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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

**MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

**THESIS ON**

**WORK PLACE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICE IN PRIVATE commercial banks OF  
ETHIOPIA**

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**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

## Statement of Declaration

I declare that this thesis entitled: Work Place Conflict Management Practice in Private Commercial Banks of Ethiopia; is my original work, prepared under the guidance of my advisor Tilahun Teklu (PhD). All sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

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## Statement of Certification

This is to certify that, Lieltewoin Nega Agonafir has carried out her research work on the topic entitled “Work Place Conflict Management Practice in Private Commercial Banks of Ethiopia”. The work is original in nature and is suitable for submission for the award of the Degree of Master of International Business at Addis Ababa University.

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**Declaration**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Lieltewoin Nega Agonafir, entitled “Work Place Conflict Management Practice in Private commercial banks of Ethiopia”. And submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of International Business compiles with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Abstract**

*Currently in the banking business environment employees face multiple challenges and obstacles in their daily activities. These threats offer unique challenges for the management to manage their organizations well. The challenges raised in banking organization will impact the employees in one way or another. As such, employees might be faced with interpersonal conflict due to challenges such as differing needs, scarce resources, values and goals among colleagues in the organization. The purpose of this study is to examine the work place interpersonal conflict management strategies practice by private commercial banks in Ethiopia through the application of Thomas-Kilmann's conflict handling model. Conflict is a common incidence in organizations. Conflict occurs for different reasons in banking sector. The managers must be able to understand why and when conflict arises and how it managed or resolved. Employees have different view point for choosing different conflict management strategies. Descriptive research design was used in the study. Data were collected from 110 respondents from 10 private commercial banks in Ethiopia. Questionnaire was used as main data collection instruments. The data collected from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as percentages and frequencies. The findings of the study suggested that private commercial banks in Ethiopia use all five conflict management strategies of Thomas-Kilmann model such as compromising, collaborating, avoiding, competing and accommodating. But the strategy that was most frequently used is collaborating strategy. Collaborating in conflict management means trying to find the best solution for all parties involved. Parties involved resolving a conflict openly express their concerns and work to find a mutually useful solution. Collaboration leads to creative problem-solving and respect among colleagues in an organization. This style finds the root of a problem, such as personal conflicts, and attends to the situation in the least hostile manner of any conflict-management style. But on the other hand collaborative efforts tend to take more time compared to other conflict resolution strategies. Accommodating, compromising, competing and avoiding strategies were the second, third, fourth and fifth preferred and practiced strategies by employees of private banks respectively. As banking sector in Ethiopia is highly competitive, the employees may focus on long term relationship while resolving conflict. Recommendation also made focusing on management and employee's role for effective conflict handling. Collaborative workplace culture and responsive management can play very crucial role in this regard.*

**Keywords:** *Conflict management, competing, collaborating, compromising, accommodating and avoiding.*

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## **Acronyms**

CMS      Conflict Management System

S.C      Share Company

BOA      Bank of Abyssinia

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Conflict is a perpetual given of life, although varying view of it may be held. Some may view conflict as being a negative situation which must be avoided at any cost. Others may see conflict as being a phenomenon which necessitates management as it generates new ideas. Still others may consider conflict as being an exciting opportunity for personal growth and so try to use it to his or her best advantage. Whoever may fall on this continuum of viewpoints concerning conflict, seldom would one expect to be in a continual state of conflict as for the basis for employment. Work place conflict free company has never existed and never will exist. Antagonisms, tensions, aggressions, stereotypes, negative attitudes and the frustrations of perceived conflicting need will always be present wherever men are forced to live and work together. However, conflict in organizations is a daily occurrence. Conflict is inevitable among humans. (Nafiza and Nahhida, 2017)

Organizational conflict (work place) is the discord that occurs when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those individuals or groups block or tend to frustrate each other's attempt to achieve stress responses: fight or flight (Esquivel and Kleiner, 1997).

When two or more social entities (i.e., individuals, groups, organizations, and nations) come in contact with one another in attaining their objectives, their relationships may become incompatible or inconsistent. Relationships among such entities may become inconsistent when two or more of them desire a similar resource that is in short supply; when they have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint action; or when they have different attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills.

Interpersonal conflict is very common at our workplace. Workplace (organizational) conflict can trigger negative consequences affecting relationships between individuals. It can lead to a serious loss of time and energy when there is a failure to address it competently. However, it can sometimes open up new opportunities for relationship-building if it is handled honestly, impartially, and smoothly. Moreover, conflict management strengthens relationships among individuals and groups in their workplaces and indeed, other fields of life (Yasmin & Aleya, 2017).

To ensure a productive and vibrant workplace, it is necessary to find out the causes and management of interpersonal workplace conflicts. Furthermore, understanding interpersonal workplace conflicts and applying management strategies can produce a sound and friendly workplace. This is where the necessity of conflict management comes in, which is examined in detail in this paper. Conflict management is necessary to keep harmony within the group and between individuals.

### **Conflict Management**

Conflict management involves implementing certain strategies to eliminate the negative aspects of conflict, increase the positive aspects of conflict and to enhance performance and effectiveness in an organized setting. Rather than eliminating or avoiding disagreements, the purpose of work place conflict management is to teach individuals conflict resolution skills, such as managing conflict, finding self-awareness about the types of conflict and effectively communicating while in conflict with a team member (Wangari, 2013). These skills assist individual employees as well as teams in establishing a positive outcome from conflict. It is the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way.

Conflict management enhance creative problem solving, enabling people to turn work place conflict situations into constructive learning opportunities, developing creative and more appropriate solutions, preserving relationships, saving time and money, empowering people to resolve their own disputes and creations of more durable outcomes. Managing Conflict in Organizations has been investigated by the

sociologist; and the struggle for survival by species of differing genetic endowments has been studied by the biologist (Nightingale, 1974). Scholars in organization theory became interested in studying conflict only in recent times. In recent years, there have been renewed interest and significant changes in the study of conflict in organizational contexts (Nafiza and Nahida, 2017).

Work place conflict management implemented within a business environment usually involves through effective communication, problem solving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the company's overall goals (Thakore, 2013).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem (research problems)**

In the current business environment employees in the banking sector face multitude challenges and obstacles in their daily jobs. These threats offer unique challenges for the management to manage their organizations well. The challenges that take place in banking organization will affect the employees in one way or another. As such, employees might be faced with interpersonal conflict due to challenges such as differing needs, beliefs, values and goals among individual members in the organization.

The selection of conflict management strategies is varying depending on differences in variables such as sex, age, working experience, educational level and other factors. By taking in to consideration these variables the researcher will summarize in the data presentation and analysis part of the thesis.

The literature reveals varying conclusions about the effect of various variables on the choice of CMS. Some studies concluded that demographic variables had an effect on the choice of CMS; conversely, others claim that demographic factors do not significantly affect choice of CMS. These inconsistent findings initiated for further study (Setegn, 2007).

Thomas (1976), Thomas-Kilmann (1977), as cited in Harrington, et al. (2000), McKenna & Richardson (1995), Barrier, et al. (2005), for example, have reported that sex has effect on the choice of CMS. Sternberg & Soriano (1984), on the other hand, have found out that the effect of sex on the choice of conflict management style was not statistically significant.

Barrier, et al. (2005) found significant differences between men and women on the choice of two CMS (collaboration and avoiding), women were found to be more collaborative and less avoiders than their male counterparts. McKenna & Richardson (1995) studied the relationship between age and CMS by dividing their samples into four age groups - 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, and 31-35. They found out that there were no significant differences except for the 31-35 age groups. They indicated in their study that with increasing age, respondents have a clear tendency to become more assertive; the 31-35 age groups indicated a collaborative style (which is a combination of assertiveness and cooperation). They also identified compromising and avoiding as the two predominant modes of handling conflict for both men and women. Barrier, et al. (2005) stated that in managing conflict women, unlike men, favor accommodating strategy, whereas men, unlike women, prefer to be more confrontational and competitive.

Researchers (e.g. McKenna and Richardson, 1995; Barrier, et al. 2005) believed that the above findings accord with gender role expectations. They explained that traditionally women are taught to define their sense of self within the context of relationships and are socialized to abandon personal goals for the benefit of others. Men, in contrast, are taught to define themselves in terms of domination and control and are socialized to be more assertive, aggressive, and independent. A study by Habtamu (1998) also strengthens this explanation. The study revealed that wives used accommodative style [competitive or win/lose style from husbands' side]; i.e. wives tolerating beatings, remaining silent in managing conflict with their husbands.

The roles of educational level and experience at work have also been examined. (Devonish & Nurse (2007) found out that workers who have been exposed to more formal education were more cooperative in managing conflict at work. Younger, less experienced, and less educated workers, on the other hand, are inclined to be challenging and competitive and are likely to be less tolerant of perceived conflict than their older, more educated, and more experienced counterparts.

Researchers (e.g. Sternberg & Soriano, 1984; Rahim, 1985; Deetz & Stevenson, 1986; Darr, 1999), identified awareness as the decisive variable for people's choice of CMS. They explained that many people seem to believe conflict is unnatural departure from human sociability. People perceive it as always appearing as a break in the continuity of good feelings they have towards others and in the ability to work together to satisfy needs and achieve goals; and hence people think that conflict can be and should be avoided in most circumstances.

### **Summary of Phenomenon study**

It is a general result that has been observed reliably in a systematic empirical study. It is an established answer to a research question.

As per the finding of Islam N. and Rimi N. (2017), private commercial banks in Bangladesh used the entire five CMS of Thomas-Kilmann model but collaborating strategy was most frequently used. Integrating, compromising and dominating strategies were used to manage conflict by employees of banks in Penang, Malaysia (Kassim M. and Ibrahim H., 2014).

A general result that has been observed on studies conducted in Ethiopian context at various sectors revealed that, though the bank do not take in to consideration work place conflict management as an integral part of management activities, employees in Bank of Abyssinia IT project dominantly used avoidance or withdrawals as a CMS(Beletu B. 2019). While Meskerem A. (2014) found out that, collaborating is the primary and most practiced strategy. Competing, compromising and accommodating is the second, third and fourth preferred strategies; finally avoiding is the least preferred CMS among EOTC priests.

In a research conducted by Fisseha T. (2018) in both global fund and CDC funded projects, competing and avoiding conflict resolution strategies were mostly practiced.

As explained above by various researchers that the choice of conflict management style is influenced by other factors in addition to demographic variables that dictate the selection of CMS. Regardless of the causes of conflict in banks and the choice of conflict management styles or models, work place conflict management practices in banking industry was not well studied. Instead in educational and other sector some studies were conducted as indicated in an empirical review section of the literature review.

Work place conflict between employees arising from competition for scarce resources, time pressure, unreasonable standards, policies, rules or procedures, communications breakdowns, personality clashes, ambiguous or overlapping jurisdictions, unrealized expectations, task interdependence, status problems, individual traits, ambiguous objectives and goals, individual differences, employees dissatisfaction, poorly defined responsibilities, authority and role, undesirable demands of workers, poorly defined system of payment, faulty performance appraisal and reward system could be taken as organizational conflict.

The fact that financial institutions (banks) mobilize the largest financial resources of the nation and employ thousands of employees, work place interpersonal conflict in the working environment of the banking industry should be properly studied and appropriate recommendations should be presented in order to create conducive working environment and team spirit that makes the industry more profitable. Therefore, to enhance understanding of work place conflict and its management practice in Ethiopian private commercial banks, the researcher intends to conduct a research on the title with an intention to get answers for basic research questions.

### **1.3. Research Question**

#### **1.3.1. General Research Question**

Do employees of the bank use Thomas Kilmann's conflict management strategies (model) for handling work place interpersonal conflict?

#### **1.3.2. Specific Research Questions**

- Do employees of the bank use avoiding strategy for handling interpersonal conflict situations?
- Do employees of the bank use accommodating strategy for handling interpersonal conflict situations?
- Do employees of the bank use competing strategy for handling interpersonal conflict situations?
- Do employees of the bank use collaborating strategy for handling interpersonal conflict situations?
- Do employees of the bank use compromising strategy for handling interpersonal conflict situations?

### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

#### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to examine the practice of conflict management strategies to resolve work place interpersonal conflict in Ethiopian private commercial banks.

#### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

- To examine avoiding strategy practiced by employees of the bank to resolve interpersonal conflict.
- To examine accommodating strategy practiced by employees of the bank to resolve interpersonal conflict.
- To examine competing strategy practiced by employees of the bank to resolve interpersonal conflict.
- To examine collaborating strategy practiced by employees of the bank to resolve interpersonal conflict.
- To examine compromising strategy practiced by employees of the bank to resolve interpersonal conflict.

- To recommend about effective conflict resolution techniques by explaining management role.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The research work is focused on examining work place conflict management strategies practice on interpersonal conflict in private commercial banks operating in Addis Ababa city, Ethiopia.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study may provide valuable information and recommendations to different stakeholders as it aims in examining interpersonal conflict management strategies practice on work place in private commercial banks. The findings mainly benefit private commercial bank's senior management members, branch managers, supervisors and other employees of the bank.

- The study assists private commercial banks management to set new interpersonal conflict management strategies and amend their existing procedure used to resolve interpersonal conflict.
- The study helps management of banks to make them aware and to give due attention about the alternative work place conflict management strategies.
- The study helps the management of the banks to view work place conflict not only as a source of challenges but also as a source of opportunities.
- Furthermore, the study adds a know how to existing body of knowledge on the practice of work place conflict management strategies in private commercial banks.

## **1.7. Organization of the Study**

The study will be organized in to five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study background, giving an overview idea of work place conflict management practice, problem statement, purpose and scope of the study, objectives, research questions and significance of the study. Chapter two review of related literatures on both theoretical and empirical studies. It will contain an assessment of researches done on bank's interpersonal conflict management practices and related topics. The methodology employed for investigating the qualitative significance of the strategies of conflict management practice will be presented in chapter three. Chapter four will present the results of analysis done and discusses the findings made. Chapter five, finally, will draw conclusions from findings and give recommendations for the management of private commercial banks.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. Review of Related Literature**

This chapter will discuss related theoretical and empirical literatures on work place conflict management practices in private commercial banks in Ethiopia and abroad. It will review information from other researchers that have conducted studies in related field of area and will explain methodologies adopted and findings of other researchers. This chapter will establish a frame work for the study and clearly identify the gap to be researched.

#### **2.1. Background of Organizational Conflict**

Organizational conflict refers to the condition of misunderstanding or disagreement that is caused by the perceived or actual opposition in the needs, interests and values among people who work together. Organizational conflict may also be termed as workplace conflict. The conflicts occur during situations where there is an interaction between two or more members of an organization involving contradictory opinions.

As cited by (Akhtar et.al, 2020), in organizations, difference in opinion is an everyday phenomenon due to multiple approaches and thoughts by individuals and parties. Whenever two individuals discourse in different ways, a conflict arises. They think in different styles and behavior, hence clash in opinion and definite disagreement gives beginning to conflict. Simply conflict is difference between thoughts as well as understanding between two persons or group of persons. The etymology of conflict can be traced back to the Latin word *conflicyus* meaning trouble between two or more human beings. According to Balawi (2005) a conflict among people is a disagreement, friction, or dispute. Keeping insight enormous activities of organizations, conflicts have gained importance for making correct decisions.

A number of definitions of conflict are available in literature. According to Schramm-Nielsen (2002), conflict is a state of grave contradiction in argument over a matter considered indispensable by at least one person or group involved. Both parties having conflict are clearly identified in case of industrial conflicts. Azamosa (2004) noted that industrial conflicts include all types of dealings having disagreement between owners, administrators, and workers. Dzurgba (2006) emphasized the social aspect of conflict and treated it as serious problem for the functionality of social groups. Baron (1984); Fisher (1993); Papa and Pood (1988) believed that it is almost impossible to avoid conflict in its entirety because it is a continual part of the organizational sustainability and growth.

## **2.2. Theories of Organizational Conflict**

### **2.2.1. The Classical View of Organizational Conflict**

Theorists of the classical organization (Fayol, 1916/1949; Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Taylor, 1911; Weber, 1929/1947) did not look to appreciate various impacts of conflict on organizations. They implicitly assumed that conflict is damaging to organizational efficiency and therefore should be minimized in organizations. They prescribed organization structures, rules and procedures, hierarchy, channel of command and so on. So that organization members would be unlikely to engage in conflict. This approach to managing organizations was based on the assumption that harmony, cooperation, and the absence of conflict were appropriate for achieving organizational effectiveness.

#### **Frederick Taylor**

Frederick Taylor (1911) and his associates believed that if scientific management principles were implemented, the functioning of an organization would improve. Taylor insisted that the conflicts between labor and management would disappear if these principles were applied. Though scientific management led to significant advancement in industrial efficiency, it was not without conflict. Scientific

management also did not make any provision for the effective management of conflict between individuals and groups in an organization.

### **Henry Fayol**

Henry Fayol was a French executive classical organization theorist. Today's organization theory is greatly appreciative to Fayol (1916/1949). In some respects his work was superior to that of Taylor. Fayol advocated that the managerial functions, such as planning, organizing, command, coordination, and control, are applicable to all sorts of organized human endeavor. In addition to this, some of his organization principles, such as unity of command, span of control, division of work, and so on, are widely used today. Although Fayol's approaches to management were broader and more systematic than those of Taylor, both of them, as well as other classicists such as Gulick and Urwick (1937) and Mooney and Reiley (1939), saw organizations from a closed-system perspective. They implicitly assumed that conflict was detrimental to organizational effectiveness. They prescribed mechanistic organizational structures with clear lines of authority, hierarchical structures, division of labor, and so on, which would encourage harmony and cooperation and suppress or eliminate conflict among members.

### **Max Weber**

Max Weber (1929/1947), a well-known German sociologist, proposed a structure of organization that he called bureaucracy and believed it to be the most efficient form of organization. Weber left no room for conflict or deviance in his model of bureaucracy. Although he was aware of some of the dysfunctions of bureaucracy, he maintained that bureaucratic structures were appropriate for organizational effectiveness.

Mary Parker Follett Among the classical organization theorists, Mary Parker Follett (1926/1940) was a significant exception. Her strong behavioral orientation to management and organization in the 1920s placed her several decades ahead of her time. She noted the value of constructive conflict in an organization: "We can often measure our progress by watching the nature of our conflicts. Social progress is in

this respect like individual progress; we become spiritually more and more developed as our conflicts rise to higher levels” (Follett, 1926/1940). She strongly advocated the need for an integrative (problem-solving) method for managing organizational conflict. She believed that other methods of handling conflict, such as suppression, avoidance, dominance, and compromise, were ineffective in dealing with conflict.

### **2.2.2. The Neo-Classical View of Organizational Conflict**

As discussed before, the studies of Elton Mayo (1933) during the 1920s and 1930s, which led to the human relations movement, also emphasized the need for minimization or elimination of conflict for increasing organizational effectiveness.

Conflict to Mayo was neither inevitable nor economic. It was a result of the maladjustment of a few men on the labor side of the picture. Even after Hawthorne forced Mayo to grow, he remained firm in his conviction that conflict was an evil, a symptom of the lack of social skills. Cooperation, for him, was symptomatic of health (Baritz, 1960).

Over time the human relations theory found other supporters such as Lewin (1948), Likert (1967), and Whyte (1951).

Taylor, Fayol, Weber, and Mayo intended to reduce conflict for enhancing organizational efficiency, but they followed different routes. Whereas Taylor, Fayol, and Weber attempted to reduce conflict by altering the technical– structural system of the organization, Mayo attempted to accomplish this by altering its social system.

Thus, it can be observed that the classical organization theorists, with the exception of Follett, did not incorporate a conflict variable into their models. These theorists “viewed conflict as undesirable, detrimental to the organization. Ideally it should not exist. The prescription was simple. Eliminate it” (Litterer, 1966). The classicists did not, however, explicitly state that conflict should be eliminated from organizations. They, of course, implicitly assumed that conflict was not desirable for an

organization and should be minimized. This approach to organization and management dominated the literature during the first half of this century.

### **2.2.3. The Modern View of Organizational Conflict**

Litterer (1966) argued that the preceding view of classical organization theorists is similar to the view of others on the handling of tension within people. A fundamental position of many who analyzed individual behavior was that individuals were motivated by a desire for tension reduction. The prescription in both therapy and organization design therefore was to take steps or make arrangements which would reduce tension within individuals. More recently it has become accepted that tension is normal, even desirable, with the thought growing that “healthy” personalities actually seek to increase tension (Litterer, 1966).

Whyte (1967) indicated the functions of organizational conflict briefly: Harmony is an undesirable goal for the functioning of an organization. The objective should not be to build a harmonious organization, but to build an organization capable of recognizing the problems it faces and developing ways of solving these problems. Since conflicts are an inevitable part of organizational life, it is important that conflict resolution procedures be built into the design of organizations.

The interactionism approach is similar to the pluralist theory, which looks upon conflict as a means of generating agreements and of creating agreed upon terms of collaboration. Conflict becomes an instrument of social change and influence rather than a symptom of a breakdown in social relationships. In fact, conflict behaviors must occur from time to time in order to demonstrate the will and capacity of action (Nightingale, 1974).

Kerr (1964) was one of the leading figures in the application of this theory to the study of conflict in organizations.

Miles (1980) has summarized the significance and functions of organizational conflict quite forcefully: Although some theorists have regarded excess organizational conflict as the antithesis of “organization,” others have begun to

stress the function of conflict as a vital seed from which organizational processes, such as activation and motivation, feedback and control, power balance and coalition formation, growth and innovation, and even the institutions for channeling and resolving disputes, germinate. These functions and dysfunctions reveal both the centrality of conflict in organizational life and the complexity associated with its management. Both these features make it absolutely essential that managers and organizational designers understand the context in which organizational conflict occurs and the variety of techniques available for use in its management (Miles, 1980).

### **2.3. Types of Organizational Conflict**

Because of the diverse and varied definitions of conflict, attitudes towards it and images of its role are also varied. Work place conflict in companies takes different forms; for example officers seem reluctant to obey the managers, they do not seem to follow rules or accept extra work, they do not easily get along with their managers. Managers to adopt an authoritative approach, for example they pressure officers and clerical staffs to work extra working hours without any extra payment. It therefore, becomes common that conflict between clerical staffs and the bank management occur frequently at any time in the bank. In institutions, conflict occurs between various individuals because of their frequent interaction with each other. Conflict is an expression of hostility, antagonism and an understanding between the staff members (Axley Stephner R. Communication at Work). Bearing all in mind, conflict might be the result of individual or group expression of resentments and discontents. Conflict in organizations can be classified into four categories (Madalina, 2015, Yasmin & Aleya, 2017).

**Interpersonal conflict:** Refers to a conflict between two individuals. This occurs typically due to how people are different from one another.

**Intrapersonal conflict:** Occurs within an individual. The experience takes place in the person's mind. Hence, it is a type of conflict that is psychological involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions.

**Intra-group conflict:** Is a type of conflict that happens among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings among these individuals lead to an intra-group conflict.

**Inter-group conflict:** Takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different teams within an organization. In addition, competition also contributes to the rise of intergroup conflict. There are other factors which fuel this type of conflict, some of these factors may include a rivalry in resources or the boundaries set by a group to others which establishes their own identity as a team (Denohue, and Kott.1992).In addition to this category (Jehn and Mannix 2001) have proposed the division of conflicts into three types: relationship, task, and process. Relationship conflict stems from interpersonal incompatibilities; task conflict is related to disagreements of viewpoints and opinion about a particular task, and process conflict refers to disagreement over the group's approach to the task, its methods, and the group process. Even though the relationship conflict and process conflict are harmful, task conflict is found to be beneficial since it encourages diversity of opinions; care should be taken so it does not develop into process or relationship conflict (Denohue, and Kott, 1992).

Amason and Sapienza (1997) differentiate between affective and cognitive conflict, where cognitive conflict is task-oriented and arises from differences in perspective or judgment, and affective conflict is emotional and arises from personal differences and disputes.

Conflicts also have been categorized as functional and non-functional. Functional conflicts are positive which support achievement of organizational targets and improve working efficiency. On the other hand, conflicts of negative nature cause hurdles in accomplishing goals, hence considered as destructive or dysfunctional. It is rather complicated to assess exact estimation of conflicts with regard to functionality or dis-functionality. The same conflict may reflect same importance through time but it may not have same meaning for opposite party in a conflict (Robbins, 2000).

## **2.4. Importance of Managing Work Place Conflict**

Conflict is caused by multiple inter-related variables and circumstances. Some of these causes include constant changes in the competitive environment, increasing diversity among employees, and limited resources. As a result of these managing conflict is important in many ways. First, it is important because unmanaged conflict can have expensive legal consequences as people seek litigation as a way to resolve disputes. Second, managing conflict is important because high level of negative conflict can cause employee dissatisfaction and expensive turnover as well as decreased productivity. Lastly, managing conflict is important because when done well it can become a catalyst for creativity and innovation as well as organizational learning. It can become a strategic advantage as a company becomes a learning organization capable of benefiting from different points of views. Employees of a learning organization feel open to express opinions and make suggestions that lead to improvements without the fear of conflict

## **2.5. Causes of Conflict in Organization**

Generally conflict is a psychological state of mind when people are in a state of dilemma whether to do or not to do a thing. Conflicts in an organization are originated because of unequal values, indistinguishable and overlapping duties, interdependence of employees to perform their duties, complexity in organizational arrangements, infeasible targets, combined verdicts where multiple people participate in decision-making, out of reach demands of the employees having impractical hopes with regard to their work and working environment, compensation, and possibilities for promotion, unresolved/tacit old conflicts from past, organizational structures making employees helpless, divided and indifferent leaving little incentive for them to exhibit professional cooperation and excellence, in an environment where continuous change within the organization is not managed effectively.

In addition the following are the major sources of conflict in organizations as stated by Upasana D.

## **1. Competition for Scarce Resources**

In an organization, anything of value (funds, personnel and valuable information) can be a competitively sought – after resource. When competition for scarce resources becomes destructive, conflict can be avoided by increasing the resource base. For example more personnel can be hired when they are to avoid shortages in the future.

## **2. Time Pressure**

Time pressure, like deadlines, can increase the performance of an individual or reduce the performance by triggering destructive emotional reactions. Hence, while imposing deadlines, managers must understand and consider an individual's capacity and ability to meet the set targets.

## **3. Unreasonable Standards, Policies, Rules or Procedures**

When policies, standards, rules, or procedures are unreasonable and unattainable, they lead to dysfunctional conflicts between managers and subordinates. Therefore, managers must frame sound policies, rules and procedures and correct those policies and procedures that do not help employees achieve organizational objectives.

## **4. Communications Breakdowns**

Communication is a complex process. Barriers to communication often provoke conflict. When two-way communication is hampered, it is easy to misunderstand another person or group. Such misunderstandings have a negative impact on employee performance.

## **5. Personality Clashes**

People have different values and different perceptions of issues. A production manager, for instance, may be of the opinion that streamlining the products line and concentrating on a few products can make the organization more productive, while a

sales manager may desire a broad product line that will satisfy diverse customer demands.

An engineer may like to design the best product regardless of market demand or cost considerations. It is very difficult to change one's personality on the job. The practical remedy for serious personality clashes is to separate the antagonistic parties by reassigning one or both to a new job. Showing genuine concern for the ideas, feelings and values of subordinates helps minimize such conflicts.

### **6. Ambiguous or Overlapping Jurisdictions**

When job boundaries are not clear, they often create competition for resources and control. A clarification of job boundaries and jurisdictions of various managers helps in preventing conflicts from turning into serious problems.

### **7. Unrealized Expectations**

When expectations are not met, employees feel dissatisfied. Unrealistic expectations can also result in destructive conflict. Open and frank communication with employees can help make people knowledgeable about what they can expect from their organization.

Conflicts can arise from other sources as well. For example, a superior's autocratic leadership style may cause conflicts. Differing educational backgrounds of employees may also lead to conflict.

Consequently, this may cause fears and insecurity of employees. Such depression then leads to disappointment, displeasure and strain which in turn affect the social relations at work place. Absence of team spirit or poor efficiency at work may also be another cause of conflict especially if team members believe that other colleagues are unable to perform their duties in an appropriate and desired manner or lack competence to carry out their assigned tasks.

|



**Figure 1 Various Sources of Organizational Conflicts as Categories by Jones and George (2003)**

### **2.6. Challenges of Work Place Conflict Management**

There are opportunities and challenges faced in conflict management. The first challenge of conflict management is the challenge of change where real listening and reflecting is going on; people cannot communicate without changing each other. One big challenge for conflict managers is to address people's very real fear of being persuaded through listening. Many times, when mediation doesn't work, it is because participants have a stated intention of listening and a determined behavior of not listening. We believe that people don't listen because of their values or other barriers. That's sometimes the case. More often, people fear that what they hear will change them. People change when they identify a conflict within themselves (Kagwiria, 2019).

The second challenge is having different ways of conflict management strategies. Research on conflict management strategies found that there are at least 5 strategies of conflict resolution. Among several others, there are also very comprehensive conflict resolution strategies extremely informative and very dependable for example the seven strategies of conflict management by Donna Cardillo, RN, MA.

Challenge of different faith and culture is the third. Conflict management and building bridges of understanding among people of different faiths and cultures is really a big challenge. Multiculturalism, as expressed through behaviors and attitudes, may also affect interactions and performance in today's work environment (Martin et al. 1994).

Critical skills associated with handling difficult people and situations are a challenge in conflict management. Because the changing and turbulent environment in which managers now operate demand from them skills and abilities to manage conflict situations towards constructive outcomes. Conflict is a massive growth industry. It is an integral part of the fabric of a postmodern society that is increasingly litigious, competitive, complex and alienating (Bryant, 2003). Too little conflict results in organizational stasis, while too much conflict reduces the organization's effectiveness and eventually immobilizes its employees (Marquis & Huston 1996).

There is also a challenge of competition of scarce resources. Scarce resources in an organization could pose be a big challenge too because employees compete for those scarce resources causing conflict among. Competition can be defined as when two or more individuals, groups or organizations struggle for the same resources. In business these resources could be sales, market share, contracts, employees, and ultimately, profits. In the nonprofit sector, the competition might be donations, grants, clients, volunteers, and even political influence.

The challenges of changing environment(globalization and technology) is also another one in conflict management where globalization has caused change and restructuring so that Banks operate more flexibly. There has been a rapid growth in

virtual teams, with people from different backgrounds and cultures working across vast regions and time zones volatile, fast-changing workplaces. Email and electronic communication are the most practical ways to connect, but these can be anonymous and lead to misunderstanding (Islam &Rimi, 2017).

Last and the least the challenge of creating structural support for consensus processes. There are a number of consensus-building models that operate effectively, even though the rights-based structure casts a shadow over them. The current structure supports a rights-based approach to everything, but interest-based problem solving is fundamentally different. So long as the publicly-funded mechanisms are based on rights, we are making a statement about the importance of rights as opposed to interests.

Finally, the challenge of cooperative discourse is also a challenge in conflict management. Times of transition demand a readiness to explore other ways of thinking. Each person contributes to the greater understanding. This leads to a more appreciative process. As we deal with larger group issues, it becomes more important to consider paradigms other than batting a tennis ball back and forth. People have a strong desire to be listened to and appreciated for who they are (Lipsky &Avgar, 2008).

## **2.7. Conflict Management Strategies**

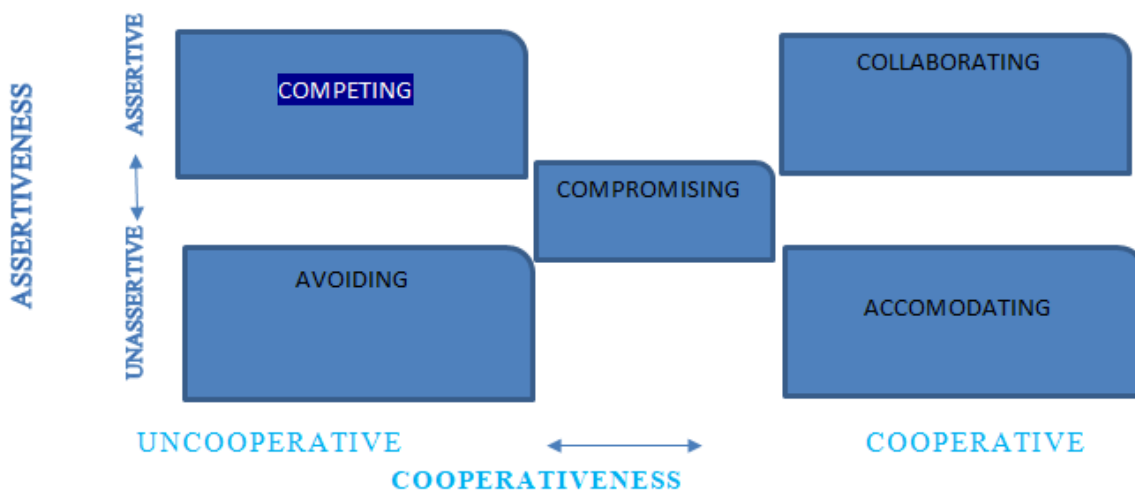
Conflict management is the capability to identify and handle conflicts wisely, reliably, positively, and efficiently. It is the process of minimizing and sometimes limiting the horrible consequences of conflicts while increasing the positive aspects of conflict resolution. Learning how to manage conflict can easily minimize the chances of serious escalations of conflicts in a workplace or organization (Yasmin K. & Aleya, 2017).

Many communication texts make reference to strategies used by individuals (or small groups or organizations) in the management of conflict. Some include a spectrum of strategies, while others concentrate on an elaboration of a single

strategy. Although some researchers have described a variety of strategies, no one makes the claim that his/her list would include all possible strategies apparent in a conflict situation. Strategy as any set of options that can be taken by a particular player or participant, while noting that the function of conflict analysis is the enabling of participants to make better decisions, they recognize three steps in approaching conflict(Frase & Hipel,1984).

First, they recommend what is referred to as modeling; that is, considering of conflict as a whole. Second, the participant must determine all possible resolutions to the conflict. Third, particular strategies must be evolved. When people find themselves in conflict, their behavior can be described in terms of where it lies along two independent dimensions that is assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness is the degree to which you try to satisfy your own concerns, and cooperativeness is the degree to which you try to satisfy the other person’s concerns (Fraser & Hipel, 1984).

**2.8. Theoretical Framework**



**Figure 2 the main conflict-handling modes.**

Many scholars provided many conflict resolution techniques and there are various models on conflict resolution. In this study work place conflict management practice of banks with respect to Thomas Kilmann (1975) conflict handling model has been reviewed. It is a two dimensional model and these dimensions are- i) Concern for

self that is Assertiveness and ii) Concern for others that is Cooperativeness(Nafiza & Nahida,2017).

When anyone becomes engaged in a conflict, there are two major concerns that have to be taken into account:

**1. Achieving own goals** – One is in conflict because he or she has a goal that conflicts with another person's goal. One's own goal may be highly important to him or her, or it may be of little importance.

**2. Keeping good relationship with the other person** – A person may need to be able to interact effectively with the other person in the future. The relationship may be very important to him or her, or it may be of little importance. The importance of these two areas will affect the ways in which one act in any given conflict. From these two concerns it is possible to identify five styles (techniques) of conflict management:

**Accommodating** – This is when a person cooperates to a high-degree, and it may be at his/her own expense, and actually work against their own goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other party is the expert or has a better solution. It can also be effective for preserving future relations with the other party.

**Avoiding** – This is when a person simply avoids the issue. It isn't helping the other party reach their goals, and also isn't assertively pursuing own goal. This works when the issue is trivial or when there is no chance of winning. It can also be effective when the issue would be very costly. It's also very effective when the atmosphere is emotionally charged and you need to create some space. Sometimes issues will resolve themselves, but “hope is not a strategy”, and, in general, avoiding is not a good long term strategy.

**Collaborating** – This is where both parties in conflict seek to achieve both of their goals. This is how they break free of the “win-lose” paradigm and seek the “win-win.” This can be effective for complex scenarios where it is needed to find a novel

solution. This can also mean re-framing the challenge to create a bigger space and room for everybody's ideas. The downside is that it requires a high-degree of trust and reaching a consensus can require a lot of time and effort to get everybody on board and to synthesize all the ideas.

**Competing** – This is the “win-lose” approach. A person acts in a very assertive way to achieve his/her goals, without seeking to cooperate with the other party, and it may be at the expense of the other party. This approach may be appropriate for emergencies when time is of the essence, or when quick, decisive action is needed, and people are aware of and support the approach.

**Compromising** – This can be win-lose or lose-win situation. This requires a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation. It may be appropriate for scenarios where a temporary solution is needed, or where both sides have equally important goals. The trap is to fall into compromising as an easy way out, when collaborating would produce a better solution.

## **2.9. Empirical Review**

Madalina O. (2015), the aim of this study is to provide methods for handling and managing conflict effectively. In this study, communication contributes the establishment of fair and efficient relations, mutual understanding, acceptance between bosses and subordinates, colleagues, people inside and outside the organization.

This paper aims to examine issues related to the management of interpersonal conflict in the work environment. It focuses on highlighting the role of communication in the conflict management process, which is considered as the common denominator of all organizational arrangements for managing conflicts.

Improving the understanding of managers about the importance of both upward and downward internal communication, and the need of "listening and interpreting the pulse" of the organization. Only by creating a collaborative environment and by

increasing organizational understanding and creating team spirit that shares common goals can ensure an effective performance on conflict management (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Islam N. and Rimi N. (2017), studied on conflict management technique in private commercial banks of Bangladesh, an application of Thomas-Kilmann conflict handling model. Data were collected from 50 respondents from five private commercial banks in Bangladesh and used descriptive research design. Questionnaire was used and data was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The findings suggested that private commercial banks in Bangladesh use all the five conflict management strategies of Thomas-Kilmann model. But collaborating strategy was most frequently used.

Akhtar,et.al (2020), conducted a research on conflict management strategies and organizational performance in banking sector of Pakistan. The study identified the causes of conflict (cumbersome and ineffective means of communicating grievances to top managers as the most severe factor leading to conflict, non-communication of employee`s wishes to top management) and the relationship between conflict management strategies and organizational performance by collecting data via questionnaire from a sample of 100 employees and analyzed by SPSS version 16. The result revealed that the primary causes of conflict are ways of expression and communication between management and employee. In addition to this both factors have statistically significant positive relationship between them.

Kassim M. and Ibrahim H. (2014) conducted a research on work place conflict management styles and organizational commitment, a study among bank employees in Penang, Malaysia. The study was conducted using data from 65 respondents from the banks in Penang. The total sample is determined by stratified proportionate sampling framework. This study has employed Rahim's Organizational Conflict Inventory – II (Rahim & Magner, 1995) to identify styles in handling conflicts. By combining dual dimensions i.e. concern of self and concern of others, this instrument has introduced five styles in handling conflict namely avoiding, dominating, obliging, compromising and integrating. The result of factor analysis

reveals that the styles used by employees in this study are integrating, compromising and dominating.

Beletu B. (2019) conducted a research on conflict resolution practice in project management, a case study of IT project in Bank of Abyssinia. It assessed the causes and type of conflict, conflict resolution methods adopted and the presence of organizational consideration for conflict resolution in the bank's IT project environment. The researcher adopted descriptive research design by collecting data through questionnaire from a sample of 51 employees engaged in the IT project. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics method. Its findings revealed that different perception of employees about the project is the primary source of conflict. Though the outcomes of conflict resolution strategies were not assessed by the researcher, employees dominantly used avoidance or withdrawals as a conflict resolution strategy. In addition, BOA did not take in to consideration conflict resolution as an integral part of management activities.

Filimon R. (2015), studied on the impact of work life conflict on employees job satisfaction in ten selected Ethiopian banks in Addis Ababa. The data were collected using cross sectional survey questionnaire from a sample of 370 employees and exploratory research design was adopted by the researcher. The data were analyzed using statistical measures and concluded that, work to personal life interference; work overload and personal life to work interference and job satisfaction have inverse and significant relationship between them. Job autonomy has a strong positively significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Fisseha T. (2018), investigate the practice of Conflict Management in both Global Fund and CDC funded Projects in the case of Network of Networks of HIV Positives in Ethiopia. His primary data were collected via structured questionnaire and interview from a sample of 33 and 36 employees of the organization respectively. Annual newsletter and periodic reports of the organization were used as a source of secondary data. The study identified interpersonal and intergroup conflicts are the most recurring and caused by communication gap between the staffs. Competing and

avoiding conflict resolution strategies were mostly practiced in the organizations for resolving disputes among employees.

Meskerem A. (2014), conducted a research entitled conflict management styles among EOTC priests, a case study on seven selected churches in Addis Ababa. Mixed research design was applied on a total 142 randomly selected priests as a respondent for the administered open ended questionnaire and focus group discussion. The study used Thomas- Kilmann conflict handling mode as a reference. As per the findings of the study, collaborating is the primary and most practiced style, competing, compromising and accommodating are the second, third and fourth preferred styles by the priests. Avoiding is the least preferred conflict management style of the study sample.

#### **2.10. Research Problem and Knowledge Gap**

Studies conducted on work place conflict management strategy practice in Ethiopian banking industry were not found except a research conducted on related titles by Beletu B. (2019), entitled “conflict resolution practice in project management, a case study of IT project in Bank of Abyssinia” and Filimon R. (2015), studied on the impact of work life conflict on employees job satisfaction in ten selected Ethiopian banks in Addis Ababa but ignored about the conflict among the employees and how they manage this conflict for smooth running of the organization. Most researches were conducted on conflict management sources and their resolution strategies in education sector in Ethiopian context.

This condition demands more study to be conducted on actual work place conflict management strategies practices in private commercial banks since it contributes a lot in evaluating the banks actual work place conflict management strategies practices with regard to interpersonal conflict. Therefore, this study not only fills the gap but also showed the application of Thomas-Kilmann conflict handling model in this regard. In final phase a frame of recommendation is also given for effective work place conflict handling in Ethiopian private banks.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Research Approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This plan involves several decisions (Creswell, 2014).

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is carried out; it incorporates the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from the beginning to the final analysis of data.

Research design facilitates the smooth running of the various research operations, thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding reliable information with lessor expenditure of effort, time and money.

The design which minimizes bias and maximizes the reliability of the data collected and analysis is considered a good design. The best design result in the smallest experimental errors in many investigations. Similarly, a design which yields maximal information and provides an opportunity for considering many different aspects of a problem is considered most appropriate and efficient design in respect of many research problems. Thus, the question of good design is related to the purpose or objective of the research problem and also with the nature of the problem to be studied.

#### **3.1. Research Approach Adopted**

The researcher employs qualitative research approach. Because the possible values occur in the data are known after the data have been collected. The researcher has no idea what the possible answer values are for the questions raised to respondents. Also it is applicable for phenomenon that cannot be expressed in terms of quantity and involves using narrative expression than numeric expression. Therefore, the data are qualitative and can recode these qualitative data and assign values to each

response (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011). Thus, I quantify the data, allowing further statistical analysis. Purposeful sampling, collection of open-ended data, analysis of text or pictures, representation of information in figures and tables, and personal interpretation of the findings all inform qualitative methods (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research emphasizes the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the human experience, and attempts to capture those experiences in their entirety, within the context of those experiencing them (Polit & Beck 2004, Streubert & Carpenter 1999).

### **3.2. Research Design Employed**

Research design is the philosophical assumptions that the researcher brings to the study; procedures of inquiry about informing the overall decision involves which approach should be used to study the topic.

Descriptive research involves direct exploration, analysis and description of the particular phenomena, as free as possible from unexplained presuppositions, aiming at maximum intuitive presentation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Descriptive studies are used to document the phenomenon of interest in the real situation (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Descriptive research design is used in the study. Data were collected from 110 respondents from 10 private commercial banks operated in Addis Ababa. Questionnaire was used as main data collection instruments. The data collected from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as percentages and frequencies.

### **3.3. Population and Sample of the Study**

**Population of the Study:** Population is defined by Polit and Beck (2004), as the aggregate or totality of those conforming to a set of specifications. Population of the study is employees of all private banks that engage in commercial activities operated in Ethiopia and registered by National Bank of Ethiopia. There are 16 Private Commercial Banks operating in Ethiopia such as Awash Bank S.C, Dashen Bank S.C, Bank of Abyssinia S.C , Wegagen Bank S.C, Hibret Bank S.C, Nib International Bank S.C, Cooperative Bank of Oromia S.C, Lion International Bank S.C, Oromia International Bank S.C, Berehan International Bank S.C, Buna International Bank S.C, Zemen Bank S.C, Abay Bank S.C, Addis International Bank, Debub Global Bank S.C, Addis International Bank S.C and Enat Bank.

**Sample of the Study:** Sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion of the population that conforms to a designated set of specifications to be studied. A sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in the study (Polit & Beck 2004; Uys & Basson 1991). The sample is drawn via non-probability purposive sampling technique to select private banks as well as employees of each bank which enable the researcher to obtain participants.

According to Brink (1996), purposive sampling requires selecting participants who are knowledgeable about the issue in question, because of their complete involvement in and experience of the situation. While Creswell (2003), states that purposive sampling refers to selection of sites or participants that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question, they must be willing to reflect on and share this knowledge.

The sample size is ten private commercial banks from which twelve respondents were selected from each sample and questionnaires were distributed to have a total of 120 employees in data collection via questionnaire. There are 7 uncollected, 113 returned but three of them were incomplete and became out of analysis. The rest 110 questionnaire were fit for analysis and utilized in the process. Employees participated in data collection were at were at various positions including customer service officers, supervisors and management members of Awash Bank S.C, Dashen Bank S.C, Bank of Abyssinia S.C , Wegagen Bank S.C, Hibret Bank S.C, Nib International Bank S.C, Oromia International Bank S.C, Buna International Bank S.C, Zemen Bank S.C, Abay Bank S.C.

### **3.4. Data Collection, Presentation and Analysis Techniques**

#### **3.4.1. Data and data Collection Instruments**

Self-administered structured questionnaire and unstructured interviews are used to collect data from respondents. The researcher has used an unstructured interview as the tool for data collection, because it provides participants with the opportunity to fully describe their experiences. This method of data collection was chosen to allow the participants to share their own stories in their own words, rather than being forced by pre-established lines of thinking developed by the researcher. Interviews are also regarded as the best way for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon (Munhall 2001; Streubert & Carpenter 1999).

Target respondents were the branch managers, supervisors and front end officers as they have to deal with each other and their customers on day to day operation in banks. To achieve the research objectives 5 point Likert scale is used. The questionnaire consists of two parts: First part used to collect the information about demographic variables of the respondents such as age, gender, education, status, income while the second part collects the information about variables of the current study. Before distributing the questionnaire among the respondents, the purpose of the study and questions were explained to the respondents. 110 respondents will fill

the questionnaires. Then responses were coded and entered into SPSS version 20 for further analysis. Secondary data obtained from various paper based publications, annual reports and electronic sources will be used for the purpose of literature review.

**Table 1 Data sources and their application are shown in the following table**

<b>Types of Data</b>	<b>Specific Source</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Application</b>
Primary Data	Bank's Employee and Management	Questionnaire and Interview	Analysis and Findings
Secondary Data	Paper Base Sources	Books, journals, periodicals, abstracts, research reports, annual reports, internal records of banks, newspaper and magazines	Literature Review
	Electronic Sources	On-line data bases, internet etc.	Literature Review

### **3.4.2. Data Presentation and Analysis**

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data. These included frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to determine strategies practiced by private commercial banks in Ethiopia. For example, the strategies with the highest frequency as well as percentage were deemed as the most popularly used.

The questionnaire is framed regarding 5 strategies of Thomas Kilmann conflict resolution technique and respondents were asked to score their answer. The responses were coded and entered into SPSS for further analysis. Then total up the score to find out individual score for each strategy. The higher the total score for each strategy, the more frequently respondent tends to use that approach. The total

questionnaires will be analyzed through pie charts and percentage basis so that the highest score can be drawn and the most adopted strategy practiced by the respondents can be find out. Open-ended questions will be content analyzed, used to explain responses to closed ended questions to which were applied. Analyzed data was presented in form of tables. The results were presented in terms of themes outlined by the objectives of the study. To perform the analysis, the questionnaires were recorded. In addition information collected via interview is properly compiled and incorporated in the analysis and presentation section of the research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings/results of the data analysis and its interpretation using descriptive statistics. The aim was to examine the conflict management practices of private commercial banks operating in Addis Ababa. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to 120 employees of selected banks as stated in the sample frame. 110 questionnaires (91.67%) were returned, 7 (5.83%) were unreturned and 3 (2.5%) were incomplete and void. In addition, **three selected senior** management of the banks were interviewed and finally the data were analyzed in terms of frequency, percentage, mean scores and standard deviation.

Items in the questionnaire of each category were arranged under five rating scales. The rating scales were: 5= strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree.

Percentage, Mean scores and standard deviation were calculated from the responses. For the sake of easy analysis and interpretation, **the mean values of each item** in the questionnaire were interpreted.

#### 4.2. Response Rate

The response rate of the questionnaire is presented in the table below.

**Table 2 Response Rate**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Properly responded	110	91.67%
Un returned	7	5.83%
Incomplete & rejected	3	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.3. Background of Respondents

The chapter consists of two major parts. The first part presents the characteristics of respondents' in terms of sex, age, academic qualification, position and work experience. The second part focuses on the conflict management strategies of the banks which were gathered through questionnaire and interview.

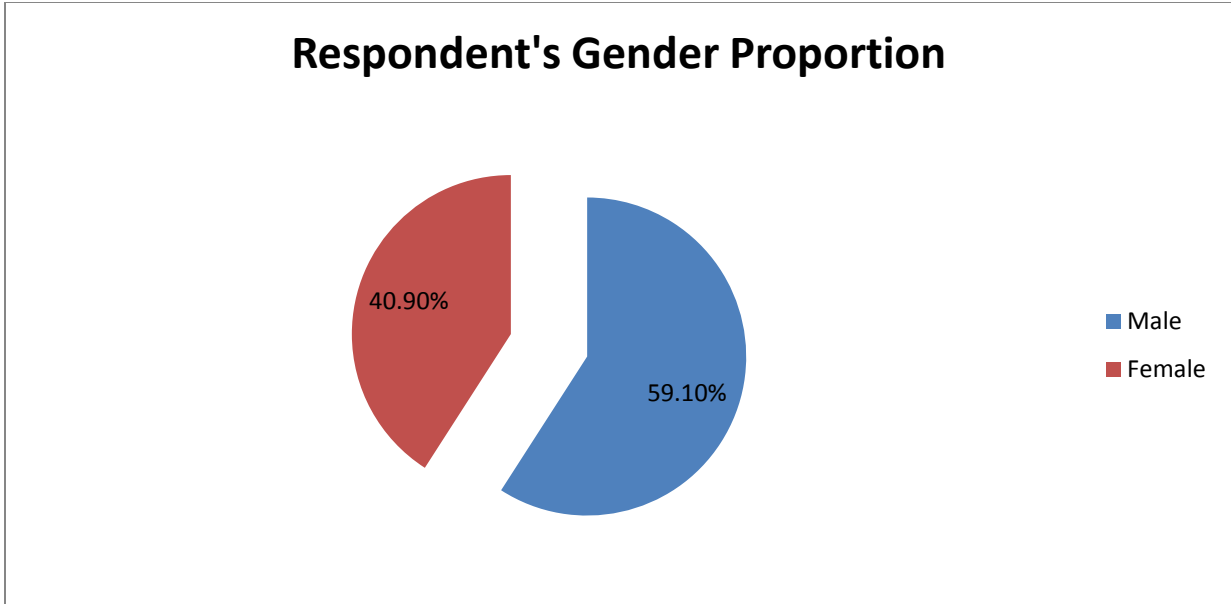
#### Characteristics of respondents

The demographic data indicates that in terms of sex, 65 (59.1%) of the employees who participated in the study were males and the other 45 (40.9%) were females. Though the number of female respondents seems somewhat smaller in number as compared to males, the data shows that there is an encouraging representation of women in the study sites which means giving importance to both men and women in the workplace.

**Table 3 Demographic Data of the participants/respondents**

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Sex	Male	65	59.1	59.1	59.1
	Female	45	40.9	40.9	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	
Age	Below 25	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
	25-34	56	50.9	50.9	55.5
	35-44	44	40.0	40.0	95.5
	Above 44	5	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	
Qualification	Diploma	9	8.2	8.2	8.2
	BA Degree	55	50.0	50.0	58.2
	Masters	46	41.8	41.8	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	
Work Experience	1-5 Years	36	32.7	32.7	32.7
	6-10 Years	35	31.8	31.8	64.5
	Above 10 years	39	35.5	35.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	
Position	Director	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Branch manager	8	7.3	7.3	10.0
	Supervisor	24	21.8	21.8	31.8
	Officer	61	55.5	55.5	87.3
	Other	14	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

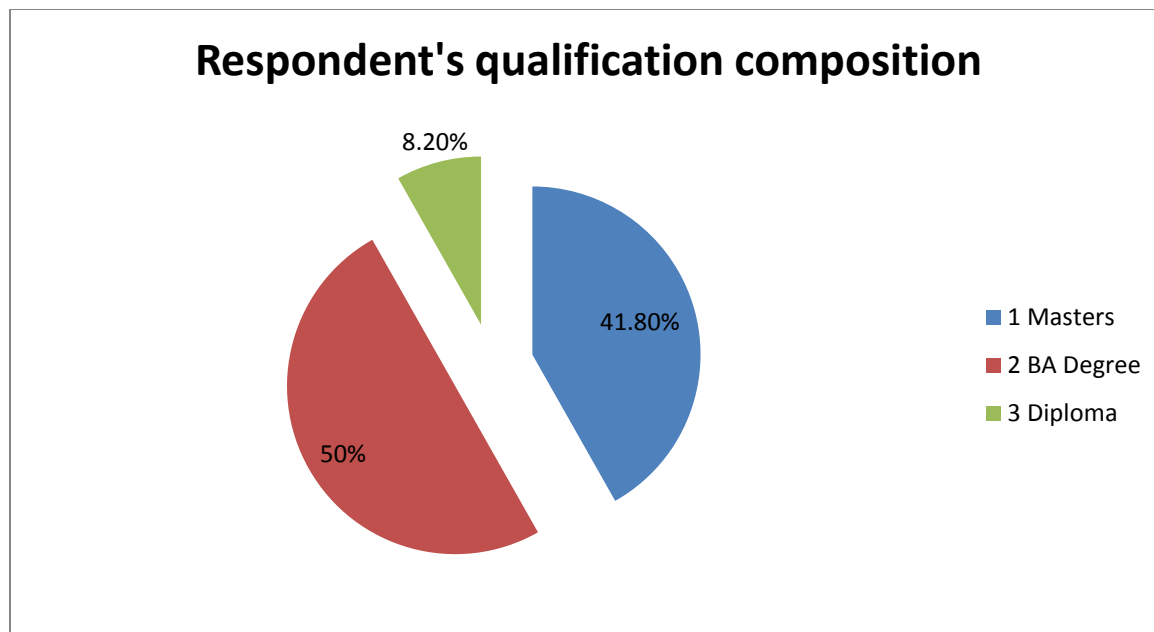
Source: Survey data (2021)



**Figure 3 Respondent’s gender proportion**

With respect to age group, 56(50.9%) and 44(40%) constitutes respondents aged from 25 -34 and 35- 44 respectively; and the rest 4.5% of the respondents were above 44 and below 25 years old.

Regarding participants’ qualification, 55(50%) of the respondents were BA degree holders and the other 46(41.8%) have Master’s degree. The remaining 9(8.2%) were qualified at diploma level.



**Figure 4 Respondent’s qualification composition**

As to respondents’ work experience the majority 39(35.5%) have worked above ten years and 35(31.8%) of the respondents replied that they have experience between 6-10 years.

Finally, concerning their current position majority of the participants 61(55.5%), were on a position of officers. Supervisor, manager, and director represent 24(21.8%), 8(7.3%), and 3(2.7%) respectively of the participants.

#### **4.4. Strategies Employed To Resolve Conflict in the Banks**

##### **4.4.1. Avoiding as a strategy to resolve conflict**

As indicated in Table 4 below, 61.68% of the respondents rated agree as their preference regarding avoiding as a work place interpersonal conflict management strategy; 21.07% of the respondents strongly agreed avoiding as a strategy to resolve interpersonal work place conflict in their banks. While the rest 12.58%, 3.92% and 0.75% of the respondents were in a neutral, disagree and strongly disagree position respectively to take avoiding as an interpersonal work place conflict management strategy.

**Table 4 Avoiding as a strategy to resolve conflict**

No .	1. Avoiding (withdrawal) Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem	20.0	67.3	9.1	3.6	0
2	I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions	27.3	64.5	7.3	0.9	0
3	I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself	27.3	65.5	5.5	0.9	0.9
4	I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think about it	21.8	57.3	10.9	10.0	0
5	I feel that differences are not always worrying about	15.5	56.4	22.7	3.6	1.8
6	I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create controversy	14.5	59.1	20.0	4.5	1.8
	Aggregate score	21.07	61.68	12.58	3.92	0.75

Source: Survey Data (2021)

#### 4.4.2. Accommodating as a strategy to resolve conflict

The finding from Table 5 below reveals that 55.11% of the respondents rated agree as their preference to take accommodating as a work place interpersonal conflict management strategy. Significant number (20.81%) of the respondents also strongly agreed accommodating as a strategy to resolve interpersonal work place conflict in their banks. However, the rest 15.80%, 6.81% and 1.35% of the respondents were in a neutral, disagree and strongly disagree position respectively regarding accommodating as an interpersonal work place conflict management strategy.

**Table 5 Accommodating as a strategy to resolve conflict**

No	1. Accommodating (Smoothing) Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things up on which we both agree	16.4	39.1	30.0	11.8	2.7
2	I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person	18.2	59.1	13.6	7.3	1.8
3	I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution	16.4	41.8	17.3	20.9	3.6
4	I might try to relax the other's feelings and preserve our relationship	19.1	60.0	13.6	6.4	0.9
5	I try not to hurt the other's feelings	36.4	50.0	10.0	1.8	0.9
6	If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views	17.3	60.9	16.4	4.5	0.9
7	In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's feelings	22.7	70.9	6.4	0	0
8	If the other's position seems important to them, I would try to meet their wishes	20.0	59.1	19.1	1.8	0
	Aggregate score	20.81	55.11	15.80	6.81	1.35

Source: Survey Data (2021)

#### 4.4.3. Competing as a strategy to resolve conflict

As indicated in Table 6 below 48.53% of the respondents rated agree as their preference to take competing as a work place interpersonal conflict management strategy. The other 20.94% of the respondents also strongly agreed competing as a strategy to resolve interpersonal work place conflict. Nevertheless, 22.61%, 7.41% and 0.51% of the respondents were in a neutral, disagree and strongly disagree position to take competing as an interpersonal work place conflict management strategy.

**Table 6 Competing** as a strategy to resolve conflict

No.	1. Competing (Forcing) Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I am firm in pursuing usually my goals	26.4	42.7	24.5	6.4	0
2	I try to win my position	35.5	45.5	14.5	4.5	0
3	I make some effort to get my way	32.7	58.2	8.2	0.9	0
4	I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position	13.8	51.4	25.7	8.3	0.9
5	I assert my wishes	13.6	57.3	24.5	4.5	0
6	I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position	18.2	49.1	27.3	5.5	0
7	I press to get my points mad	6.4	35.5	33.6	21.8	2.7
	Aggregate score	20.94	48.53	22.61	7.41	0.51

Source: Survey Data (2021)

As shown in table 7 below, 53.10% of the total respondents agree to take collaborating as a work place interpersonal conflict management strategy; 23.10% of the respondents also strongly agree collaborating as a strategy to resolve interpersonal work place conflict in private commercial banks in Ethiopia. While the rest 15.01%, 7.71% and 0.36% of the respondents were in a neutral, disagree and strongly disagree position to take collaborating as an interpersonal work place conflict management strategy.

**Table 7** Collaborating as a strategy to resolve conflict

No.	1. Collaborating (Problem Solving) Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I attempt to deal with all of another's and my concerns	25.5	66.4	7.3	0.9	0
2	I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution	25.5	42.7	11.8	19.1	0.9
3	I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open	17.3	51.8	17.3	13.6	0
4	I tell another my ideal and ask them for theirs	20.9	57.3	17.3	4.5	0
5	I attempt to immediately work through our differences	18.2	60.0	16.4	5.5	0
6	I always learn towards a direct discussion of the problem	34.5	55.5	7.3	2.7	0
7	I am often concerned with satisfying all my wishes	26.4	38.2	23.6	10.9	0.9
8	I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy	21.8	54.5	18.2	4.5	0.9
9	I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about	17.3	52.7	18.2	10.9	0.9
10	I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out	23.6	59.1	12.7	4.5	0
	Aggregate score	23.10	53.82	15.01	7.71	0.36

Source: Survey Data (2021)

#### 4.4.5. Compromising as a strategy to resolve conflict

As displayed in Table 8 below, 58.96% of the respondents indicated that they agree to take compromising as a work place interpersonal conflict management strategy. The other 16.87% of the respondents also strongly agreed compromising as a strategy to resolve interpersonal work place conflict in their banks. The rest 17.29%, 6.10% and 0.77% of the respondents were in a neutral, disagree and strongly disagree position respectively to take compromising as an interpersonal work place conflict management strategy.

**Table 8 Compromising as a strategy to resolve conflict**

No.	1. Compromising (Sharing) Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I try to find a compromise solution	28.2	62.7	8.2	0.9	0
2	I give up some points in exchange for others	17.3	61.8	9.1	8.2	3.6
3	I propose middle ground	10.0	59.1	24.5	6.4	0
4	I will let the other person have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine	12.7	52.7	21.8	12.7	0
5	I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us	23.6	56.4	15.5	3.6	0.9
6	I try to find a position that is intermediate between mine and another person's	14.5	61.8	16.4	7.3	0
7	I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise	11.8	58.2	25.5	3.6	0.9
	Aggregate score	16.87	58.96	17.29	6.10	0.77

Source: Survey Data(2021)

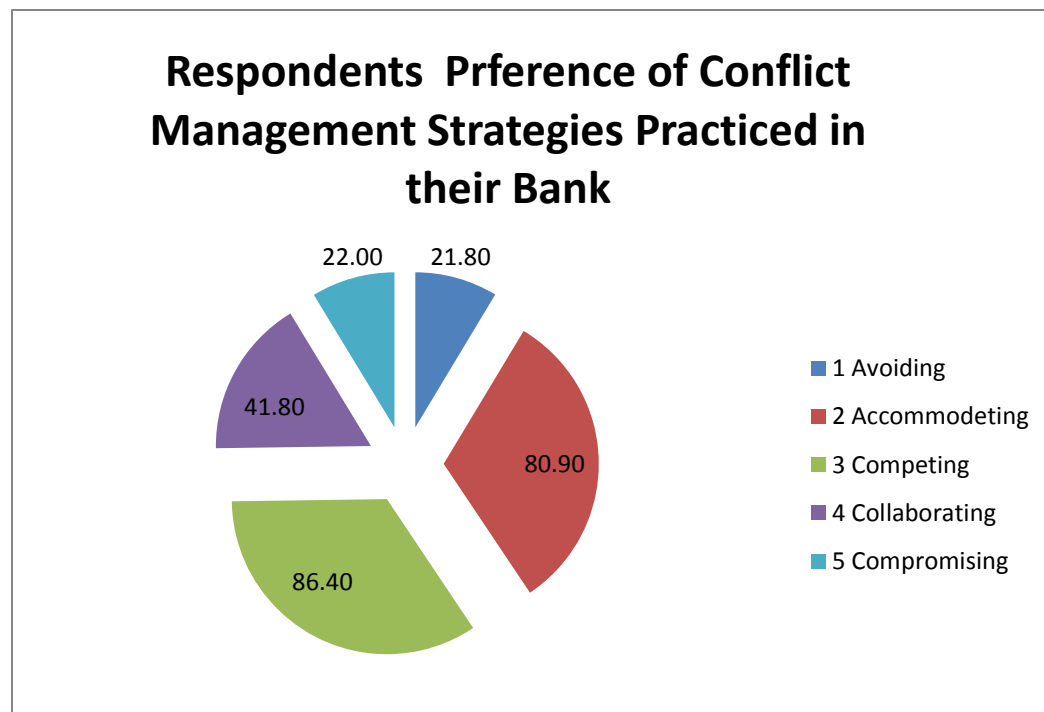
#### 4.4.6. Conflict management strategies Preference

In order to assess which conflict management strategy the respondents prefer as the best in their banks, participants were asked a yes/no questions. The finding from the data is presented in table 9. Accordingly as presented in Table 9, below 86.4% and 80.9% of the respondents prefer competing and accommodating strategy as the best work place conflict management strategy with respect to their company (bank). The other strategies namely collaborating, compromising and avoiding were preferred by 41.8%, 22% and 21.8% of the respondents respectively.

**Table 9 Conflict Management Strategies Preference**

1	<b>Avoiding (withdrawal) Strategy</b>	Yes	No
	Do you think that avoiding is the best conflict management strategy in your company?	21.8	78.2
2	<b>Accommodating (Smoothing) Strategy</b>		
	Do you think that accommodating is the best conflict management strategy in your company?	80.9	19.1
3	<b>Competing (Forcing) Strategy</b>		
	Do you think that competing is the best conflict management strategy in your company?	86.4	13.6
4	<b>Collaborating (Problem Solving) Strategy</b>		
	Do you think that collaborating is the best conflict management strategy in your company?	41.8	58.2
5	<b>Compromising (Sharing) Strategy</b>		
	Do you think that compromising is the best conflict management strategy in your company?	22.0	78.0

Source: Survey Data (2021)



**Figure 5 Respondent’s conflict management strategies preference**

## **4.5. Data Presentation by Respondents' Average Scores**

### **Decision Rule for the Analysis Result**

The mean statistical values of the items were based on the 5 point Likert scale and will be illustrated through the following assumptions:

If the mean (M) score is below 2.5 it implies that the respondents disagree with the statement, if the mean score is equal to 2.5 it indicates that the respondents prefer to stay Neutral, and finally if the mean score is above 2.5 it implies that the respondents agree with the statement. In case a binary response is requested, the mean simply is evaluated whether the value is above or below 1.

In the meantime, the value of the standard deviation will assist to get to a conclusion as to how much the respondent's reply is scattered towards or away from the mean value. The lower the value, preferentially approaching zero shows the more respondent agree to the mean value while the larger value shows scattered responses not agreeing to the mean result.

Accordingly, the mean and Standard deviation scores have been computed for all the five part of questions which are designed to answer the five separate research questions this study wants to address and a detailed interpretation of the results are addressed accordingly.

### **Avoiding strategy**

As indicated by the aggregate mean score and standard deviation (3.31 and 0.729 respectively), the data revealed that respondents agreed avoiding strategy as a tool to manage workplace conflict in private commercial banks. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed on the statements about "doing things that is necessary to avoid useless tensions and unpleasantness for themselves" as a strategy to manage conflict (means 4.18, 4.17 and standard deviation of 0.593 and 0.648 respectively). They also agree to let others to "take responsibility for solving the problem and postpone the issue until they have had some time to think about it" (mean = 4.04 and 3.91; standard deviation = 0.663 and 0.852 respectively).

**Table 10 Avoiding Strategy**

Questions	Number	Mean	St. deviation
There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem	110	4.04	.663
I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions	110	4.18	.593
I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself	110	4.17	.648
I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think about it	110	3.91	.852
I feel that differences are not always worrying about	110	3.80	.810
I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create controversy	110	3.80	.810
<b>Aggregate Score</b>		<b>3.31</b>	<b>.729</b>

Source: Survey data (2021)

**Accommodating Strategy**

The results of the present survey indicated that respondents agreed accommodating strategy as a tool to manage workplace conflict in private commercial banks (mean= 3.88 & standard deviation = 0.816). Majority of the respondents strongly agreed on the statement “not to hurt other’s feelings and trying to be considerate of the other person’s feelings while approaching negotiations” as an accommodating work place conflict management strategy( mean score of 4.22, 4.16 and standard deviation of 0.783 and 0.516 respectively). The respondents reply on “the other’s position seems important to them and try to meet their wishes and try to relax the other feelings to preserve their relationship” (mean score of 3.97, 3.9 with respective standard deviation of 0.683and 0.812 respectively).

**Table 11 Accommodating Strategy**

Questions	Number	Mean	St. deviation
Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things up on which we both agree	110	3.55	.992
I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person	110	3.85	.869
I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution	110	3.46	1.106
I might try to relax the other's feelings and preserve our relationship	110	3.90	.812
I try not to hurt the other's feelings	110	4.22	.783
If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views	110	3.89	.770
In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's feelings	110	4.16	.516
If the other's position seems important to them, I would try to meet their wishes	110	3.97	.683
<b>Aggregate Score</b>		<b>3.88</b>	<b>.816</b>

Source: Survey data (2021)

### Competing Strategy

The results of the average score indicate that respondents agreed competing strategy as a tool to manage workplace conflict in private commercial banks (.mean score = 3.82 & standard deviation =0.806).Most of the respondents strongly agreed on the statements “making some effort to get their way; trying to win their position and firm in pursuing usually their goals as competing strategy to manage work place conflict”( mean score of 4.23, 4.12, 3.89 and standard deviation of 0.630, 0.821 and 0.871 respectively). The respondents strongly agreed on the statements that “they make their effort to get their way; try to win their position and are firm in pursuing their goals” (See Table 12).

**Table 12 Competing Strategy**

Questions	Number	Mean	St. deviation
I am firm in pursuing usually my goals	110	3.89	.871
I try to win my position	110	4.12	.821
I make some effort to get my way	110	4.23	.630
I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position	110	3.69	.847
I assert my wishes	110	3.80	.727
I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position	110	3.80	.799
I press to get my points mad	110	3.21	.949
<b>Aggregate Score</b>		<b>3.82</b>	<b>.806</b>

Source: Survey Data (2021)

**Collaborating Strategy**

The results indicated that respondents agreed collaborating strategy as a tool to manage workplace conflict (mean score = 3.92 & standard deviation = 0.821) as indicated by the aggregate scores. Most of the respondents strongly agreed on the statement “they always learn towards a direct discussion of a problem; attempt to deal with all of others and their concerns and share the problem with the other person so that they can work it out” that depicted collaborating strategy is best practiced to manage work place conflict (mean score of 4.22, 4.16, 4.02 & standard deviation of 0.696, 0.583 and 0.742 respectively). The respondents also agreed on the statements that “they tell their ideas and ask for theirs; attempt to immediately work through their differences and they avoid taking positions that would create controversy” (See table 13).

**Table 13 Collaborating Strategy**

Questions	Number	Mean	St. deviation
I attempt to deal with all of another's and my concerns	110	4.16	.583
I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution	110	3.73	1.074
I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open	110	3.73	.908
I tell another my ideal and ask them for theirs	110	3.95	.752
I attempt to immediately work through our differences	110	3.91	.749
I always learn towards a direct discussion of the problem	110	4.22	.696
I am often concerned with satisfying all my wishes	110	3.78	.990
I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy	110	3.92	.814
I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about	110	3.75	.903
I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out	110	4.02	.742
<b>Aggregate Score</b>		<b>3.92</b>	<b>.821</b>

Source: Survey data (2021)

### **Compromising Strategy**

The finding from the survey data indicated that respondents agreed on compromising strategy as an instrument to resolve interpersonal workplace conflict in private commercial banks.( Mean= 3.85 & standard deviation = 0.776). Most of the respondents strongly agreed on the statement that “they try to find a compromise solution for problems; find a fair combination of gains and losses between them and find a position that is intermediate” ( mean score of 4.18, 3.98, 3.84 and standard

deviation of 0.609, 0.790 and 0.761 respectively) which revealed compromising strategy is practiced to manage work place interpersonal conflict.

**Table 14 Compromising Strategy**

Questions	Number	Mean	St. deviation
I try to find a compromise solution	110	4.18	.609
I give up some points in exchange for others	110	3.81	.943
I propose middle ground	110	3.73	.728
I will let the other person have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine	110	3.65	.861
I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us	110	3.98	.790
I try to find a position that is intermediate between mine and another person's	110	3.84	.761
I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise	110	3.76	.741
<b>Aggregate Score</b>		<b>3.85</b>	<b>.776</b>

Source: Survey data (2021)

#### **4.6. Discussion**

Banks in Ethiopia are operating in a challenging environment where they are forced to look for solutions that will allow them to enhance their performance and competitiveness. Challenges other than work place conflict management like economic policy issues may take the center stage, but interpersonal conflict among employees also impact greatly on achieving their goals. To face this challenge it is time for the banks to focus on the resolving strategies of work place interpersonal conflict. In this paper, Thomas-kilmann conflict handling model is applied to examine the practice of the banks; and found that all the five strategies are practiced by the employees of private commercial banks in Ethiopia.

The finding from the present study revealed that majority of the respondents use collaborating strategy for resolving work place interpersonal conflict in their private banks. In conflict management collaborating means looking for the best solution for all parties involved in conflict. When several parties collaborate to resolve a conflict, they openly express their concerns and work to find a mutually useful solution. Collaboration leads to creative problem-solving and respect amongst colleagues in an organization. This style finds the root of a problem, such as personal conflicts, and attends to the situation in the least hostile manner of any conflict-management style. However, collaborative efforts tend to take more time compared to other conflict resolution strategies as in this style both parties try to solve their problem. In banking industry all tasks are performed by all staffs participation; no single entry (task) will passed without the involvement of at least two individuals. Thus, employee's preference of collaborating strategy as a primary conflict management style seems logical. Islam and Rimi(2017) pointed out that collaborating and compromising strategy used mostly as the primary preference of employees to resolve work place conflicts in commercial banks of Bangladesh. In contrast in Ethiopian private banks, compromising strategy is the third preferred work place conflict management style.

In addition, a research conducted by (Edwin, 2013) in Kenya revealed that, commercial banks used the strategies of accommodating, compromising, competing, collaborating and avoiding. But the most popularly used were avoiding and collaborating.

Next to collaborating, majority of the respondents preferred accommodating strategy that reflects sacrifice, selflessness and low assertiveness mentality. It is useful when someone find wrong and to allow a better position to be heard, issues are more important to others than yourself and to satisfy others and maintain cooperation, use accommodative style. Compromising strategy is the third preferred style of work place interpersonal conflict resolution technique. In this style the party is ready to give up something for the sake of resolving the conflict. This is useful only when both parties have relatively equal power and practice it. Otherwise, if one party

gives up and the other not, then the first party may regret and get frustrated. The fourth preferred strategy for resolving work place conflict in the present study is competing strategy. The competitive strategy works best in a limited number of conflicts, such as emergency situations.

Though it is their last preference, a significant number of employees of private commercial banks of Ethiopia also prefer to avoid conflict. The basic goal of avoidance is to delay. By delaying or ignoring the conflict, the avoiders hope the problem resolves itself without a confrontation.

As stated by Thakore(2013), employees would rather hide and ignore conflict than resolve it. This leads to the unhelpful and unassertive. Employees tend to give up personal goals and display passive behavior creating lose-lose situations. They consider it is easier to take out from a conflict rather than to face it. Avoiding strategy may help to preserve relationship that would be hurt by conflict resolution and effective way to stop conflictive situations at short term. The disadvantage of this strategy may be conflict remain unresolved, misuse of the style leads to others walking all over them. The appropriate time to use this strategy is when risks are not high or issues is minor, confrontation will injure a working relationship, there is little chance of satisfying your wants, disorders offsets the benefit of conflict resolution, others can more effectively resolve the conflict and when time constraints demand a delay.

Therefore, avoiding strategy is the least and last preferred conflict resolution technique in Ethiopian private banks. Since banking is a highly competitive sector, they may think internal conflict will hinder their daily activities and it will backward them in the competition.

The final part of this chapter is discussion on opinion collected from interviewee, which involves mostly the senior supervisors having many years working experience. Similar responses from the interviewee on each question were combined together for simplicity.

As per the interviewee response, the major sources of work place interpersonal conflicts are due to personal problems among employees. Some of the employees want to show how valuable they are for the organization. Some of them want to show nobody is beyond them in skills and knowledge, some other want the rest should respect them and obey them. Violation of the rules and regulations by individuals result in interpersonal conflict between supervisors and their subordinates. This violation arises from carelessness on intentionally to satisfy their personal interest. The other source of conflict which is not intense is between individual staffs and customers; customers never ending needs even at the expense of rules and regulations.

With respect to the existence of conflict management strategy; there are no strategically designed workplace interpersonal conflict management strategies. Rather work place conflict between employees is resolved by informal discussion and formally through administrative manuals designed to manage violations of rules and regulations of the company.

In one or the other way round, CMS(competing ,accommodating, collaborating, compromising and avoiding) may be practiced. Their implementation was not noticed separately which strategy is practiced or not.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Conclusion**

Banks in Ethiopia are operating in an unsettled environment where they are looking for measures that will allow them to improve their profitability and competitiveness. Economic challenges and political issues may occupy the center stage, but interpersonal work place conflict between employees also affect greatly on organizational performance. In the face of these traits now it is high time for the banks to focus on how they can resolve work place interpersonal conflict and have a good understanding of the strategies. In this study, Thomas-kilmann conflict handling model is applied and the finding revealed that all the five techniques of Thomas-kilmann conflict handling model are practiced by the employees of private commercial banks in Ethiopia. Most often collaborating and accommodating strategies were used to resolve work place conflict. Employees not only focus on goal but also look on the relationship. As this sector is highly competitive, teamwork is highly required for successful survival in this cut throat competition. So conflict is inevitable in this regard. Collaborating and accommodating strategies is the best preferred tool. However, the percentage of compromising and competing is also high. Though avoiding strategy is the last choice of employees to resolve conflict among them, it might take place for diplomatically bypassing an issue or postponing an issue until a better time.

#### **5.2. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made from the management and employees point of view:

##### **1. Role of the Management**

- The management of private commercial banks should offer training to employees on work place conflict management.
- They should provide training on various types of strategies of work place conflict management and train them which kind of strategy is suitable for which situations.

- The banks should have dedicated conflict management committee who will deal on the conflicting issue and provide suggestions and guidelines to properly manage work place conflict.
- The management should create a friendly working environment for the employees; so that they can work freely without any threat and help them to build up strong relationship.
- There must have Feedback System which gathers on-going information about what has been done as well as what has been learned.
- Management should guarantee a free flow of communication between the management and the employee.
- Management should inspire and promote interpersonal relationships among co-workers to improve their confidence.
- Management should re-orient employees about the effect of work place conflict on organizational performance and its consequence on the interest of the employees.

## **2. Role of Employees**

- Employees should obey all the rules and regulations of the banks.
- They should join in all the training on conflict management organized by the management of the banks.
- When employees face any conflict, they should try to solve the problem with the conflicting party by using any conflict management strategy.
- Not all the strategies are appropriate for the entire situation. Employees should use an appropriate strategy to manage conflict.

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## 7. APPENDICES

### Results-SPSS-20

#### 1. Demographic Data

##### age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 25	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
25-34	56	50.9	50.9	55.5
Valid 35-44	44	40.0	40.0	95.5
Above 44	5	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

##### Sex

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
female	45	40.9	40.9	40.9
Valid male	65	59.1	59.1	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

##### Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Diploma	9	8.2	8.2	8.2
Valid BA Degree	55	50.0	50.0	58.2
Masters	46	41.8	41.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

##### Work Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5 years	36	32.7	32.7	32.7
Valid 6-10 years	35	31.8	31.8	64.5
above 10 years	39	35.5	35.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Position				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Director	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
Branch Manager	8	7.3	7.3	10.0
supervisor	24	21.8	21.8	31.8
Valid officer	61	55.5	55.5	87.3
other	14	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

## 2. Variables Data

### 1. Avoiding Strategy

CMSAV1				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	4	3.6	3.6	3.6
neutral	10	9.1	9.1	12.7
Valid agree	74	67.3	67.3	80.0
Strongly agree	22	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

CMSAV2				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
neutral	8	7.3	7.3	8.2
Valid agree	71	64.5	64.5	72.7
strongly agree	30	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSAV3**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	1	.9	.9	1.8
neutral	6	5.5	5.5	7.3
agree	72	65.5	65.5	72.7
strongly agree	30	27.3	27.3	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSAV4**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid disagree	11	10.0	10.0	10.0
neutral	12	10.9	10.9	20.9
agree	63	57.3	57.3	78.2
strongly agree	24	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSAV5**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	2	1.8	1.8	1.8
disagree	4	3.6	3.6	5.5
neutral	25	22.7	22.7	28.2
agree	62	56.4	56.4	84.5
strongly agree	17	15.5	15.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSAV6**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid strongly disagree	2	1.8	1.8	1.8
disagree	5	4.5	4.5	6.4
neutral	22	20.0	20.0	26.4
agree	65	59.1	59.1	85.5
strongly agree	16	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

## 2. Accommodating Strategy

**CMSACC1**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
disagree	13	11.8	11.8	14.5
neutral	33	30.0	30.0	44.5
agree	43	39.1	39.1	83.6
strongly agree	18	16.4	16.4	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSACC2**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	2	1.8	1.8	1.8
disagree	8	7.3	7.3	9.1
neutral	15	13.6	13.6	22.7
agree	65	59.1	59.1	81.8
strongly agree	20	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSACC3**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	4	3.6	3.6	3.6
disagree	23	20.9	20.9	24.5
neutral	19	17.3	17.3	41.8
agree	46	41.8	41.8	83.6
strongly agree	18	16.4	16.4	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSACC4**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	7	6.4	6.4	7.3
neutral	15	13.6	13.6	20.9
agree	66	60.0	60.0	80.9
strongly agree	21	19.1	19.1	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSACC5**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	2	1.8	1.8	2.7
neutral	11	10.0	10.0	12.7
Valid agree	55	50.0	50.0	62.7
strongly agree	40	36.4	36.4	99.1
6.00	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSACC6**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	5	4.5	4.5	5.5
Valid neutral	18	16.4	16.4	21.8
agree	67	60.9	60.9	82.7
strongly agree	19	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSACC7**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
neutral	7	6.4	6.4	6.4
Valid agree	78	70.9	70.9	77.3
strongly agree	25	22.7	22.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSACC8**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	2	1.8	1.8	1.8
neutral	21	19.1	19.1	20.9
Valid agree	65	59.1	59.1	80.0
strongly agree	22	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

### 3. Collaborating Strategy

**CMSCOLLA1**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
neutral	8	7.3	7.3	8.2
Valid agree	73	66.4	66.4	74.5
strongly agree	28	25.5	25.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA2**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	21	19.1	19.1	20.0
Valid neutral	13	11.8	11.8	31.8
agree	47	42.7	42.7	74.5
strongly agree	28	25.5	25.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA3**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	15	13.6	13.6	13.6
neutral	19	17.3	17.3	30.9
Valid agree	57	51.8	51.8	82.7
strongly agree	19	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA4**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
neutral	19	17.3	17.3	21.8
Valid agree	63	57.3	57.3	79.1
strongly agree	23	20.9	20.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA5**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	6	5.5	5.5	5.5
neutral	18	16.4	16.4	21.8
Valid agree	66	60.0	60.0	81.8
strongly agree	20	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA6**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
neutral	8	7.3	7.3	10.0
Valid agree	61	55.5	55.5	65.5
strongly agree	38	34.5	34.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA7**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	12	10.9	10.9	11.8
Valid neutral	26	23.6	23.6	35.5
agree	42	38.2	38.2	73.6
strongly agree	29	26.4	26.4	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA8**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	5	4.5	4.5	5.5
Valid neutral	20	18.2	18.2	23.6
agree	60	54.5	54.5	78.2
strongly agree	24	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA9**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	12	10.9	10.9	11.8
neutral	20	18.2	18.2	30.0
agree	58	52.7	52.7	82.7
strongly agree	19	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOLLA10**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
neutral	14	12.7	12.7	17.3
agree	65	59.1	59.1	76.4
strongly agree	26	23.6	23.6	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**4. Competing Strategy****CMSCOMP1**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	7	6.4	6.4	6.4
neutral	27	24.5	24.5	30.9
agree	47	42.7	42.7	73.6
strongly agree	29	26.4	26.4	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMP2**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
neutral	16	14.5	14.5	19.1
agree	50	45.5	45.5	64.5
strongly agree	39	35.5	35.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMP3**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
neutral	9	8.2	8.2	9.1
Valid agree	64	58.2	58.2	67.3
strongly agree	36	32.7	32.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMP4**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	9	8.2	8.3	9.2
Valid neutral	28	25.5	25.7	34.9
agree	56	50.9	51.4	86.2
strongly agree	15	13.6	13.8	100.0
Total	109	99.1	100.0	
Missing System	1	.9		
Total	110	100.0		

**CMSCOMP5**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	5	4.5	4.5	4.5
neutral	27	24.5	24.5	29.1
Valid agree	63	57.3	57.3	86.4
strongly agree	15	13.6	13.6	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMP6**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	6	5.5	5.5	5.5
neutral	30	27.3	27.3	32.7
Valid agree	54	49.1	49.1	81.8
strongly agree	20	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMP7**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
disagree	24	21.8	21.8	24.5
neutral	37	33.6	33.6	58.2
agree	39	35.5	35.5	93.6
strongly agree	7	6.4	6.4	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**5. Compromising Strategy****CMSCOMPR1**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
neutral	9	8.2	8.2	9.1
agree	69	62.7	62.7	71.8
strongly agree	31	28.2	28.2	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMPR2**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	4	3.6	3.6	3.6
disagree	9	8.2	8.2	11.8
neutral	10	9.1	9.1	20.9
agree	68	61.8	61.8	82.7
strongly agree	19	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMPR3**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	7	6.4	6.4	6.4
neutral	27	24.5	24.5	30.9
Valid agree	65	59.1	59.1	90.0
strongly agree	11	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMPR4**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	14	12.7	12.7	12.7
neutral	24	21.8	21.8	34.5
Valid agree	58	52.7	52.7	87.3
strongly agree	14	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMPR5**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	4	3.6	3.6	4.5
Valid neutral	17	15.5	15.5	20.0
agree	62	56.4	56.4	76.4
strongly agree	26	23.6	23.6	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMPR6**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
disagree	8	7.3	7.3	7.3
neutral	18	16.4	16.4	23.6
Valid agree	68	61.8	61.8	85.5
strongly agree	16	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**CMSCOMPR7**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	1	.9	.9	.9
disagree	4	3.6	3.6	4.5
neutral	28	25.5	25.5	30.0
agree	64	58.2	58.2	88.2
strongly agree	13	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Avoiding strategy 1	110	4.04	.663
Avoiding strategy 2	110	4.18	.593
Avoiding strategy 3	110	4.17	.648
Avoiding strategy 4	110	3.91	.852
Avoiding strategy 5	110	3.80	.810
Avoiding strategy 6	110	3.80	.810
Accommodating strategy 1	110	3.55	.992
Accommodating strategy 2	110	3.85	.869
Accommodating strategy 3	110	3.46	1.106
Accommodating strategy 4	110	3.90	.812
Accommodating strategy 5	110	4.22	.783
Accommodating strategy 6	110	3.89	.770
Accommodating strategy 7	110	4.16	.516
Accommodating strategy 8	110	3.97	.683
Competing strategy 1	110	3.89	.871
Competing strategy 2	110	4.12	.821
Competing strategy 3	110	4.23	.630
Competing strategy 4	109	3.69	.847
Competing strategy 5	110	3.80	.727
Competing strategy 6	110	3.80	.799
Competing strategy 7	110	3.21	.949
Collaborating strategy 1	110	4.16	.583
Collaborating strategy 2	110	3.73	1.074
Collaborating strategy 3	110	3.73	.908
Collaborating strategy 4	110	3.95	.752
Collaborating strategy 5	110	3.91	.749

Collaborating strategy 6	110	4.22	.696
Collaborating strategy 7	110	3.78	.990
Collaborating strategy 8	110	3.92	.814
Collaborating strategy 9	110	3.75	.903
Collaborating strategy 10	110	4.02	.742
Compromising strategy 1	110	4.18	.609
Compromising strategy 2	110	3.81	.943
Compromising strategy 3	110	3.73	.728
Compromising strategy 4	110	3.65	.861
Compromising strategy 5	110	3.98	.790
Compromising strategy 6	110	3.84	.761
Compromising strategy 7	110	3.76	.741
Valid N (listwise)	109		

## Addis Ababa University

### College of Business and Economics

#### Masters of Science in International Business

#### Questionnaire

The data collected from this questionnaire is for academic purposes only and confidential. The study intends to examine the practice of conflict management strategies of private commercial banks in Ethiopia. The data collected shall be used as primary data in my thesis for a partial fulfillment for the requirement of MSC in international business at Addis Ababa University.

Your prompt and reliable responses will be appreciated as it will enable the timely completion of this thesis and enhance the benefits of the research in terms of its relevance.

*Note:* Please tick or fill in the blank spaces as required.

**Thank you for your commitment in advance.**

#### **Part A: Demographic Information**

1. Name of your company? \_\_\_\_\_

***Position******Demographic Information***

Director

Branch Manager

Supervisor

Officer

Other

Sex M  F

**Educational Qualification**

Masters

Degree

Diploma

Age: Below 25

25 – 34

35 – 44

45 and above

**Part B: To what extent do you agree with the following statements in the tables.**

No.	1. Avoiding(Withdrawal) strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.					
2	Do you try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship?					
3	Do you try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions?					
4	Do you try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself?					
5	Do you try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think about it?					
6	Do you feel that differences are not always worrying about?					
7	Do sometimes avoid taking positions which would create controversy?					

Do you think that avoiding is the best conflict management strategy in your company?

Yes

No

If your answer is yes, state some reasons:

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No.	2. Accommodating(Smoothing)strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which we both agree.					
2	Do sometimes sacrifice your own wishes for the wishes of the other person?					
3	Do you consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution?					
4	Do you try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship?					
5	Do you try not to hurt the other's feelings?					
6	If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views.					
7	In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's feelings.					
8	If the other's position seems important to them, I would try to meet their wishes.					
9	Do you try not to hurt the other person's feelings?					

Do you think that accommodating is the best conflict management strategy in your company?

Yes

No

If your answer is yes, please state your reasons:

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No	3. Competing (Forcing) strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Are you firm in pursuing usually your goals?					
2	Do you try to win your position?					
3	Do you make some effort to get your way?					
4	Do you try to show him the logic and benefits of your position?					
5	Do you try to convince the other person of the merits of your position?					
6	Do you assert your wishes?					
7	Do you try to show the other person the logic and benefits of your position?					
8	Do you press to get your points made.					

Do you think that competing is the best conflict management strategy in your company?

Yes  No

If your answer is yes, please state your reasons:

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No.	4. Collaborating(problem solving) strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Do you attempt to deal with all of another's and your concerns?					
2	Do you consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution?					
3	Do you attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open?					
4	Do you tell another your ideas and ask them for theirs?					
5	Do you attempt to immediately work through differences?					
6	Do you always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem?					
7	Are you often concerned with satisfying all your wishes?					
8	Do you always concerned with					

	satisfying all your wishes?					
9	Do you sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy?					
10	Do you feel that differences are not always worth worrying about?					
11	Do you always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out?					

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Do you think that collaborating is the best conflict management strategy in your company?

Yes  No

If your answer is yes, please state your reasons:

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No.	5. Compromising(sharing) strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Do you try to find a compromise solution?					
2	Do you give up some points in exchange for others?					
3	Do you propose middle ground?					
4	Will you let the other person have some of their positions if they let you have some of yours?					
5	Do you try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us?					
6	Do you try to find a position that is intermediate between you and another person's?					
7	Do you try to get the other person to settle for a compromise?					

Do you think that compromising is the best conflict management strategy in your company?

Yes  No

If your answer is yes, please state your reasons:

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**THANK YOU!**

