Original Article

Conflict Management and Resolution in Uganda: A case of Ntungamo District Local Government

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on conflict management on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government. Specifically to identify the influence of arbitration on resolution, to examine the influence of negotiation on resolution and to examine the influence of confrontation on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government. The research used case study design. The study used purposive random sampling to select documents in the study that helped to gather detailed information on conflict resolution. The data study used secondary source of data collection with the sample size of 6 articles were considered. Data was analysed using content analysis for qualitative data. The study found out that local council courts were established to bring justice nearer to the people. The grading of the courts is based on the administrative units created by the local Government Act (Cap 243). Every village, parish, sub county and division/town councils is established as a local council court according to Local councils Courts Act. The law establishes local courts for the administration of Justice at local levels, defines their jurisdictional powers and procedures. The study also found out that LCs are viewed as popular organs created to counter and hold in check abuses of the civil servants and all other state functionaries. The study recommends that Ntungamo Local Government actors should be capacitated with the skills and knowledge to manage conflict is a proactive measure that will support their efforts to prevent and mitigate conflicts that may arise in these increasingly densely populated urban environments.

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, conflict has been always viewed as undesirable, and as something that should be fully avoided (Esquivel, 1997). According to Ajike et al (2015), Conflict was regarded as an indicator of poor organizational management which needed to be avoided, in the mid 1950's, it was accepted passively, and it was perceived as normal and expected as managers focused on addressing conflict, while in the 1970's, conflict was regarded necessary as not good or bad but could be used to stimulate growth, and in the 1990's managers embarked on confronting and managing conflict suitably as a mechanism to increase it positivity (Algert & Watson, 2002).

Globally, as discovered by Lipsky and Seeber (2006), Conflict management has gained a lot of popularity and recognition in the structural literature throughout the last two decades due to an alteration in attitudes and perception towards disputes in institutions. Prentice (2006) also averted that several positive results have been realized such as ability to regulate one's conduct in conflict circumstances, reduction of suspensions, enhancement in relational communication skills, prevention of violence and improving the capacity to respect and recognize diverse opinions or views of individuals at place of work are achieved as a result of conflict management programs. It is for this purpose that handling disputes is more vital than shunning and eliminating it. Conflict among employees has been increasingly popular in Europe, North America and Africa in recent years. Conflicts occur from individual perspective to organizational settings, for example, competition for minimum resources, poor communication about roles and responsibilities of the employees among other

factors; however, the results are not predetermined. Renner (2007) recalled various cases when managers from developed countries were expatriated to less developed countries to manage conflicts within various companies and they realized little success because of their failure to recognize and adapt to the conflict management styles of the local culture.

Albert (2011) averted that there are productive and destructive conflicts in workplace, according to him, "Conflict is said to be positive when it is constructively discussed by the parties and amicable terms for settlement reached". He emphasized that constructively managed conflict in workplace triggers positive resolution while poorly managed conflict lowers employees' morale, reduces employees' productivity, increase employee absenteeism, increase the chances of losing skilled personnel, leads to loss of man and machine hours, and may lead to an increase in the number of defective products produced due to lack of employees' commitment to work.

Nationally, the resolution in the private sector varies from that of the employees in local government as pointed out by Namboze (2013), who states that on average, 68.9% of private sector employees met their employment target output as compared to only 29.6% of local government employees. Similarly, Cheptoris (2014) studied Motivation and Resolution, revealed that on average 51.6% of local government employees in Soroti district did not meet their expected daily work target.

Conceptual background

According to Adeyemi and Ademilua (2012) conflict management refers to the process to control or minimize conflict through various measures.

Conflict management mechanisms are referred to mean internal mechanisms used by the various authorities in resolving conflict. According to Edwin, (2013), conflict management contains operationalization of certain measures to fully eradicate the negative results of conflict as you maximize and rise the positive results of conflict that enhances resolution and effectiveness in an organized setting.

Hellriegel (2010), defined conflict management as the intermediations designed to reduce conflict, or in some instances, to increase insufficient conflict. It is a practice whereby managers design plans, and actualize policies and procedures to ensure that conflict circumstances are resolved effectively. Knippen, Yohan and Ghalla (2011), asserted that conflict management widens the understanding of the phenomenon, increases the managements and tend to work towards consensus and to seek an honest assurance to decision making. Since there is a wider, stronger element of divergence and discord within the conflict process, a significant amount of mental and psychological energy is generated. The ability to divert this energy into productive accomplishment for both parties involved in the conflict can result in the conversion of conflict into a joint discovery of a problem-solving solution (Prentice, 2006).

According to Rabinz (2008), noted that in negotiation, effective listening and giving proper feedback improves flow of communication and resolution in an organization accordingly. Furthermore, Gorton (2004) also argued that managers in an organization should bear various competencies and skills related to listening, speaking, and questioning skills which will later ensure effective and efficient negotiation process that will therefore realize improved resolution.

Putnam and Krone (2006), indicates that conflict among employees in an organization is unavoidable because it is the nature and feature of complex organizations. However, according to Dana, (2000), noted that conflict if properly managed by using

conflict management techniques like arbitration, negotiation and confrontation, it can to a greater extent be influential on satisfaction of employees and their performance in an organization.

Accountemps, (2006), it's well indicated that top managers in organizations are doubling the time settling employees' grievances than they did several years back. Awan and Anjum, (2015) also contends that if conflicts are properly handled and managed by using the best course of action, the organization has a greater opportunity to increase its performance in terms of fully utilizing the scarce resources to achieve the organizational goals and objectives.

Conversely according to Awan and Anjum (2015), unaddressed conflict has a great negative impact on both job satisfaction and resolution. Awan and Anjum (2015), further noted that timely management of disputes has the ability to improve resolution and job satisfaction. Song (2000) also argued that for an organization to increase its performance, management has to address and resolve the existing disputes and among its employees.

Contextual background

According to Armstrong (2006), conflict management and employees' performance is where the employees have different views and understanding of how best to deal with conflicts as it may not destruct the employee's performance. In the organization context, Armstrong (2006) addressed performance as the capacity to execute a job well. According to Lebans and Euske (2006) resolution is a combination of monetary and nonmonetary signs which provides data on the degree of success in line with activities, outputs and purpose in order to realize the positive results. Kidega (2012) in his study about Local government resolution points out that causes of employee's poor performance is attributed to the conflicts that are very common but poorly managed in Local government. Ntungamo District like any other Local Government Administration institution faces

challenges in deploying better conflict management strategies that can benefit conflicts and stimulate better employees' performance despite the legal frameworks that are in place to manage conflicts constructively like the public service standing orders and code of conduct work ethics.

Betty (2017) indicates that conflicts in Ntungamo district are caused by various factors like delayed salaries, poor communication, inadequate office space, Lack of motivation, political interference, erroneous deletion from payroll and competition for limited resources by different departments which has hindered better resolution of Ntungamo district local government. Whether the deteriorating employees' performance is attributed to poor and unpopular strategies employed in managing the above conflicts is the question subject to debate in this study. It's against this scenario that the researcher seeks to assess the influence of conflict management and resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government.

Problem statement

Conflict in an employment relationship has been an issue of continuing interest and debate. Dealing with conflicts in organisations has over the years been seen as the sole responsibility of the managers who often times consider a rigid stand on how to deal with it; organisations that conflicts in this manner fail to recognize that conflict is natural in organisational life and has its own both benefits and costs (Ebe & Osibanjo, 2014). In many organizations, internal (intrapersonal) and interpersonal conflicts are consuming so much organizational time and attention that organizations are starting to look as though conflict is their primary business (Ojielo, 2002).

In Ntungamo DLG, the unsatisfactory resolution majorly manifests through delayed service delivery, continued customer complaints about poor service delivery (Ntungamo District Abstract, 2021). The district annual report (2022) revealed that approximately 13 workers were conflicting with

politician's poor quality of services rendered to community members. According to the District Audit report (2022), a total of 19 kms was constructed in Bwizibwera but politicians were against it because the project was not favouring their political will. The District received a Primary Health Care Development grant to construct a maternity ward in Rubare Health centre III but some of the workers claimed that the projects was shoddy with cracked floor; the windows and external doors were not fixed and the electrical installation was not done as planned (Audit report, 2022).

In order to reduce conflict, Ntungamo district has been engaged in dealing with conflicts through various initiatives such as arbitration, negotiation and confrontation (Ntungamo districts Abstract, 2022). If the situation is not addressed, resolution in terms of quality of service offered, timeliness and efficiency in service delivery, meeting targets and availability of staff will continue to deteriorate which affects the growth and development. The unresolved conflict would generate many serious consequences involving high financial and human costs, frustration, and tension, low morale, missing meeting deadlines, lack of self-confidence, low trust level, communication problems, absenteeism, and legal proceedings. Conflict might cause stress, reduces confidence levels, and makes employees anxious, and frustrated, lesser job satisfaction, humiliation, embarrassment, induce psychological and physical diseases. It was from this background that the study determined the influence of Conflict management on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government.

General objective

To determine the influence of conflict management on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government.

Specific objectives

- To identify the influence of arbitration on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government.

- To examine the influence of negotiation on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government.

- To examine the influence of confrontation on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government.

Research questions

- What is the influence of arbitration on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government?

- What is the influence of negotiation on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government?

- What is the influence of confrontation on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government?

Research hypothesis

- Arbitration has significant influence on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government

- Negotiation has significant influence on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government

- Confrontation has significant influence on resolution in Ntungamo District Local Government

Justification of the study

Conflict management plays a critical role in enhancing resolution by making sure that employees understand the contribution they are expected to make towards objectives of the organisation (Ayentimi, 2012). On the contrary, for several years, academic scholars and corporate executives have debated on the repercussions of improper conflict management in institutions (Yiannis et al., 2009). According to Hellqvest (2011), the regularity of inadequate conflict management practices damage workplace environment and lead to decline in performance. It has also resulted in legal and ethical problems in various organizations in developing nations. The government of Uganda introduced the Integrated Conflict-Performance Management Framework in order to ensure a well-remunerated and motivated civil service able to deliver on time and provide enhanced services to the public, District Local Government inclusive (GoU, 2007). However, performance at the Ntungamo District Local Government has remained below the expected standards. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study and establish the effect conflict management on resolution.

Significance of the study

The study benefited other employees in the organization who would be able to understand the importance of conflict management and its impact on working together in a team. The Management also benefits from this study, because conflict if left unresolved could lead to lower sales, poor customer service and fewer profits. The study helped the organization project a positive corporate image to the public.

The Government benefit from this study through the acquisition of dynamic working citizens who translated into professionals who can meet international standards through bringing into the market quality and quantity products and services. The study also benefited the general public because it add to knowledge of the importance of managing conflict in everyday life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review

The study was guided by Conflict management theory. This theory provides that a healthy conflict management system should be established in any institution (Ford, 2007). The conflict management system should be integrated with in the management and administrative system of the institution at the high level of the institution hierarchy. Manager in

various institutions are presented with conflicts by their employees and they are expected to solve them. (Ford, 2007) urges that managers as third parties, they are required to enable the conflicting parties to recognize that all of them have legitimate needs that must be satisfied in order to resolve their conflicts. Managers should also bring parties into a permanent solution to their problem by using conflict management techniques like Arbitration, Negotiation and confrontation that can help manage conflicts effectively.

According to Kirchhoff and Adams (1982), Traditional theory of conflict bases on assumptions that conflict is evil and must be totally rejected and abstained as it creates a state of disorder and anxiety among employees within the organization. Conflict is perceived as dissenting because it is accompanied with violence, hostility and destruction. Conflict is the outcome of unclear communication and mistrust among people. Robins, (2005) argues that conflict can be minimized and addressed only at top management level, this view contends that all disputes in an organization should be avoided in order to give chance to top management to perform their tasks well as they envision for the organization. However, Robins (2005), insists that there is demand to recognize the root causes of conflict and take corrective action as a technique to improve resolution. Rahim, (1986) also noted that several conflicts have negative attributes, stimulate negative feelings and always result into destruction thus affecting employee and organizational performance. However, he also claims that whether the intermediate results of conflict are good or bad, it depends on the strategies used to deal with it in order to realize best results for improved organizational performance.

Empirical review

Arbitration and Resolution

According to Igbokwe (2023) arbitration is a conflict-solving process in where disputing parties make their issue to a private independent person or third-party intermediary (panel of arbitrators) who through his expertise critically examines and re-examines all the evidence and later takes a unified decision before the parties involved in a dispute. The decision made by the arbitrator or panel of arbitrators is usually binding and, in most cases, enforced. Unlike court-based adjudication, arbitrators' decision is not appealed against. Beaumont, Brodlija and Foucard (2022) noted that presentations are echoed before the arbitrators to establish facts and prove one side right and the other wrong. This, therefore make, parties to presume that they are working at logger heads with each other, but not collaboratively and cooperatively. Arbitration is not generally as formal as court adjudication; however, the rules can be bent to some extent to achieve the party's needs. Although this aspect of conflict management is good, it has some loopholes because, it may end up not solving a dispute since one side to the conflict will come out arbitrated against. Thus, in the worst scenarios, this can instead deepen the conflict than managing it.

Makoyi (2018) in his research revealed that Arbitration is always best used in situations of employee conflict over resource allocations, wages, salaries, tasks among other disputes. Arbitration mechanism of conflict management is an out of court technique for resolving a conflict. The arbitrator has the mandate to control the process, gives opportunity and listen to both sides that he bases on to make a final decision. Like in courts of law, only one side will prevail in arbitration though the appeal rights are limited and this is a great challenge of using arbitration technique in conflict management. Boettcher (2020) states that Arbitration technique can be much worse than better in managing conflicts in an institution due to win-lose results. Gross (2019) urges that in a more formal setting, the arbitrator or third party has to give a fair hearing to all parties' before making a decision. The parties always present their evidence through documents, exhibits and testimony by themselves or representatives. Chandrasekher and Horton (2019) also discovered that parties may

agree to already established procedures or they may establish their own procedures or the institution may establish the procedures for the arbitrator to conduct in arbitrating. There can be either one arbitrator or a panel of more than one arbitrator. An arbitration hearing process can be held from any gazetted place that is convenient and agreed upon by both parties in a dispute. Southey, Lynch, Rose and Hafeez-Baig, (2023) echoed that the outcomes of an arbitration can be enforced in case all parties had previously accepted to be bound by the decision and this limits the right of appeal against the arbitrator's final decision. An arbitrator's decision is same as a judgment in courts of judicature and therefore it is enforceable.

St Antoine (2020) argues that arbitration should always be deployed only when mediations fails to work and this will automatically and naturally suggest arbitration as the best choice. Arbitration is always a voluntary process, whereby the parties in conflict willingly agree upon a private independent party to take a decision for them. According to Szalai (2018) arbitration, the arbitrator or panel of arbitrators has discretionary powers to make conclusive decisions which are binding and this demands the parties in conflict are to recognize, adhere and obey them. An agreement is designed between the conflicting parties and the arbitrator, indicating a main point and emphasizing that the arbitrator's decision shall be operationalized, thus giving the required significance of arbitration process and emphasizing to parties in dispute that the main objective of arbitration shall be fulfilled. This scenario makes the decision made by the arbitrator legal and binding thus permitting relevant authorities to enforce it against other decision makers. However, according to Szalai (2018) in his conclusion noted that arbitration always performs better depending on the situation at hand.

Rogers (2021) also criticized arbitration as a strategy of managing conflicts in an institution, arguing that arbitration can instead fuel more conflicts among the employees in an organization than solving them and this is due to the decision of the arbitrator which is binding and limits appeal against it, this may trigger the losing side to promote conflicts at the workplace thus leading to poor employee relations, low productivity, creation of cliques at workplace which in turn lead to poor resolution in an organization.

The study findings on Arbitration and resolution are in agreement with several reviews in the literature by most scholars as it was postulated that Arbitration positively and significantly influences resolution.

Negotiation and Resolution

Vadi (2018) argues that negotiation is a very critical the most significant and delicate task that a manager in an organization is mandated to handle. Close and objective interaction with subordinates, superiors and all individuals are inevitable for a manager to fulfill organizational tasks. However according to Oliveira Sá Pires and Gabriel (2019), noted that this process of communications is a component of negotiation which necessitates a manager to have specific communication and negotiation skills in an organization.

Sevcenko, Wu, Kacperczyk and Ethiraj (2022) argue based on research in Harvard University that negotiation is the revival of healthy employee relationships, teamwork, cooperation and improved resolution in an organization. According to Omene (2021) noted that in negotiation, effective listening and giving proper feedback improves flow of communication and resolution in an organization accordingly. Furthermore, Moravec (2019) also argued that managers in an organization should bear various competencies and skills related to listening, speaking, and questioning skills which will later ensure effective and efficient negotiation process that will therefore realize improved resolution.

Makoyi (2018) observes that managers in an organization should always interest themselves to learn negotiation skills, because as negotiating is part and partial of their day to day activities.

Actually, situations when there is a conflict in tasks and process between employees and yet they need each other for better working relations, negotiation is the best mechanism to a leveled ground and agreement. Several scholars have argued that one of various challenges that managers interface with is due to lack of negotiation skills and competencies in performing their tasks. Lai (2018) also noted that in the process of putting in place a strategic communication framework that will be effective and efficient needs negotiation as the main communication tool to harmonize with other relevant office and departments in an organization.

According to Lai (2018) indicates that in one of the Canadian organizations, a survey was carried out and more than 550 employees fully participated in it. Lai (2018) noted that this survey revealed that employees preferred to always participate in making decisions that can affect them through negotiation with managers before final decisions are made. Employees' considered negotiation as the only technique that exhibits fairness since participation led to collective responsibility and shared values. The findings of the survey concluded that the features of an improved performance workforce included recognition of employee's voices in strategy and governance, situational compensation, cooperation and employee involvement by using negotiation to resolve disputes. The report further warned superiors to always recognize that the subordinates in joining their organization had clear expectations of their employers and thus employer's actions were key in involving employees at all levels of strategy designing in order to have ownership of Strategy and which will ensure operationalization hence realizing organizational performance.

In relation to negotiation, Wanjiru (2020) also conducted a study on negotiation and performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Wanjiru's study discovered that negotiation positively influenced employee's performance in the banking sector. This was evidenced as negotiation was fully considered

before reaching at a compensation package acceptable by the employee and employer. This study also went further to ascertain if Stima Sacco had a communication framework and plan in place considering the positive effect negotiation had on resolution in the Sacco. Odek and Okoth (2019) also conducted a study on strategies that are used by secondary schools in Kisumu Municipality to manage conflicts. This study discovered that techniques of negotiation employed by secondary schools in Kisumu municipality to manage conflicts were effective in increasing performance.

The results of negotiations are earmarked to establish whether the defiant teams shall reach a common ground and work towards improvement of resolution to actualize organizational goals and objectives. Gunia (2019) also insists that in any negotiation practice, the intermediate results shall either promote group harmony or create tensions. The intermediate results are comprised of win-win, lose-lose and win-lose results. The win-win negotiating results are applicable to various situations like tasks negotiations, salary negotiations, conflict management among other situations. Negotiation is the process where both parties settle for common ground in situations of divergence, thus on party force terms on another. According to Voon, Che Azmi and Jayasingam (2023) also noted the result of negotiation can only be mutually satisfactory when the common interests are catered for and this thus will trigger and influence on resolution in an organization.

Ampomah et al. (2022) carried out a study on the US Army and recommended that negotiation is a key factor and all levels of management in the Army and advised that Army officials at all levels be trained in negotiations in order to obtain a skill that will facilitate effective implementation of their tasks. According to Jadallah and Garven, (2011), the outcomes of negotiation were a win- win type of negotiation for the military. Zhang (2018) indicated that several training programs on negotiation had been conducted for better security operations in the

Middle East; hence the potential to negotiate with different people and organizations progressively became a key skill to manage day-to-day conflicts through effective negotiation.

According to Raines (2019), win-lose outcomes are less likely to be accepted voluntarily especially by the party who feels they have lost in a negotiation exercise. In this case, some organizations resort to distributive bargaining processes, based on a principle of harmony between participants, so as to end up in win-win outcomes (Zhang, 2018). It is the bargaining between the two parties that have recognized their conflict. In this case, representatives of the conflicting groups can handle it. It is an efficient method when there is a tendency for reconciliation or agreement. However, it is not as effective when the resettlement will require judging in favor of one side. Zhang (2018) viewed negotiation as a win-lose situation where gains by one party meant losses by the other. On the other hand, he viewed negotiation as a win-win situation where the interests of both parties can be maintained. Thus, it is a motivating aspect of conflict management in organizations.

The study discoveries on negotiation and resolution are in agreement with several reviews in the literature by most scholars as it was postulated that Negotiation positively and significantly influences resolution.

Confrontation and Resolution

Mussa (2020) argues that confrontation is another aspect through which conflict can be managed. In this aspect, conflict can deepen if there is a decrease in communication amongst conflicting groups within an organization. He thus suggested that this would be solved by; bringing the conflicting groups in meeting such that they can jointly identify the problem and solve it amicably. Pace (2019) analyzed confrontation as a traditional value, creating deeper analysis of interpersonal challenges. De Forsberg and Reichenbach (2021) define the abilities needed for facilitating disputes through

constructive confrontation and further linked positive confrontation strategy to reducing conflict and maximizing the productivity of employees in an organization.

According to Davis and Cates (2018), the encounter of values in an organization is due to employee's ignorance of their existing cultural values before switching into organizational culture and the resistance to change individual behaviour. The encounter between the available individual values and the desired values of organizational culture impacts internalization of organizational values by employees. Consequently, Caplan (2019) noted that the confrontation can also be viewed as an encounter between and current states and the desired organizational values of their internalization by the employees.

Hoover and Disilvestro, (2005) equated the positive confrontation technique to reducing disputes and maximizing accountability and transparency. However, the scholars didn't propose any tool to measure the state of confrontation and furthermore didn't employ the technique to realize confrontation of cultural tenets. Patterson et al. (2004) also focused on critical confrontation to ensure transparency and accountability. However, the scholars didn't evaluate the possibility of applying the technique for shifting organizational cultural values. Hellriege (2010) also observed confrontation as a cultural value for providing deeper inquiry of social challenges. However, scholars don't apply confrontation as a technique for minimizing the gap between individual and organizational cultural values under restriction of altering organizational culture.

Paschke et al (2018) suggest that positive confrontation is a better technique of resolving intractable disputes. However, use of the technique for management of the structural disputes triggered by the variance in cultural beliefs and values were not examined. Additionally, the scholars do not attend to the management of positive confrontation grounded on measurable outcomes. Holland (2019)

created the structured vibrant value confrontation leadership model, modeling the leadership process of altering organizational culture while directed at engendering productive confrontation between preferred organizational values and current employee values. Dynamics of the model prompts dynamics of the management process.

According to Rahmat (2020) conflicts can also be addressed by accommodating or avoiding. Both accommodation and avoidance are passive while confrontation can be assertive and competitive. To him therefore, confrontation is the process of airing out one's views, thoughts and feelings about a dispute situation and an invite is as well made to the other party to also do the same about a conflict and all this is done with an aim of resolving that conflict. Thus, it involves, describing behavior and ones' reactions to that behavior, clarifying and exploring issues in the conflict (substantive, relational, procedural), the nature and strength of the parties' interests, needs, concerns and disclosure of relevant feelings. Whereas this aspect of conflict management sounds good and effective, it can only help in resolving conflicts which are simple and rise from misunderstandings. However, in a more complex conflicting situation that involves un-coordinated exchange of views or even fighting. This is not effective because conflicting parties if not well set and prepared may end up fighting which can worsen the conflict further. The study results on confrontation and resolution are in agreement with several reviews in the literature by most scholars as it was postulated that Confrontation significantly influences resolution.

METHODOLOGY

The research used case study design (Crewell, 2014). The design is crucial to demonstrate that the chosen approach is appropriate for addressing the research questions or objectives. The study used purposive sampling to select documents in the study that helped to gather detailed information on conflict resolution (Amin, 2005, Creswell, 2003, Creswell, 2014). The data study used secondary source of data collection (Kothari, 2004; Creswell, 2014; Amin, 2005). Data was analysed using content analysis for qualitative data. The study upheld high levels of research ethics such as the right to voluntary participation, respect of participants (Yin, 2013), protection of participants from risk and harm; and protection of participants' privacy and confidentiality.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study found out that local council courts were established to bring justice nearer to the people. The grading of the courts is based on the administrative units created by the local Government Act (Cap 243) (Ministry of Local Government 1997). Every village, parish, sub-county and division/town councils is established as a local council court according to Local Councils Courts Act (Ministry of Local Government 2006). The law establishes local courts for the administration of Justice at local levels, defines their jurisdictional powers and procedures (Ministry of Local Government 2006). According to Ddungu (1993), LCs are viewed as popular organs created to counter and hold in check abuses of civil servants and all other state functionaries. As organs of the people, they check corruption, solve conflicts and help in implementation of government programmes at little or no fee at all.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that since conflict is a natural concomitant of all human interactions, and the essence of governance is conflict management every local government functionary should build the appropriate strategies of conflict resolution and management into his administration system. This is coupled with high display of knowledge of human relations. In addition, local government functionaries shun exclusive pursuit for selfish desires, hypocrisy and vainglory but are firm in policy implementation and conflict adjudication. The principle of good governance such as transparency, accountability, equality, un-gagged

information flow, popular participation in policy process, and leadership by example constitutes the framework upon which local governance must operate.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that Ntungamo Local Government actors should be capacitated with the skills and knowledge to manage conflict is a proactive measure that will support their efforts to prevent and mitigate conflicts that may arise in these increasingly densely populated urban environments.

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