldoret. Collaboration conflict management strategy increases the service delivery in university of Eldoret. From regression model there was a positive significant effect of collaboration conflict management strategy on service delivery ( $\beta_2= 0.568$  and  $p\text{ value} <0.05$ ). A unit

increase in collaboration conflict management strategy led to an improvement in service delivery at University of Eldoret by 0.568. This implied that application of collaboration as a conflict management technique help improve service delivery in University of Eldoret.

### **5.2.3 Effect of Compromise Conflict Management Strategy on Service Delivery**

The third objective of this study was to establish the effect of compromise conflict management strategy on service delivery. Majority of the employees used collaborating conflict management strategy by believed that compromise is a conflict management strategy, negotiating with co-workers, being open to any bargaining process that leads to compromise and a fair combination of gains and losses for both parties was a conflict management strategy.

From correlation results there was significant positive effect of compromise conflict management strategy ( $r= 0.683$ ,  $p$  value  $=0.000$ ) on service delivery in university of Eldoret. An increase in compromise conflict management strategy led to an improvement in service delivery in university of Eldoret. From regression model there was a positive significant effect of compromise conflict management strategy on service delivery ( $\beta_2= 0.684$  and  $p$  value  $<0.05$ ). A unit change in compromise conflict management strategy would lead to a 0.684 positive change in service delivery in the university of Eldoret.

Majority of the employees believed that timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency and quality/reliability affected the service delivery. When staff is productive, they achieve more within a specified time and this in turn leads to greater productivity for the organization

while staff's unproductive behavior can lead to the reverse as they take longer time to meet set targets. Proper conflict management has a favorable impact on a variety of performance metrics, including productivity, staff interpersonal connections in the educational setting, and successful resource use.

The findings also suggest important theoretical and policy implications on why conflict techniques should be applied in public university to drive performance, given the types and nature of the conflict that may arise or exist. It demonstrates that, to promote the growth and success of tertiary institutions, there should be a greater emphasis in public universities in Kenya on the application of collaboration and compromising conflict management strategies in resolving workplace conflicts among staff, students and the management(s) of these institutions.

Because of its negative consequences on service delivery, administrators and management of public university in Kenya should minimize the use of avoidance as a conflict management tactic. This conflict resolution approach should only be used for dealing with minor or trivial disagreements. Regular reviews of how workplace disagreements affect performance within the public university should be instituted by the administration. This could aid management in determining the best effective conflict management strategy to use in resolving current or future workplace disagreements.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study findings underscore the detrimental impact of the avoidance conflict management strategy on service delivery within public universities. By prioritizing the avoidance of unpleasantness and conflict situations, this strategy prevents timely resolutions and allows issues to escalate, ultimately undermining effective communication and collaboration among faculty, staff, and students. The reliance on avoidance fosters a negative academic environment characterized by fear and reluctance to address important issues directly, which diminishes transparency, accountability, employee engagement, and student satisfaction. Consequently, while avoidance may temporarily relieve tension, it hampers overall service delivery and stifles institutional adaptability and progress.

In contrast, the compromise conflict management strategy emerged as a positive influence on service delivery in public universities. By promoting mutual concessions and encouraging negotiation and fairness among faculty and administration, compromise fosters a collaborative approach to conflict resolution. The findings suggest that engaging in compromise allows individuals and departments to address and resolve conflicts in a manner that accounts for the concerns of all academia stakeholders. This not only enhances trust and communication but also leads to more effective resolutions, improved working relationships, and greater student satisfaction, which in turn contribute to higher productivity and better overall service delivery in the educational environment.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that the collaboration conflict management strategy had a significant positive effect on service delivery. This approach encourages open

communication, mutual understanding, and the prompt resolution of issues, enabling public universities to address conflicts effectively. By actively involving faculty and staff in investigating issues and seeking win-win outcomes, collaboration promotes a harmonious academic environment where all concerns are acknowledged and addressed. This positive atmosphere not only enhances service delivery but also cultivates a culture of creativity and innovation within the institution, which is essential for meeting the diverse needs of students and staff alike.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based to address the challenges associated with conflict management strategies, policymakers in the education sector should formulate regulations and guidelines that encourage constructive conflict resolution approaches within public universities. Policies should emphasize the importance of reconciliation and collaboration over avoidance, promoting training programs that equip faculty, staff, and administration with the necessary skills to handle conflicts effectively. By fostering a supportive regulatory framework, universities can create environments conducive to proactive conflict resolution, ultimately enhancing service delivery and creating a positive academic experience.

From a managerial perspective, university leaders must prioritize the development and implementation of conflict management strategies that promote compromise and collaboration. Administration should model these behaviors and create a culture where open communication and mutual understanding are actively encouraged. Regular workshops and training sessions focused on conflict resolution can empower faculty and

staff to engage in constructive dialogue, facilitating a more cooperative work environment. Investing in leadership development will enhance the university administration's ability to navigate conflicts and foster a culture of trust, teamwork, and academic excellence.

Practically, public universities should implement structured conflict resolution processes that incorporate both compromise and collaboration as core strategies. This includes establishing clear protocols for addressing conflicts and providing resources for faculty and staff, such as mediation services or conflict resolution training. By creating an organizational framework that emphasizes addressing issues transparently and promptly, universities can enhance engagement among faculty, staff, and students, leading to improved service delivery. Regular assessments of conflict resolution practices and feedback from the university community can help fine-tune these initiatives, ensuring that they effectively support a positive academic environment and contribute to the overall success of the institution.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study focused on three major conflict management strategies within the University of Eldoret. A wider study involving other public and private universities in the country is hereby recommended. This will enable a better and broader comparison to be made and also a better generalization of the study results to be made.

The study did not consider other conflict management strategies that might have an influence on service delivery. There is need to establish how the negotiation, mediation,

confrontational conflict management strategies influence service delivery in both public and private higher learning institution in order to make comparison. In addition, other studies may review the effect of other organizational conflict management techniques, not covered in this study, on employees' performance in the country's public and private universities.

There is need to carry out more research to establish how the conflict management strategies influence service delivery both at individual level and at organizational level other than higher learning institution. A study should be done to establish the strategies adopted by another non-education institution to check whether there was similarity with the public university.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

#### Introduction

I am Mulwa Chemtai Christine, a post graduate student at Moi University currently undertaking a Master's Degree in Human Resource Management. I am conducting a study on "effects of conflict management on service delivery at public Universities: A case study of University of Eldoret, Kenya". This study is conducted purely for academic reasons. Based on your knowledge, competence, honesty and experience, please respond to the questions asked accordingly in the spaces provided.

The information you will provide will be treated with strict confidentiality, your identity will remain anonymous, and your responses will not be revealed without your permission.

Thank you

**Christine Chemtai Mulwa**

#### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tick one appropriate answer

1. Gender

Male  Female

2. Age: tick the bracket that describes your age

18 -29 years  30-39 years  40-49 years  50 years and above

3. Highest level of education

No Education  Primary  Secondary  College

Diploma  Degree and above

## SECTION B: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

4. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements. Please tick the response which matches your opinion. Key: 1=(SD)- Strongly disagree, 2=(D)- Disagree, 3=(UD)-Undecided, 4=(A)- Agree, 5=(SA)- Strongly agree).

<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Avoidance unpleasantness to myself					
2. Sometimes withdrawal from conflict situation with the hope that disagreement will eventually disappear					
3. Avoiding being put on the spot					
4. Often avoiding taking position that may create controversies					
5. Avoidance gives me ability to prepare and collect facts					
<b>Compromise Strategy</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Use of give and take so that compromise may be reached					
2. Negotiate with co – workers so that compromise may be reached					
3. Being open to any bargaining process that leads to compromise					
4. Trying to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both conflicting parties					
<b>Collaboration Strategy</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Going along with the suggestion of co-workers					

2. Trying to investigate the issue with co-workers to find a solution that is acceptable to all					
3. Trying reconcile differences and search for a win -win solution					
4. Trying to use a neutral third party to help reach a solution					
5. Trying to <i>get all</i> issues of concern out in the open immediately					

### SECTION C: SERVICE DELIVERY

5. This section represents aspects of service delivery in your organization. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements. Please tick the response which matches your opinion. *Key: 1=(SD)- Strongly disagree, 2=( D)- Disagree, 3=(UD)-Undecided, 4=(A)- Agree, 5=(SA)- Strongly agree).*

Service Delivery	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Physical facilities, equipment and personnel are adequate					
2. The institution's employees are able to perform the promised service dependably and accurately					
3. The employees of the institution are willing to help consumers (including students) and provide prompt service					
4. The employees of the institution have adequate knowledge, are courteous and are able to inspire trust and confidence					
5. The employees of the institution are caring and offer individualized attention to its customers (including students)					

6. The following strategies affect service delivery. Please tick the response which matches your opinion. Key: 1=(SD)- Strongly disagree, 2=(D)- Disagree, 3=(UD)- Undecided, 4=(A)- Agree, 5=(SA)- Strongly agree).

Conflict management Strategies of enhance service delivery	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Ensuring tangible to avoid duplication of duties					
Reliability to avoid to appreciate the work of others					
Responsiveness to make it clear and enhance communication flow					
The use Assurance					
Empathy					
Reliability to avoid to appreciate the work of others					

## Appendix II: Interview Schedule

1. What kinds of conflict do you often handle at this University?.....  
.....
2. What mechanisms do you use to handle conflicts at the university?.....  
.....
3. How do you perceive effectiveness of conflict management at the university?.....  
.....
4. In your own opinion, do you think conflict can be of any benefit to your organization?  
.....  
.....
5. To what extend does conflict management affects service delivery in your organization?  
.....  
.....
6. What measures has your organization put in place to enhance conflict management and service delivery?  
.....  
.....

## Appendix III: Research Authorization (NACOSTI)



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349, 310571, 2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke  
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke  
When replying please quote

9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Utalii House  
Uhuru Highway  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:  
**3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2014**

**NACOSTI/P/14/1974/2037**

Christine Chemtai Mulwa  
Moi University  
P.O.Box 3900-30100  
**ELDORET.**

#### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Effects of conflict management on service delivery in public universities. A case study of University of Eldoret, Kenya,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Uasin-Gishu County** for a period ending **31<sup>st</sup> August, 2014.**

You are advised to report to **the Vice Chancellor, University of Eldoret, the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Uasin-Gishu County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

  
**SAID HUSSEIN**  
**FOR: SECRETARY/CEO**

Copy to:

The Vice Chancellor  
University of Eldoret.

The County Commissioner  
The County Director of Education  
Uasin-Gishu County.

## Appendix IV: Authorization University of Eldoret



P. O. Box 1125 - 30100, Eldoret, Kenya  
 Tel: +254 53 206 3111 Ext. 2200/1  
 Mobile: 0788232004  
 Fax: +254 53 2063257  
 E-mail: [vc@uoeld.ac.ke](mailto:vc@uoeld.ac.ke)

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**OFFICE OF REGISTRAR - ADMINISTRATION**


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REF: UOE/ADM/129

10<sup>th</sup> March, 2015

Ms. Christine Mulwa,  
 P.O. Box 5553 - 30100,  
 ELDORET

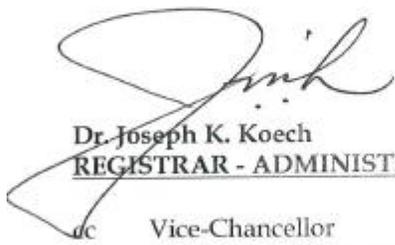
Dear Ms. Mulwa,

**RE: CONDUCTING RESEARCH**

We are in receipt of your letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 requesting to conduct your research at this Institution on "Effects of Conflict Management of Service Delivery in Public Universities". This is to inform you that your request has been approved.

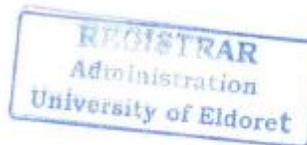
Kindly get in touch with the undersigned on arrival for further assistance.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Joseph K. Koech**  
**REGISTRAR - ADMINISTRATION**

dc Vice-Chancellor  
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (ASA)  
 Registrar Planning



Deputy Vice-Chancellor (A&F)  
 Registrar - Academic

JKK/pnl

## Appendix V: Authorization Moi University



**MOI UNIVERSITY**  
**ISO 9001:2008 Certified Institution**  
**OFFICE OF THE DEAN**  
**SCHOOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

P.O. Box 3900  
 ELDORET, KENYA.

254-053-43153/43620 Ext.2448

REF: MU/SHRD/PG/77

28<sup>th</sup> April 2014

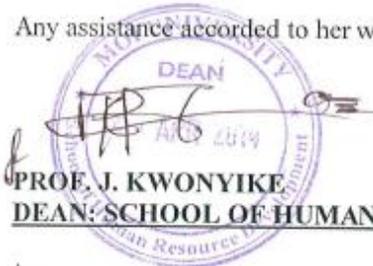
**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

RE: **CHRISTINE MULWA – SHRD/PGH/08/12**

The above named is a Masters student at Moi University, School of Human Resource Development, Department of Development Studies.

It is a requirement of her Masters Studies that She conducts a research and produce a Thesis. The topic of her Thesis is *“Effects of Conflict Management on Service Delivery in Public Universities: A Case Study of University of Eldoret, Kenya.*

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

  
**PROF. J. KWONYIKE**  
**DEAN, SCHOOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

/mc