

# INFLUENCE OF NEGOTIATION AS A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE ON WORKPLACE HARMONY IN THE KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA

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**Abstract:** A workplace where people get along well will be more productive, with fewer complaints. Positive managing workplace programs leads to dedicated and healthier performing employees who promote demographic interactions and appreciation of cultures. There have been concerns about the workplace interpersonal conflicts and other institutional conflicts in devolved governments within the new constitutional dispensation. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of negotiation as a strategic leadership initiative on workplace harmony in Kakamega County, Kenya. The theory underpinning this study was strategic choice theory. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select a sample size of 98 respondents. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Data analysis was done using descriptive methods and inferential statistical methods. The study concluded that negotiation influences the workplace harmony in the County of Kakamega, Kenya. The study found that negotiation influences workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega as negotiation is positively correlated with workplace harmony. The study thus recommends that the County Government of Kakamega prioritizes on industrial relations, ensures that all disputes are negotiated successfully, and puts mechanisms in place to make negotiation strategy integrative enough to enable creation of a win – win situation at all times.

**Keywords:** County, Initiative Workplace Harmony, Kakamega, Negotiation, Strategic Leadership.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years conflicts in the world have had an effect on employee performance both positively and negatively (Okotoni & Okotoni, 2003). When there is a conflict either among employees or between employees and the management, performance is affected. Conflict in itself has both positive and negative outcome. All conflict provides a dynamic opportunity for growth and transformation, and leaders should treat conflict as simply another tool of good leadership. Drucker (1998) said that 90 percent of leadership is addressing human behavior issues. A good proportion of this 90 percent involves addressing issues that have some form of conflict at their base.

A survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2008) found that managing conflict is an integral part of most HR practitioners' jobs on a daily basis. Almost half (44%) of respondents reported that they have to manage disputes at work frequently or continually. This rises to 51% among public sector respondents. As many as one in five respondents claim to manage conflict 'continually' in organizations of between 5,000 and 10,000 employees. Conflict at work is extremely time-consuming. The survey also found that on average HR professionals spend 3.4 hours every week managing conflict at work. This rises to 3.8 hours for public sector respondents.

A survey by the American Management Association (2011) revealed that typically, managers spend at least 24% of their time managing conflict. The secret of good conflict management is simple, but the process is not (CIPD, 2008). The secret is to get the parties in conflict to discern the root issues and mutually agree on actions to be taken. Building an effective process to accomplish this goal, however, is a complex task. Leaders, to do their job well, must acquire basic conflict management skills.

A state of the work report discovered 81 percent of more than 2,000 American adults surveyed experienced workplace conflict with other departments, groups, teams, or co-workers (Task, 2014). As a result, 4 out of 10 respondents reported a loss in productivity. Conflicts are found in all industrial sectors. Major Airlines with massive resources and global network have not been spared from this challenge e.g. Delta Airline and Austrian Airlines are grappling with industrial unrest arising from collective bargaining agreements just like Air France and British Airways (Kenya Airways Limited, 2012).

The negative outcome of conflict causes the organization's unrest thus interfering with the organizational short term and long term plans. Even the management faces conflicts with many forces from outside the organization, such as government, unions and other coercive groups which may impose restrictions on managerial activities. Workers in some instance, feel intimidated by a boss or a colleague, and as many as 25% say they have been intimidated by a client (Tang & Chang, 2010). Inappropriate behavior can be partly explained by increasing diversity, assertiveness and insufficient competencies in dealing with conflicting interest and needs. Therefore, inappropriate behavior is a big problem in the workplace, both nationally and internationally.

In Kenya, at the end of January 2014, there was secondment of civil servants to the counties by the Transition Authority as the devolved units took over the control of their salaries. The workers from various ministries, whose functions were devolved, were to have their pay and human resource issues managed by the counties. The Ministry of Devolution and Planning then indicated that the national government was transferring the management of payroll to the counties. The move followed protests by health workers and unwillingness by some civil servants to be moved to counties for fear of unfair treatment. There were concerns that some counties might be forced to sack excess workers (Bigambo, 2014). For instance, a county might be having more workers in a given sector than it needs thus leading to duplication of duties.

Payroll transfer provides opportunity for rationalising lower level employees. Some counties have bloated lower level employees and some might be declared redundant (Okongo, 2015). According to the then Transitional Authority, only seconded lower level employees from the National Government had their transferred to the counties. In other words, they had been officially handed over to the counties. Moreover, lower level employees' rationalisation in the counties was also under way to determine the devolved units with excess employees (Ngundo, 2014). Therefore, it is possible that most of the conflict in the public sector organizations today stem from the restructuring of government.

Conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort. It can cause irreparable rifts, resentments, and breakups (Manktelow & Carlson 2013). But when conflict is resolved in a healthy way, it increases our understanding of one another, builds trust, and strengthens our relationship bonds (Sang & Keror, 2013). Unhealthy responses to conflict are characterized by: an inability to recognize and respond to matters of great importance to the other person; explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful reactions; the withdrawal of love, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming, and fear of abandonment; the expectation of bad outcomes, and; the fear and avoidance of conflict (Omboko, 2006).

Healthy responses to conflict are characterized by the capacity to recognize and respond to important matters; a readiness to forgive and forget; the ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing, and; a belief that resolution can support the interests and needs of both parties (Pauwels & De Waele, 2014). Successful conflict resolution requires strategic leadership. However, the influence of strategic leadership on conflict resolution in the workplace has not been subjected to thorough examination in previous research and this will be the main thrust of this study.

### **Strategic leadership:**

Strategic leadership is a leadership style that is meant to provide vision and direction for the growth and success of an organization. According to Ireland and Hitt (2009) strategic leadership is a person's ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organisation. Rowe (2001) defines strategic leadership as the ability to influence others to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that enhance the long-term organisation's viability.

In a rapidly changing world, strategic leaders face incredible pressure to deliver immediate results, do more with less and manage an ever-increasing personal workload, the pace and urgency of daily demands can make it difficult to be more than a step ahead into the future. However, in a world of changing conditions and priorities, leaders and individual contributors alike should be able to look beyond their approach to their work and responsibilities (Wheeler McFarland, & Kleiner, 2007; Serfontein, 2009). The global economy has created a new competitive landscape, in which events change constantly and unpredictably (Ireland & Hitt, 2009) and where competition is complex, challenging and fraught with competitive opportunities and threats (Drucker, 2002).

Leaders often face the continuing challenge of how they can meet the expectations of those who placed them there or the organization's goals in an atmosphere of competition and uncertainties in resourcing and employee commitment (Beatty & Quinn, 2010). Addressing these expectations usually takes the form of strategic decisions and actions. For a strategy to succeed, the leader must be able to adjust it as conditions require. However, leaders cannot learn enough, fast enough, and do enough on their own to effectively adapt the strategy and then define, shape and execute the organizational response.

According to Stumpf (2008), if leaders are to win they must rely on the prepared minds of employees throughout the organization to understand the strategic intent and then both carry out the current strategy and adapt it in real time. Building prepared minds on a large scale is critical for companies needing to reset the strategic direction and transform the organization. Getting employees pointed in the right direction with the ability to learn and adapt concurrently helps ensure the strategy will deliver what leaders are looking for indeed. The challenge is not only producing a winning strategy at a point in time but getting employees smart enough and motivated enough to execute the strategy and change it as conditions change. This requires the leader to focus as much on the process used to develop the strategy – the human dimension, as the content of the strategy – the analytical dimension (Kouzes & Posner, 2009).

#### **Strategic leadership and workplace harmony:**

The importance of effective leadership in cross-cultural management has been emphasized in the literature (Nguyen & Umemoto, 2009). Leaders are tasked with effectively guiding organizational goal achievement, while considering team member skills necessary to produce the desired output. Leadership qualities that influence goal achievement include the ability to create a clear vision, the ability to understand organizational culture, the ability to focus on performance development, and the ability to encourage innovation. Leaders have to develop several creativities through a leadership framework to build an organization of mutual respect and understanding in other words important leadership components and significant leadership initiatives need to be identified to enhance workplace harmony and improve performance efficiency.

This however can only be achieved effectively if leaders understand behavioral patterns that contribute to the desired culture in their efforts to build unity. Establishing a welcoming environment where employees are free to engage with leaders fosters open communication with team members. This open communication allows for increased creativity and ingenuity. Successful leaders must therefore create synergy, teamwork and one cohesive atmosphere made up of the various cultural groups within the workplace (Hansen, 2002).

Communicating the rules of engagement and team member responsibilities to ensure open dialogue and exchange of ideas is among some of the creativities that leaders can put in place to ensure reduction or elimination of workplace conflict. This participatory approach will also minimize the risks of innovation while maintaining progress and harmony in the workplace. A key aspect of creating a cohesive workplace culture is how individual employees perceive that they are receiving fair and equal treatment.

Identifying employee perception of fairness begins by evaluating current employee benefits and assessing specific suggestions that are appealing to a diverse workforce. However, a study conducted by Bohlander and Snell (2007) showed that giving employees benefits that they do not need has no additional value to the company as there will be no motivational effect. Hence aside from equitable resource distribution and the perception of distributive justice among employees the benefits as perceived by employees must first consider an appraisal of their core needs to have any meaningful impact in terms of reduction in complains and antics.

The process of evaluation of employee needs and benefits is however a political process that is governed by constraints and adjustments and hence requires an open integrative negotiation process. One of the most important functions of leaders is to articulate the vision and create opportunities for team members to thrive. In doing so, leaders understand the

organization's heartbeat and determine effective methods to influence employees to perform at optimum levels goal achievement negotiation is observed as an effective mechanism to positively manage workplace conflict and hence promoting workplace harmony (Saner, 2000).

Negotiation exchanges of offers a start to converge on a solution which both parties find acceptable. Negotiation applies to parties who have a need to create or maintain healthy relationships. Instead of focusing on competitive measures and winning the negotiation, parties collaborate by looking to create solutions which maximize the meeting of their interests, values and needs (Schelling, 1960).

### **Devolved Governments in Kenya:**

Devolution is the transfer of powers and resources from the national government to local units. The promulgation of the new constitution in Kenya in 2010 brought about a new system of government. After the 2013 general elections, new system of governance came into place with national government headed by the president and 47 counties headed by county governors. One of the objectives and principles of a devolved government according to constitution is to recognize the right of communities to manage their own affairs and further their development. This would give the people a sense of identity and self-empowerment. This is because they would feel recognized in their contribution to the growth of their own county. Another principle is to protect and promote the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized communities. Hence the minorities would not feel sidelined. This would promote a sense of unity as they would not feel as though their needs have been ignored.

A total of 47 counties were created as per the constitution. Each county was to receive funding from the National government and at the same time generate funds to sustain themselves. Just like in the case of the president, the county governors were elected on the platform of the vision that they created for their county. The vision was to generate funds for their county and how they would make their county the best in the country by improving the standards of living and eradicating the issues affecting the county.

### **County Government of Kakamega**

Kakamega County is located in the Western part of Kenya and borders Vihiga County to the South, Siaya County to the West, Bungoma and Trans Nzoia Counties to the North and Nandi and UasinGishu Counties to the East. The County covers an area of 3,051.3 km<sup>2</sup> and is the second populous county after Nairobi with the largest rural population of 1,660,650 people (Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA, 2011). The County is divided into 12 sub- counties, namely; Lurambi, Navakholo, Ikolomani, Shinyalu, Malava, Butere, Khwisero, Mumias East, Mumias West, Matungu, Lugari and Likuyani.

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

A workplace where people get along well and enjoy their work will be more productive, with fewer complaints. Positive managing workplace programs leads to dedicated and healthier performing employees who promote demographic interactions and appreciation of cultures. Organizations lose an average of \$47,000 when replacing each employee with 2 years tenure or more, and approximately \$9,000 per year replacing each first-year employee (Avery et al., 2011). An organization's culture and overall financial performance have the potential to influence employees to stay or leave an organization (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013). Devolution in Kenya was meant to promote social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services to all citizens. However, it is over five years since the operationalization of the County governments as a second-tier government in the devolution process. Teething problems in the county governments threaten to impede their functions and slow down the devolution process considerably (Nyakundi, 2014). There are concerns about the workplace interpersonal conflicts and other institutional conflicts in devolved governments within the new constitutional dispensation (Juma, Rotich, & Mulongo, 2014). Issues such as wage disparities among employees in both tiers of government together with levels of subordination still remain issues among the employees who feel they do equal work and different pay or have the same job description but with more responsibilities (CRA, 2016). Lack of resolution of this conflict situation undermines the concept of devolution as a means of bringing public services closer to the people, and hamper the achievement of the new constitutional expectations and the countries long term social and economic development agenda. Studies on strategic leadership and organizational behavior, such as, Baum and Wally (2003); Ireland and Hitt (2009); Beatty and Quinn (2010), have not linked strategic leadership ingenuities as a framework through which leadership can address conflict management in the workplace. The

present study thus sought to investigate how strategic leadership initiatives generates workplace harmony in devolved governance systems focusing on devolved units in Kenya.

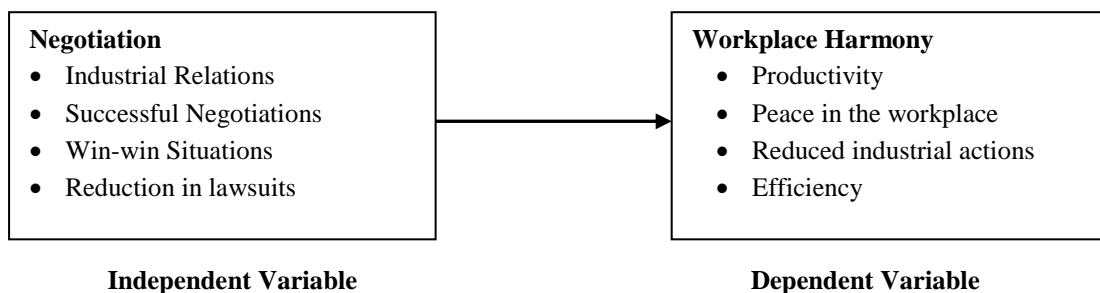
### III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to investigate influence of negotiation as a strategic leadership initiative on workplace harmony in Kakamega County, Kenya.

### IV. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Negotiation as a strategic leadership initiative does not significantly influence workplace harmony in Kakamega County, Kenya.

### V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



### VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Strategic Choice Theory:

Strategic Choice Theory was developed when industrial relations in the U.S. were changing rapidly. Because most of the popular theories at that time were generated during periods of relative stability in U.S. industrial relations practice and consequently are overly static, they have difficulty explaining behavior when the basic parameters of the system appear to be changing. According to Kochan, et al., (1984) industrial relations practices and outcomes are shaped by the interactions of environmental forces, union leaders, workers, and public policy decision makers. Strategic Choice Theory starts with consideration of relevant forces in the external environment that affects employment relationships. Changing external environment induce employers to make adjustment in their competitive strategies. In making these adjustments, the range of options considered are filtered and constrained so as to be consistent with the values, beliefs, and philosophies engrained in the mind of key decision-makers.

As choices are also embedded in particular historical and institutional structures, the range of feasible options available at any given time is partially constrained by the outcomes of previous organizational decisions and the current distribution of power within the firm and between it and any unions, government agencies, or other external organizations it deals with (Dibrell & Miller, 2002). Thus, industrial relations processes and outcomes are determined by a continuously evolving interaction of environmental pressures and organizational responses. The relative importance of either the environment or the parties' responses can vary over time. Therefore, labor-or product market changes do not have independent effect or operate in a unique or deterministic fashion. Then, choice and discretion on the part of labor, management, and government affect the course and structure of industrial relations systems. Moreover, history plays an extremely important role in shaping the range of feasible strategic adaptations (Buzan, 2006).

Their broader conception of the institutional framework of industrial relations is as follows. It divides the activities of management, labor, and government organizations into three tiers: (1) a top tier of strategic decision making, (2) a middle or functional tier of collective bargaining or personnel policy making, and (3) a bottom or workplace-level tier where policies are played out and affect individual workers, supervisors, and union representatives on a day-to-day basis (Dibrell & Miller, 2002). In this framework, the middle tier encompasses the most traditional terrain of industrial relations, since it focuses on the practice of collective bargaining and personnel policy formulation and on the development and administration of the key public policies governing labor-management relations. Strategic choices that are relevant to the bottom tier are those most directly associated with the organization of work, the structure of worker rights, the management and motivation of individuals or work groups, and the nature of the workplace environment (Burgelman, 1983).

In the present study it is recognized that most of the employees affected by the conflicts are the lower cadre or third tier employees who are not necessarily the decision makers but implementers of policy. Failure by the leadership to enable them to make strategic choices in the face of conflict can be detrimental to their service delivery capabilities. Thus, this theory will give insight into how strategic choices are made by organization leaders to forestall or resolve conflicts in the workplace.

## VII. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

### Negotiation and Workplace Harmony:

Conflict resolution at times requires negotiation, especially when the conflict is protracted. Negotiation is a dialogue between two or more people or parties intended to reach a beneficial outcome. This beneficial outcome can be for all of the parties involved, or just for one or some of them, in situations in which a good outcome for one/some, excludes the possibility of a desired result for the other/others. It is aimed to resolve points of difference, to gain advantage for an individual or collective, or to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests (Buettner, 2006). It is often conducted by putting forward a position and making small concessions to achieve an agreement. The degree to which the negotiating parties trust each other to implement the negotiated solution is a major factor in determining whether negotiations are successful.

Negotiation is not a zero-sum game; if there is no compromise, the negotiations have failed. When negotiations are at an impasse it is essential that both the parties acknowledge the difficulties, and agree to work towards a solution at a later date (Brazeal, 2009). Negotiation is an important strategy in resolving workplace conflict. Negotiations may be described as a process through which two or more parties - be they individuals, groups or larger social units such as nations - interact in developing potential agreements out of divergent viewpoints, so as to provide guidance and regulation of their future behavior. This characterization of negotiations holds notwithstanding the fact that the underlying purpose of a particular negotiation may not be agreement at all, but rather delay or propaganda (Gavin, 2005).

Delay forestalls action while one awaits more favorable circumstances; and propaganda seeks to embarrass the other party, promote positions that public opinion would favor, or to simply avoid the onus of failing to negotiate. Other discernible functions of negotiation are the maintenance of contact, deception of the other party, and intelligence gathering. The concern here is with negotiations aimed at an outcome, for example, with those situations involving serious efforts towards agreement. This may be termed negotiating in good faith (Armstrong, 2006).

There is a tendency to use "negotiation" and "bargaining" synonymously. Strictly speaking, however, negotiation is a wider concept than bargaining. It covers both the processes that take place prior to bargaining, during which the rules of the latter are established, including such steps as consultation and dialogues; as well as the bargaining process itself. Bargaining, on the other hand, more accurately refers to the actual "process of demand formation and revision which provides the basic mechanism whereby the parties converge towards an agreement." Negotiation thus refers to the whole situation within which bargaining occurs. Nonetheless, there are aspects of negotiations, such as negotiating style and techniques, in which the emphasis is appropriately put on the bargaining process, and where it seems justifiable to equate negotiations with bargaining (Jones & George, 2003).

Negotiation can take a wide variety of forms, from a trained negotiator acting on behalf of a particular organization or position in a formal setting, to an informal negotiation between friends. Negotiation can be contrasted with mediation, where a neutral third party listens to each side's arguments and attempts to help craft an agreement between the parties. It can also be compared with arbitration, which resembles a legal proceeding. In arbitration, both sides make an argument as to the merits of their case and the arbitrator decides the outcome. This negotiation is also sometimes called positional or hard-bargaining negotiation (Beatty & Quinn, 2010).

Negotiation theorists generally distinguish between two types of negotiation. One very common distinction concerns the distribution of gains-distributive versus integrative models (Pfeiffer & Salanik, 2006). Distributive negotiation is also sometimes called positional or hard-bargaining negotiation. It tends to approach negotiation on the model of haggling in a market. In a distributive negotiation, each side often adopts an extreme position, knowing that it will not be accepted, and then employs a combination of guile, bluffing, and brinkmanship in order to cede as little as possible before reaching a deal (Trotschel, Hufmeier, Loschelder, Schwartz & Collwitzer, 2011).

Distributive negotiation is also sometimes called win-lose because of the assumption that one person's gain results in another person's loss. A distributive negotiation often involves people who have never had a previous interactive relationship, nor are they likely to do so again in the near future. Integrative negotiation is also sometimes called interest-based or principled negotiation. It is a set of techniques that attempts to improve the quality and likelihood of negotiated agreement by providing an alternative to traditional distributive negotiation techniques (Mark, 2006). Integrative negotiation often involves a higher degree of trust and the forming of a relationship. It can also involve creative problem-solving that aims to achieve mutual gains. It is also sometimes called win-win negotiation.

The above characterization of negotiations assumes the existence of conflict or disagreement between the parties, which is expected to be resolved through negotiations. A conflict arises when two or more people or groups endeavour to pursue goals which appear to be mutually inconsistent. To say that the parties are in conflict is not to suggest that this conflict necessarily concerns their total relationship. If parties differ on an issue, it does not follow that they have no over-all or common interest; and negotiations permit these specific conflicts to be resolved without the over-all relationship between them being jeopardized (Mark, 2006).

Where two parties are in conflict there are a number of attitudes they may adopt. They can, for example, decide to ignore the issue and agree to disagree (Pfeiffer & Salanic, 2006). But there are costs in disagreeing; and in business relationships, agreeing to disagree does not help much. The parties may therefore decide to resolve their conflict through a number of channels. Conflict resolution, then, is the process by which the parties reconcile their goals to the extent that they are mutually consistent. The conflict is deemed to be resolved when the two parties are willing to accept a given position, either because the costs of inducing further conflict would outweigh the benefits of any improved settlement which may result, or because on some other criterion, they are willing to accept the settlement as fair (Swedburg, 2003). Conflict resolution does not, however, mean conflict elimination; and the maintenance of conflict may sometimes be a good thing.

According to Pistone (2007), most lawyers use the art of negotiation as a tool in their daily practice. The trend is that many attorneys and clients decide to negotiate their disputes themselves rather than have a Judge make the decision, due to the cost and delay. Hence, there is increased pressure to negotiate and/or to enter into more formal mediation rather than litigate a dispute, whenever possible. Negotiations are dynamic and some are plagued by certain tensions. Leadership frequently does require negotiation, and good leaders are invariably effective negotiators (Esquevel, 1997).

Some of the people under one's leadership are smarter, more talented, and in some situations, more powerful than he is. In addition, one is often called to lead people over whom you have no authority, such as members of commissions, boards, and other departments in the organization. According to Gavin (2005), to persuade people to follow one's lead, he needs to appeal to their interests, communicate with them effectively, and sell his vision—all of which are part of effective negotiation. Therefore, like a skilled diplomat, a leader—whether a corporate CEO or a department head—negotiates support from followers by appealing to their interests, communicating with each of them in the right voice and medium, and forging a single compelling vision that all can get behind.

### **Workplace harmony:**

Workplace harmony occurs in a situation where there is absence of unwanted conduct likely to lead to violation of dignity or creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. One of the best ways to foster good relations within the workplace is to encourage dialogue and effective communication. This should not just be amongst colleagues but also between lower level employees and management. Encouraging the workforce to express ideas and views as well as suggesting improvements is a great way of achieving this. Workplace harmony can also be enhanced by establishing a good work/life balance in the organization. Things like introducing flexible working practices, compassionate leave, childcare facilities such as crèches etc. will make for good relations between lower level employees and management and will show that the company does have your best interests at heart (Durham, 2018).

An organization's capacity to manage employee engagement is closely related to its ability to achieve high performance levels and superior business results. Engaged employees will stay with the company, be an advocate of the company and its products and services, and contribute to bottom line business success. They will normally perform better and are more motivated. There is a significant link between employee engagement and profitability. They form an emotional connection with the company. This impacts their attitude towards the company's clients, and thereby improves customer satisfaction and service levels. It builds passion, commitment and alignment with the organization's strategies and goals. Increases employees' trust in the organization. Harmony is achieved in the workplace only when the leaders determine

what they want their organization's culture to look like and then strategize to make it a reality. organization (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013).

Organizational leaders play an important role in setting the tone for the shift towards increased diversity and inclusiveness in an organization. Open, effective communication, as well as clear channels for feedback optimizes the opportunity for discussion of issues related to inclusion and discrimination. Every organization starts from a different place and in a unique context, but all have room for improvement. (Canada HR Council, 2018).

### VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey research design. Survey research design is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad spectrum of individuals and educational settings. The design is appropriate as it could be used to assess the opinions and attitude on events people and procedures (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2009). The design was deemed appropriate for this study since it allowed for collection of a large amount of data on the study problem from a large population drawn from the County Government of Kakamega with minimum effort. It also enabled generalizations to be made on the outcome of the study. The target population of this study, therefore, comprised of management and lower level employees of the County Government of Kakamega. According to the County's Human Resource Department (2018), there are currently 5300 employees in the Kakamega County Government. The study used stratified random sampling to sample the management and lower level employees of the County Government of Kakamega. 98 respondents were sampled as the respondents of the study. The study used primary data which was collected directly from the respondents using the questionnaires. The selection of these tools was guided by the nature of data to be collected, time available and the objectives of the study. Questionnaires were tested for validity and reliability. Data obtained from the questionnaires was first cleaned and edited before being coded and subjected to further analysis. Data was then entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analysis was done using, frequencies and percentages to describe the basic characteristics of the data. Inferential statistical analysis was also done using the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and multivariate regression analysis.

### IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher gave out a total of 98 questionnaires to the staff of the County Government of Kakamega. Eighty-four were returned duly completed representing a response rate of 86%. All the 84 duly returned questionnaires were found to have been correctly filled.

#### Descriptive Statistics:

#### Influence of negotiation on workplace harmony:

The respondents were asked to indicate the aspect of negotiation on workplace harmony. The results were as shown in Table 1

**Table 1: Aspects of negotiation on influence on workplace harmony**

Statements	Responses			
	Agreed	Disagreed	Mean	SD
The organization puts much priority on industrial relations at our workplace	18(21%)	66(79%)	2.76	.431
Through strategic leadership the organization ensures that all disputes are negotiated successfully	36(43%)	48(57%)	3.33	1..300
The negotiation strategy is an integrative type where a win –win situation is created by the leadership	39(46%)	45(54%)	3.81	.917
All disputes between lower level employees and management are also negotiated in good faith by their leaders	76(90%)	8(10%)	4.29	.636
Through strategic leadership we are able to recognize the interests of the disputing sides and accommodate them in our negotiations	44(52%)	40(48%)	4.06	.962
Through strategic leadership we have been able to reduce the number of lawsuits through successful negotiations	69(82%)	15(18%)	4.50	.552
<b>Overall mean</b>			<b>3.79</b>	<b>.583</b>



The organization puts much priority on industrial relations at our workplace had 18(21%) of the respondents agreeing while 66(79%) disagreed (mean 2.76 = agreed, SD = .431). Through strategic leadership the organization ensures that all disputes are negotiated successfully had 36(43%) of the respondents agreeing while 48(57%) disagreed (mean 3.33 = agreed, SD = 1.300). The negotiation strategy is an integrative type where a win –win situation is created by the leadership had 39(46%) of the respondents agreeing while 45(54%) disagreed (mean 3.81= agreed, SD = .917). All disputes between lower level employees and management are also negotiated in good faith by their leaders had 76(90%) of the respondents agreeing while 8(10%) disagreed (mean 4.29 = agreed, SD = .636).

Other results were through strategic leadership we are able to recognize the interests of the disputing sides and accommodate them in our negotiations had 44(52%) of the respondents agreeing while 40(48%) disagreed (mean 4.06 = agreed, SD = .962). Through strategic leadership we have been able to reduce the number of lawsuits through successful negotiations had 69(82%) of the respondents agreeing while 15(18%) disagreed (mean 4.50 = agreed, SD = .552).

The results agree with those of Mark (2006). Integrative negotiation often involves a higher degree of trust and the forming of a relationship. It also involves creative problem-solving that aims to achieve mutual gains. They also agree with those of Esquevel (1997) who found that leadership frequently requires negotiation, and good leaders are invariably effective negotiators.

### Workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega:

The researcher sought to establish the level of workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega. The results were as shown in table 2.

**Table 2: Workplace harmony**

Statements	Responses			
	Agreed	Disagreed	Mean	SD
As a result of strategic leadership in conflict resolution in the organization, our annual lower level employees' turnover rates are declining	65(77%)	19(23%)	4.31	.975
There is better coordination of activities in our workplace now due to use of strategic leadership in conflict resolution	56(67%)	28(33%)	3.60	1.170
There is more consultation in the workplace on problem solving leading to improved performance	48(57%)	36(43%)	3.62	1.035
The employees' levels of productivity have been increasing	62(74%)	22(26%)	3.86	1.026
There are fewer industrial actions at the workplace nowadays	64(76%)	20(24%)	4.21	.951
The organization has managed to create a peaceful working environment for us all	62(74%)	22(26%)	4.05	.909
<b>Overall mean</b>			<b>3.94</b>	<b>1.011</b>

As a result of strategic leadership in conflict resolution in the organization, our annual lower level employees' turnover rates are declining had 65 (77%) of the respondents agreeing while 19(23%) disagreed (mean 4.31= agreed, SD = .975). There is better coordination of activities in our workplace now due to use of strategic leadership in conflict resolution had 56(67%) of the respondents agreeing while 28(33%) disagreed (mean 3.60= agreed, SD = 1.170). There is more consultation in the workplace on problem solving leading to improved performance had 48(57%) of the respondents agreeing while 36(43%) disagreed (mean 3.62= agreed, SD = 1.035).

Other results were the employees' levels of productivity have been increasing had 62(74%) of the respondents agreeing while 22(26%) disagreed (mean 3.86 = agreed, SD = 1.026). There are fewer industrial actions at the workplace nowadays had 64(76%) of the respondents agreeing while 20(24%) disagreed (mean 4.21 = agreed, SD = .951). And the organization has managed to create a peaceful working environment for us all had 62(74%) of the respondents agreeing while 22(26%) disagreed (mean 4.05 = agreed, SD = .909). The overall mean on workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega was 3.94 (= agreed; SD = 1.011). This means that the respondents generally agreed with the statements on workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega.

The results agree with those of Onsarigo (2007) who established that it is better to expose and resolve conflict before they damage people's relationships or even before they degenerate into violence which undermines institutional stability and

performance. The study concluded that social conflicts in educational institutions demand moral authority and leadership integrity to resolve them. If not resolved, they can have a destabilizing effect on institutional performance in all learning processes. Workplace harmony leads to increased employee productivity, reduced industrial actions.

### Correlation Analysis:

In this subsection a summary of the correlation analyses is presented. It seeks to first determine the degree of interdependence of the independent variable and also show the degree of its association with the dependent variable separately. This result is summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlations between the independent and the dependent variables**

		Negotiation
Workplace	Pearson Corr.	.425**
harmony	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001

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

The analysis indicated that Negotiation had a positive relationship with Workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega ( $r=0.425$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This could also imply that Negotiation contributed to Workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega whereby if Negotiation were improved Workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega would as well improve at a strong positive relationship.

## X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that negotiation influences the workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega. The study found that negotiation influences workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega as negotiation is positively correlated with workplace harmony. Thus, the study finds that negotiation influences the workplace harmony in the County Government of Kakamega. The study thus recommends that the County Government of Kakamega prioritizes on industrial relations, ensures that all disputes are negotiated successfully, and puts mechanisms in place to make negotiation strategy integrative enough to enable creation of a win – win situation at all times.

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