CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THARAKA SOUTH DISTRICT- KENYA

A Thesis

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Master of Education Administration And

Management

BY

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DECLARATION A

"This Thesis is my Original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other academic award in any University or institution of learning"

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Name and signature of candidate

21st Sept 2012

Date

DECLARATION B

"I /we confirm that the work reported in this Thesis was carried out by the candidate under my supervision"
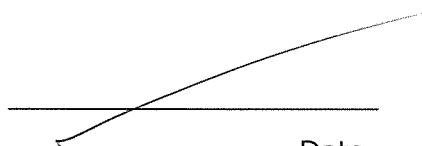
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Date

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family for their support, love, and care. My wife Jerusha Gitonga and my brothers and sisters. I owe this work to you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher's gratitude first goes to the Almighty God who has given him the strength and courage to undertake this research. He wants to thank his wife Jerusha for her constant encouragement during this study.

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Finally he would like to thank all his respondents and those who responded within a short notice including the school principals in respective schools without which this work would not have been possible.

May God bless you.

ABSTRACT

The study was an investigation on the relationship between conflict resolution and administrative efficiency in selected secondary schools in Tharaka south district-Kenya. The purpose of the study was to validate the theory on conflict management and resolution by Mcshare and Glinawn, reviews the existing literature, test the relevant hypothesis, contribute towards the existing knowledge and indentify the strength and weaknesses pertaining the variable studied. The objectives of the study were; to identify the demographic aspects of the respondents in terms of age, gender, marital status, and the level of education, to examine the level of conflict resolution, to establish the level of administrative efficiency, and establish the relationship between conflict resolution and administrative efficiency. The study was descriptive with a qualitative approach. The sample size was 130 using the solvens formula; data was analyzed using SPSS-pearson – correlation. The study found out that there was a significant co-relation between the level of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. Recommendations were to train administration on conflict resolution and allowing the staff to always give feedback based on conflicts.

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CHAPTER ONE
THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Background of the Study

Conflict may have either a positive or a negative effect on organizational performance, depending on the nature of the conflict and how it is managed Armstrong (2009). For every organization, an optimal level of conflict exists which is considered highly functional as it helps to generate good performance. When the conflict level is too high (dysfunctional), performance suffers. Consequently, innovation and change may become unmanageable and the organization may not adapt to change in its environment (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). According to Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (2004) the informal resolution of dissatisfaction is an essential part of effective day-to-day management. Most difficulties can be resolved as they arise but more formal arrangements are necessary when dissatisfaction in the employment relationship becomes unresolved conflict.

For a group to be effective, individual members need to be able to work in a positive conflict environment. If conflict is well managed, it adds to innovation and productivity (Murthy, 2006). Bricoe and Schuler (2004) have offered procedures for turning dysfunctional conflict into functional conflict, stating that too many organizations tend to take a win-lose, competitive approach to conflict or at worst avoid conflict altogether. Such a negative view of conflict ensures that a group is ineffective and the activity within it becomes destructive. However, a positive view of conflict leads to a win-win solution. Within a group, the member can take any one of the three views of conflict: dysfunctional conflict, conflict avoidance and functional conflict.

According to Chuck (2003) conflict may happen due to different reasons and causes by starting from the different experiences of individuals, resources, sharing among and between staffs and departments, in efficient administration and poor performance of the staff.

However the most important factor is that after the conflict happens what kind of solutions will be done. According to Maicibi (2005) if conflicts are not managed carefully the consequences will be obstacle to the educational goals to be achieved. Therefore any good administrator at any institution tracks whenever symptoms which lead to conflict emerge and finds a solution quickly regardless of how minor are the symptoms.

According to Stephen and David (2001) conflicts are incompatible differences resulting in some form of interference or opposition. When people's perception is different then conflict may arise. Gareth, Jenifer and Charles (2000) explained organizational conflict as a discord that arises when goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups block or thwart each other's attempt to achieve their objectives.

Conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interest is being opposes or negatively affected by another party. In this study it is simply used to mean disagreement. Administration on the other hand is the process of using available resources of the organization carefully, systematically, efficiently and effectively for the realization of stated organization goals and objectives. It is also concerned with mobilizing and motivating people's effort in an organization towards the achievement of common goals and specific objectives.

Some practicing managers view group conflict negatively and thus seek to resolve or eliminate all types of disputes (Dowling *et al,* 2008). These managers contend that conflicts disrupt the organization and prevent optimal performance. As such, conflicts are a clear indication that something is wrong with the organization and that sound principles are not being applied in managing the activities of the organization. Browarys & Price (2008) base their approaches on the principles of authority and unity of command to eliminate conflict. They believe that conflicts could be eliminated or avoided by recruiting the right people, carefully specifying job descriptions, structuring the organization in such a way as to establish a clear chain of command, and establishing clear rules and procedures to meet various contingencies.

Managers who view all conflicts as disruptive make it their task to eliminate them Griffin (2006). The main fear being the emergence of disputes arising from unchecked conflicts even where such conflicts are on a small scale. Instead of permitting heated differences to develop, proactive managers address the problems early before they degenerate to conflicts within groups and between groups (Thomas & Christopher, 2001).

Human resource policies are vital in addressing both individual and group conflict in an organization. Gupta (2008) posits that human resource policies provide guidelines for a wide variety of employment relationship in the organization. To effectively solve conflict an organization, human resource policies need address areas where conflicts may arise such as management of human resources and organizational development, compensation including profit sharing and incentives, working conditions, employee's services and welfare

relations. The policies should provide checks and balances in the daily running of an organization at all levels, thereby promoting a spirit of teamwork and loyalty. For the line and top management, the policies should address the process of decision making and provide standards or yardsticks for control. With respect to an organization's goals and objectives, apart from being clearly written, human resource policies should be flexible.

School administration has been adversely affected by lack of knowledge of conflict management. Most administrators handled conflicts by trial and error approach because there were no specific procedures and methods of managing conflicts. In the secondary school system in Osun State, students were not allowed to participate in decisions affecting them. Most students did not know the importance of a student representative council and they hardly knew how to channel their grievances. In many cases the students just took to the streets to protest against the school authority. The staff members on the other hand were not excluded from all kinds of conflict. Staff and students in conflict resolution rarely explored the use of dialogue as a resolution technique. Finally the issue of conflict management has reached the point where effective use of relevant strategies should be explored and employed.

Statement of the problem

The majority of the secondary schools in Kenya have problems with the administration trying to resolve conflict which eventually affects the administrative efficiency. There are no clear avenues to resolve conflict in schools due to cases like ownership of the school, corruption, lack of training by head teachers and staff on conflict resolution. Ninety percent of the staff has not been trained in conflict resolution which is seemingly affecting administrative efficiency. With

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the coming of Universal Secondary Education, there are so many inefficiencies in the system and the administration is one lacking. There is need to carry out a study on how conflict resolution influences administrative efficiency.

Purpose of the study

This study intended to;

i. validate the theory to which is based on conflict management of Mcshare and Glinow(2003 ,

ii. review the existing literature and identify the existing gaps and fill them,

iii. test the relevant hypothesis, contribute towards existing knowledge and

iv. identify strengths and weaknesses pertaining variables studied

General Objectives

i. To identify the demographic aspects of the respondents in terms of age, gender, marital status and level of education.

ii. To determine the level of conflict resolution among the schools.

iii. To establish the level of administrative efficiency of administrators in conflict resolution.

iv. To establish the relationship between conflict resolution and administrative efficiency.

Research questions

i. What is the demographic aspect of respondents in terms of age, gender, marital status and level of education?

ii. What is the level of conflict resolution among secondary schools?

iii.   What is the level of administrative efficiency of administrators in conflict resolution?

iv.   Is there a significant relationship between conflict resolution and administrative efficiency?

Hypothesis

Null hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution and administrative efficiency in selected secondary schools in Tharaka South district – Kenya.

Scope

Geographical scope

The study was carried out in selected secondary schools in Tharaka South district – Kenya. The study covered ten randomly selected secondary schools which include;

Karocho secondary school, Turima secondary school, Nkondi Girls secondary school, Materi Boys secondary school, Kiriria secondary school, Materi girls' secondary school, Kanyaga secondary school, Muthitwa secondary school, Marimanti girls' secondary school and Tunyai secondary school.

Theoretical scope

The study was based on the theory according to Mcshare and Glinow(2003) who believe there are six sources of conflict; Communication problems, Resource scarcity, Ambiguous rules, Task interdependence, Different values and objectives, Incompatible goals The study was also based on The theory of Griffin (1997) states the methods of controlling conflict as the following expand resource base if administrators use an appropriate technique for enhancing.

Content scope

The study was about conflict and conflict resolution, administration, and administrative efficiency.

Time scope

The study was carried out in a period of six months from April to August 2012.

Significance of the study

The study will be of significance to stake holders in identifying the loopholes of conflict management and administrative efficiency. Stake holders will identify the areas that are lacking in this and will be rectified after the study has been conducted. The study will also be of use to scholars as a point of references.

The study will also be of significance to head teachers, teachers on how to manage conflict and have better administrative efficiency.

The study will guide the **headteachers** to listen with open ear whenever grievance occurs in the school system. The head teachers or managers should listen to their subordinates carefully so that minor issues would be dealt with open ear. In addition head teachers will be able to overcome conflict peacefully by developing special techniques of conflict resolution and understand that conflicts are inevitable and may happen any time, so that they would develop tolerance .some of these conflicts would also be an opportunity for further institutional growth and development.

Whenever conflict happen **the teacher** can develop negotiation manner with the school management and the students. Teachers can get involved in conflict solving strategies together with the management, and this ensures teacher

Operational definitions of key terms

Conflict resolution - The process of resolving disagreements or arguments among people, groups or countries.

Administrative efficiency - The quality of being efficient and Productive in getting the needed results without wasting time or effort in controlling the operations of a learning institution.

Profile of respondents - A description that gives the useful Information about the respondents.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concepts, Opinions, Ideas from Authors/ Experts
Conflict resolution

Inter-group conflict may arise in situations where conflicting goals, task dependency, dissimilar work orientations, competition for limited resources, and competitive reward systems exist (Adler, 2008). Once conflict has surfaced, it goes through certain stages, covering a wide range of behaviors such as accommodating or avoiding it. This brings about change which can occur within and between groups. Some changes have positive effects and others have negative effects.

Interpersonal conflicts resulting from personality variables such as dislikes, distrust, or prejudice usually hinder group performance (Nzuve, 2007). When interpersonal conflict occurs, people are more concerned with gaining advantage over others than with task performance. Since the value of conflict can be determined by how it is managed, managers should know its sources and consequences so that they can find ways of managing it. Brown (2002) posits that the role of conflict management in organizational performance depends on contingent circumstances. Contingency theory recognizes the influence of given solution on organizational behavior patterns.

In the nature of conflict according to Kinicki and Williams (2003) that by the term "conflict" many people envision shouting and fighting. But as an administrator, during a typical workday, you will encounter more nonviolent types of conflict oppositions, criticism, and arguments. Thus definition of a conflict seems fairly mild. Conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. Conflicts is a simply a

disagreement in a perfectly normal state of affairs. According to Stephen and David (2001) conflict perceives incompatible differences resulting in some form of interference or opposition. If people perceive differences, then, a conflict state may exist.

According to Maicibi (2005) it is only when conflicts are not effectively managed by the proper administrative process that they produce disastrous effects. The time which teachers spend preparing meaningful notes for lessons will be spent on planning how to talk or deal with their rivals if they are in conflict. Workers who are in conflict cannot cooperate with one another, and may not be concerned with the aspirations of the school. Mistrust is one of the signals of conflict. Teachers involved in conflict with their administrator or headmaster mistrust him for example the teachers will not work with their whole heart.

The ability to successfully minimize and resolve conflict is an important skill for school administrators to develop. A major reason for this is that administrators are faced with the classic confrontation between individual needs and organizational needs, requiring them to spend a major part of their time attempting conflict mediation. The "appropriate" management strategy in a given situation requires accurate identification of both the conflict origin and participants, and their relationships, in order to apply the most effective resolution technique. Ideally, this technique must reduce the dysfunctional dimension of conflict so as to capitalize on its functionality for the good of all concerned. Since conflict is inevitable in schools, administrators must be prepared to deal with it, not necessarily from the point of view of elimination, but rather to derive the greatest possible benefits there from. Consequently, conflict anticipation and detection should always

constitute the first two phases of good conflict management. That is, pro-action rather than reaction should be the motto!

To this end, effective conflict management should reflect the advice offered by Mary Parker Follett some sixty years ago. She argued that one ought not to conceive conflict as a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities, but a normal process whereby socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment for all concerned. Three methods were advanced for dealing with conflict of which only integration was strongly advocated. These included: domination, whereby there is a victory of one side over the other (a win-lose situation); compromise, whereby each side gives up something in the process (a lose-lose situation); and integration, whereby each side refocuses their efforts so that neither side loses anything nor in fact each gains (a win-win situation).

Clearly, Follett believed that domination should be avoided at all costs. Although application of this strategy requires little effort on the part of the administrator, the long term side effects can be devastating. Compromise carries with it the assumption that both parties will be happy because each will gain something, but each loses something as well and this in turn creates the potential for further conflict. Integration was favored simply because if both parties can become satisfied there will remain no issue or problem - obviously an ideal situation not easily attained.

Strategies for conflict resolution will also vary according to the different philosophical bases of those involved. Generally, these bases encompass the win-lose, lose-lose and win-win approaches to conflict resolution.

Win-lose are too often overused as a strategy for solving conflicts. Whereas these methods include the use of mental or

physical power to bring about compliance, a lose-lose approach will also leave no one entirely happy. Compromise, side payments and submission of the issue to a neutral third party, as in the arbitration procedure, constitute examples of this latter approach. Arbitration resolves issues at some middle-Ground between the positions held by the disputants such that while each disputant gains something the outcome is rarely satisfying to either side. The win-win approach is now becoming more popular although it is still misunderstood by many administrators. This method yields solutions satisfactory to all in that each party to the conflict wins something, and the conflict is therefore resolved constructively. It could be suggested that important conflicts tend to be best managed with positive-sum (win-win) strategies, while more trivial issues merit no more than zero-sum (win-lose/lose-lose) strategies, with most situations calling for mixed modes (no win-no lose).

An important point must be borne in mind when attempting to deal effectively with organizational conflict, namely, that any one method will not apply to all situations or all personalities. Given the various approaches to conflict management currently in existence, a major question becomes 'Which approach is best?" While it appears that the integrated (collaborative) procedure has the most to offer, each of the other approaches can also be effective in selected circumstances. Perhaps in our pursuit of conflict management strategies we would be well advised to heed the warning given by Bailey (1971): "Any administrator who assumes that he can use the same technique or style in resolving conflicts that emanate respectively from subordinate conflicts, super ordinate conflicts and lateral conflicts is either a genius or a fool" (p. 234).

Administrative efficiency

How can managers or administrators tell whether they have made the best decision? One approach is to wait until the results are in but what if the decision has been made but not yet implemented/ while nothing can guarantee "a best" decision an administrator should at least be confident that they followed proper procedures that yield the best possible decision under the circumstance. This means that the decision makers are supposed to be appropriately vigilant in making decision. Fortunately these questions have been the subject of careful research. Much of it conducted by Yale University Vicor Vroom and Yelton identify three basic alternative with sub-alternatives for two of them. They are as follows;-

Autocratic – You solve the problem or make the decision yourself using information available to you at that time. You obtain the necessary information from your subordinates and decide on the solution to the problem yourself. You may or may not tell your subordinates what the problem is in getting the information from them. The role played by your subordinate in making the decision is clearly one of providing the necessary information to you, rather than generating or evaluating alternative solution.

Consultative -The administrator share the problem with the relevant subordinate individually, getting their ideas and suggestions without bringing them together as a group. Then you make the decision that may or may not reflect your subordinate influence. You share the problem with your subordinate as a group. Together you generate and evaluate alternatives and attempt to reach agreement on a solution. Your role is much like that of chairperson, you do not try to influence the group to adopt your solution and you are willing to

accept and implement any solution that has the support of the entire group.

Theoretical perspectives

According to kinick and willams (2003) that by the term "conflict" many people envision shouting and fighting, but as a manager, during a typical workday, you will encounter more subtle nonviolent types of conflict oppositions, criticisms and arguments. Thus the definition of a conflict seems fairly mild. Conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party.

According to Mcshare and Glinow (2003) there are six conflict sources which are:

Communication problems, Resource scarcity, Ambiguous rules, Task interdependence, Different values and objectives and Incompatible goals.

For these above conflict sources, administrators should use.

Win-win orientation. Win-win domain believes that the parties in conflict will find a mutually beneficial solution to their disagreement.

Win–lose orientation – win–lose domain is about conflict parties are drawing from a fixed pie, so the more one party receives, the less the other party will receive. However lose- lose domain should not happen.

Griffin (1997) states the methods of controlling conflict as the following expand resource base if administrators use an appropriate technique for enhancing coordination. They can reduce the probability that conflict will arise. Techniques for coordination include. Making use of managerial hierarchy, relying on rules and procedures, enlisting liaison persons, forming task forces and integrating departments. competing goals can also be a potential source of conflict among groups and individual, administrators have to gave attention

administrators should try to match personalities and work habits of employees to avoid conflict between individual for example smokers and non smokers should not work in one office because they may fight.

Robbins and Decentzo (1998) stated five important conflict resolution techniques that administrators should follow for them to improve their efficiency.

Avoidance technique. Conflict is trivial, when emotions are running high and time is needed to cool them down, or when the potential disruption from an assertive action outweighs the benefits or resolution, however it is better to develop prevention technique.

Accommodation technique. The issue and dispute is not that important to you or when you want to build up credits for later issues.

Forcing technique. You need a quick solution on important issues that require unpopular actions to be taken and when commitment by others to your solution is not critical.

Compromise technique. Conflicting parties are about equal in power, when it is desirable to achieve a temporary solution to complex issues or when time pressure demand an expedient solution.

Collaborating technique. Time pressure is minimal, when all parties seriously want a win-win solution and when the issue is too important to be compromised. Gareth, Jennifer and Charles (2000) advised administrators to follow three important steps: increasing awareness of the sources of conflict, increasing diversity awareness and skill can help administration effectively manage diversity and resolve conflict that have their origin in differences between organizational members, practicing job rotation or temporary assignment when a particular member of the organization is not able to do the job effectively, using

permanent transfers or dismissals when necessary, that is when other conflict approaches fail to work

In general, it can be concluded that conflict has been effectively managed when it no longer interferes with the ongoing activities of those involved. Conflict management is therefore the process of removing cognitive barriers to agreement (Greenhalgh, 1986). Depending on the situation, conflict management techniques often focus on changing structure, changing process or both. Sometimes structural modifications are not very creative, and the response to conflict is simply more rules and hardening of the role structure. Such efforts can improve the situation outwardly but not without consequences, for as Sanford (1964) states: "the hardening of the role structure which is an organization's best defense against the inroads of individual irrationality gives equal protection against failing and against success".

Hanson (1991) suggests administrator awareness of the various tactics of conflict management. Naturally the tactics selected will depend on the force driving the conflict. One of the most common forces is scarce resources. Effective management of scarce resources and the ability to expand the resource base whenever possible are important to management. Establishing an appeals system which provides the right of formal redress to a superior in the organization is also an excellent means of treating conflict associated with disputes at lower hierarchical levels. To cope with the bureaucratic constraints of the hierarchy or perceived favoritism, some institutions have adopted an ombudsman approach.

Occasionally the most appropriate tactic involves changing the degree of interaction between conflicting parties. If the basis of conflict is lack of trust or suspicion of motives, an effective approach is

to bring the parties together and let them get to know each other. However, if the conflict is rooted in differences in principle, increased interaction could exacerbate the situation. Too, modifying the reward system can be effective if inequity in extrinsic or intrinsic rewards is the cause of conflict. Whenever possible, eliminate zero-sum rewards, reward performance as well as rank, and establish evaluations that reward preventive contributions rather than success in finding errors.

When units such as departments, programs, etc. are in conflict because of struggles for policy control or resources, they are usually operating in their own self-interests. In these instances, mergers should be considered, since this modification creates a struggle for the common goal. There may also be occasions when breaking up a unit facilitates smoother working relationships.

To decrease task ambiguity, various role clarification procedures can be used. This involves gathering those people who interact with a particular role and defining through dialogue and debate their responsibilities and duties. A neutral third party can also help establish the confidence, atmosphere of good will, and emotional support to bring a degree of otherwise missing rationality to the decision making process.

Finally, for the good of order, an administrator can occasionally attempt to redirect the tensions and conflictive behaviors towards him/her as a means of clearing the atmosphere and enabling more productive actions to take place at lower levels. Being a conflict sponge is not easy, since the process merely redirects the heat in the direction of the administrator.

There is no shortage of proposed approaches for managing conflict in an organizational setting. These approaches are often portrayed on a continuum with flight ("I'm catching the first bus out of

town!") and fight ("Fire the trouble maker!") at the extremes. Obviously neither extreme is satisfactory since a win-lose orientation to conflict is present, characterized by the fact that contesting parties view their interests to be mutually exclusive. Hence, parties to the conflict come to believe that the issue can be settled in only one of three ways: (1) a power struggle, (2) intervention by a third party who possesses some sort of power greater than either of them, or (3) fate. Clearly, an effective approach to conflict management commonly referred to as the contingency approach lies somewhere between these extremes.

This approach to conflict management is predicated upon the idea that diagnosis of the situation is necessary as a basis of action. The contingency view is that there is not one best way of managing conflict under all conditions, but that there are optimal ways of managing it under certain conditions (Owens, 1987). An important aspect of conflict management, then, is to consider (a) alternative ways of managing conflict and (b) the kinds of situations in which each of these various alternatives might be expected to be the most effective.

Thomas (1976) provides what might be considered one of the most useful models of conflict management is utilizing the contingency approach to conflict diagnosis. This typology examines five styles of conflict management. Two basic dimensions of behavior that can produce conflict are identified: attempting to satisfy one's own concerns (organizational demands in the case of administrators) and attempting to satisfy others' concerns (individual needs of the members). From this analysis, five major perspectives are identified which may be used in conceptualizing conflict and behaviors commonly associated with those perspectives. These perspectives/management

styles are identified as avoidance, compromise/sharing, competition/ domination, accommodation and collaboration/integration.

Avoidance is often a form of flight suggesting indifference, evasion, withdrawal, or isolation. Being unassertive and uncooperative can also represent a delay tactic. **Compromise/sharing** involves splitting the difference or giving up something to get something. **Competition/domination** frequently means a desire to win at the other's expense. It is a win-lose power struggle where the opinions and interests of others are of little concern. **Accommodation** can be an appeasement or submission to others at your own expense. On occasion it can represent generosity, while at other times it might mean conserving energy and resources by giving up a few battles in order to win the war. Finally, **collaboration/integration** represents a desire to fully satisfy the interests of both parties. It is a mutually beneficial stance based on trust and problem solving. (**Dennis L. Treslan Faculty of Education Winter 1993**)

It should be noted that conflict is a reality that crosses all organizational boundaries to affect individuals, groups and disciplines. It can initiate productive change and vitality or it can lead to the demise of an organization. The resultant consequence of conflict will inevitably be determined by how well it was managed.

It has been demonstrated that conflict is inevitable within our schools. In order to manage it as a creative resource, administrators must recognize that conflict exists, and bring it out into the open so that the issue can be effectively dealt with. Understanding conflict will enable administrators to deal more effectively with the problems of organizational efficiency, stability, governance, change and effectiveness. Not only should administrators endeavor to understand conflict, but they must also be careful not to fall into the trap of

viewing it from a negative perspective. Handled properly through an appropriate conflict management style, conflict can enhance administrators' efforts in reaching school goals. For administrators who realistically confront it, conflict can represent a dynamic force which facilitates organizational growth, change, adaptation and survival. Perhaps this positive perspective on conflict can best be summed up in the words of Mary Parker Follett when she said: "it is to be hoped that ... we shall always have conflict, the kind which leads to invention, to the emergence of new values.

Related studies

A study was carried out to examine conflict management in organizations as experienced in Kenyan secondary schools. Using a descriptive research design we collected data from 43 secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. It was found that management is knowledgeable in conflict resolution, the schools also performed better. In spite of the limitations of our study these results reflect the central role conflict management plays in achieving organizational goals. Ergo we recommend integration of conflict management in leadership development programs for school principals. In the Kenyan education system, various legislations serve as guidelines for management and administration of educational institutions. However, it appears that most educational institutions have been less successful in management of conflicts MOE (2002). The Ministry of Education (2002) report indicated that in spite of the government policies put in place, Kenyan educational institutions have continued to report increased cases of conflict. In the recent past, the concern has shifted to the changing nature and increased number of organizational conflicts. Most of these conflicts occurred in secondary schools, middle level colleges and tertiary institutions MOE (2002). Many of the conflicts were

characterized by violence and wanton destruction of institutional property. Between 1980 and 2008, the number of conflicts in public secondary schools alone increased from 22 (0.9%) to 300 (7.5%) (MOE, 2008).

The objective of our study was to examine conflict management in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Further we sought to examine how conflict handling techniques were related to conflict awareness among the school principals. Data were gathered through the administration of a questionnaire to a cross-section of respondents drawn from various categories of school organizations. The questionnaire required the respondents to give their approaches, attitudes and effects of conflict in their respective secondary schools. They also compared the relationship between the management of conflict and the performance of their school organizations and came up with recommendations for improving conflict management in their respective public secondary schools. It was important to find out whether they linked organizational performance to prudent management of conflict. The questionnaire further required them to reflect on the extent of conflict in their respective secondary schools.

If school principals were to view conflict from a positive perspective, then it would possible to leverage these conflicts to improve cohesion and productivity within Kenyan secondary schools. The building of such synergy and cohesion among school members requires ability to diagnose and manage the conflicts in their nascent stages before they blow out of proportion. School principals ought to be encouraged to be alert and sensitive to sources of conflict and be well prepared to deal with conflict situations. As illustrated in table 6, communication and training in conflict management are essential in effective management of conflicts. When a school opens

communication channels and appropriate leadership training provided, conflicts situations can be contained and prevented from degenerating into unmanageable, full-blown conflicts that destroys productivity and unity among the school members.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study took a qualitative, descriptive design with a correlation approach. The study established the relationship between the level of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency

Research Population

The population consisted of head teachers and teachers in selected secondary schools in Tharaka South district Kenya.

Sample Size

The minimum sample of 130 was derived from the sloven's formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+NX^2}$$

Where   n=required sample

N=known population

x=level of significance which is given as 0.05

Out of a population of more than 200

Category	Population	Sample
Teachers	200	130
Total	200	130

Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure was purposive sampling where respondents were selected purposely. The study was purposive sampling because the area of study was majorly on conflict resolution and administrative efficiency.

The purposive sampling was utilized to select the respondents based on these criteria:

1. Male or female respondents in any of the schools included in the study

2. Teaching staff with teaching experience ranging from 30 years and above

3. Head teachers of the schools under study from the list of qualified respondents chosen based on the inclusion criteria; the systematic random sampling was used to finally select the respondents with consideration to the computed minimum sample size.

Research Instrument

The researcher used questionnaires for adults and the literate ones. The research tools that were utilized in this study include the following: (1) *face sheet* to gather data on the respondents' demographic characteristics (gender, age, qualifications, number of years teaching experience, number of qualified teachers and number of licensed teachers); (2) *researcher devised questionnaires* to determine the levels of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency in schools While a *standardized instrument* were also be adopted

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was used to test the validity and reliability of the instruments. The test-retest techniques were used to determine the reliability (accuracy) of the researcher devised instruments to ten qualified respondents; these respondents were included in the actual

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study. In this test- retest technique, the questionnaires were administered twice to the same subjects.

Data Gathering Procedures

An introduction letter was obtained from the College of Higher Degree and Research for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective heads of secondary schools.

i) When approved, the researcher secured a list of the qualified respondents from the school authorities in charge and select through systematic random sampling from this list to arrive at the minimum sample size.

ii) The respondents were explained about the study and were requested to sign the Informed Consent Form

iii) Reproduce more than enough questionnaires for distribution.

iv) Select research assistants who would assist in the data collection; brief and orient them in order to be consistent in administering the questionnaires.

During the administration of the questionnaires

1. The respondents were requested to answer completely and not to leave any part of the questionnaires unanswered.

2. The researcher and assistants emphasized retrieval of the questionnaires within five days from the date of distribution.

3. On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked if all are answered.

After the administration of the questionnaires

The data gathered was collated, encoded into the computer and statistically treated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS) with the use of spearman's correlation co-efficient to compare the level of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency.

Data Analysis

The frequency and percentage distribution were used to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The following mean range was used to arrive at the mean of the individual indicators and interpretation:

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.00---3.26	Very high
3.25---2.51	High
2.50---1.76	Low
1.75-1.00	Very low

Ethical Considerations

To ensure confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher:

1. Seek permission to adopt the standardized questionnaire on administrative efficiency.
2. The respondents and schools were coded instead of reflecting the names.
3. Solicit permission through a written request to the concerned officials of the secondary schools included in the study.
4. Request the respondents to sign in the *Informed Consent Form* Acknowledge the authors quoted in this study and the author of the standardized instrument through citations and referencing.
5. Present the findings in a generalized manner.

Limitations of the Study

In view of the following threats to validity, the researcher claimed an allowable 5% margin of error at 0.05 level of significance. Measures are also indicated in order to minimize if not to eradicate the threats to the validity of the findings of this study.

Extraneous variables which were beyond the researcher's control such as respondents' honesty, personal biases and uncontrolled setting of the study.

Testing: The use of research assistants can bring about inconsistency in the administration of the questionnaires in terms of time of administration, understanding of the items in the questionnaires and explanations given to the respondents. To minimize this threat, the research assistants were oriented and briefed on the procedures to be done in data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter covers demographic aspects of teachers, data presentation, critical data interpretation and data analysis.

Profile of the respondents

Table 1
Profile of the respondents
n=130

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30-39	57	43.8
40-49	60	46
50and above	13	10
Total	130	100
Gender of respondent		
Female	70	53.8
Male	60	46.1
Total	130	100
Level of education		
Diploma	67	51.5
Certificate	63	48.4
Total	130	100
Level of experience		
10-5 years	66	50.7
5-1 year	64	49.3
Total	130	100
Marital status		
Married	57	43.8
Single	17	13.0
Divorced	56	43.0
Total	130	100

Source: primary data

The above table shows that most of the respondents are between the age of 40-49 46%, followed by those between 30-39 (43.8%) and the least are above 50 years (10%) this implies that the majority of the ages are between 40-49 years. This implies that the teachers are Majorly between the ages of 40-49 years which means that they are old enough to teach and have ample time to be there for the students. As far as gender is concerned there are more female (53.8%) than males (46.1%).

As far as level of education is concerned, 51.5% had diplomas while 48.4% have certificate. The majority of respondents have worked between 1-5 years 50.7% and 49.2% while others have worked between 10-5 years. This implies that the respondents have enough experience as teachers.

Level of Conflict Resolution

Table 2
Level of Conflict Resolution
n=130

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Arbitration			
Desire to satisfy both parties	3.48	Very High	1
Mutually beneficial to both parties involved in conflict	3.90	Very High	2
It's a win-win approach of conflict resolution	3.77	Very High	3
Dialogue is encouraged	3.40	Very High	4
Done collaboratively	3.70	Very high	5
Resolves issues at some middle point	3.38	Very high	6
Average mean	**3.61**	Very high	
Competition			
Desire to win at another's' expense	3.41	Very High	7
Requires little effort for the administrator	3.31	Very high	8
Use mental and physical power to make compliance	3.45	Very high	9
Long term effect can be divesting	3.73	Very high	10
Average mean	**3.47**	Very high	
Compromise			
Splitting of conflicting parties	3.40	Very high	11
Leaves no one entirely happy	3.36	Very high	12
Requires personal Sacrifice	3.40	Very high	13
Compromising	3.42	Very high	14
Lose-lose approach	3.50	Very high	15
Side payments and submissions of the issue to a third parties	3.40	Very high	16
Average mean	**3.41**	Very high	
Avoidance			
Withdrawal of the administrator	3.30	Very high	17
Unassertive and uncooperative	3.40	Very high	18
Delay in tactic	3.50	Very high	19
Evasion of administrator	3.40	Very high	20
Average mean	**3.40**	Very high	
Accommodation			
Submission at your own expense	3.20	Very high	21
Represent generosity	3.30	Very high	22
Giving up battles	3.40	Very high	23
Average mean	**3.40**	Very high	

Source: Primary Data

30

Interpretation and analysis

The table above shows five means of resolving conflicts, in which arbitration which had a mean of 3.61 was greatly advocated. This is because it leaves both parties satisfied hence there will remain no issue or problem. Obviously an ideal solution is not easily attained.

Table 3
Level of administrative efficiency
n=130

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Conflict resolutions affects administrative efficiency	3.33	Very High	24
Administrative efficiency can be improved by good conflict resolution	3.40	Very high	25
Administrative efficiency is measured on student and staff behavior, number of students behavior and number of students and administrators	3.18	High	26
Indicators of conflict e are arguments and quarrels	3.52	Very high	27
Improving administrative efficiency in conflict resolution should use dominion and competition	3.51	Very high	28
Lack of training by teachers in conflict resolution	3.46	Very high	29
Corruption cases lead to favoritism leading to conflicts	3.46	Very high	30
Lack of platform for conflict resolution	3.32	Very high	31
Conflicts may be eliminated through arbitration	3.2	high	32
Careful description of job can minimize conflicts	3.3	Very high	33
Clear chains of command through clear structure minimize conflicts.	3.4	Very high	34
Establishing clear rules and procedures to meet various contingencies reduce conflicts	3.5	Very high	35
Administrators approach on conflict should be a win and lose attitude	3.1	High	36
Resource scarcity is a common source of conflict	3.1	High	37
Communication problem s source of conflict	3.1	High	38
Average	3.34	Very High	

Source: Primary data

Interpretation and Analysis

The above table shows that of administrative efficiency. This implies that administrators in conflict resolution have indicators like training of teachers, students being given a platform for resolving conflict, conflict being rampant. Other indicators like, Administrative efficiency being improved by conflict resolution and conflict affecting academic performances. All these indicators are having an average mean of 3.3; this implies that the mean ranges from 3.0-3.9 and therefore the respondents have almost the same response towards the questions alongside the level of administrative efficiency.

Relationship between the level of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency

Table 4

Significant relationship between the level of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency

Level of significance=0.05

Variable Correlated	Mean	r-value	Significance	Interpretation	Decision on null hypothesis
Level of conflict resolution	3.4	0.06	0.05	Significant relationship	Null Hypothesis rejected
Vs Level of administrative efficiency	3.34				

Source: primary data

The above table shows that the correlation between the level of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency. The average mean of the level of conflict resolution is 3.4 while the mean for the level of administrative efficiency is 3.34. This implies that the difference is 0.06 which is a very small difference. The significance is 0.05 which implies that there is a close relationship between the level of conflict resolution and administrative efficiency. This also implies that the null hypothesis is rejected.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Profile of Respondents

According to the findings, that most of the respondents are between the age of 40-49(46%), followed by those between 30-39 (43.8%) and the least are above 50 years (10%) this implies that the majority of the ages are between 40-49 years. This implies that the teachers are Marjory between the ages of 40-49 years which means that they are old enough to teach and have ample time to be there for the students. As far as gender is concerned there are more female (53.8%) than male (46.1%).

As far as level of education is concerned, 51.5% have diplomas while 48.4% have certificate. Majority of respondents have worked between 1-5 years 50.7% and 49.2% while others have worked between 10-5 years. This implies that the respondents have enough experience as teachers.

Level of conflict resolution

According to the average of the indicators, on the level of conflict resolution is between 3.0 and3.9. This implies that there is no big difference in the different indicators and the response is clearly the same. The desire to fully satisfy the interest of both parties, .a win-win approach on resolving conflict, dialoguing being encouraged, resolving conflict is done collaboratively and parties involved are well represented. The above indicators all show that the mean response is high and very high. The indicators were in form of arbitration, competition, compromise, avoidance and accommodation. All these indicators were between a mean of 3.0-3.9 which is very high. This

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A
TRANSMITTAL LETTER

TRANCSMITTAL OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (DVC)
COLLEGE OF HIGHER DEGREE AND RESEARCH

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR GITONGA JOHN JOSHUA

REG.NO.MED/24460/111/DF TO CODUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR INSTITUTION.

The above mentioned candidate is a bona fide student of Kampala international university pursuing a master's degree in educational administration and management.

He is currently conducting a field research for his dissertation entitled;

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THARAKA SOUTH DISTRICT-KENYA.

Your institution has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to this research project. The purpose of the letter then is to request you to avail him with the pertinent information he may need.

Any data shared with you will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

....

Nvemrieta R. Sumil, PhD.

Deputy vice chancellor CHDR

APPENDIX 1B
TRANSMITAL LETTER FOR THE RESPONDENTS

....

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Greetings!

I am a master in education management candidate of Kampala international university.

Part of the requirement for the award is dissertation. My study is entitled, conflict resolution ad administrative efficiency in selected secondary schools in Tharaka south district. Within the context, may I request you to participate in this study by answering the questionnaire? Kindly do not leave any option unanswered. Any data you will give shall be used for academic purpose only and no information of such shall be disclosed to others.

May I retrieve the questionnaire within five days?

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,
Mr. Gitonga John Joshua

APPENDIX II

ETHICAL REVIEW CHECK LIST

Date; august 2012

Name; Gitonga John Joshua

Reg. No. MED/24460/111/DF

COURSE: MASTERS IN EDUCATION ADMNISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

TITLE OF STUDY: CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ADMNISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THARAKA SOUTH DISTRICT KENYA.

ETHICAL REVIEWCHECKLIST

THE STUDY REVIED CHECKED THE FOLLOWING

..........Physical safety of human subject.

..........psychological safety

.........emotional security

.........privacy

.........written request for author of standardized instrument

.........coding of questionnaire

.........permission to conduct the studies

........citation of the authors recognized

RESULTST ETHICAL REVIEW

.........Approved

.........conditional (to provide the ethics committee with corrections)

ETHICAL COMMITTEE (NAME AND SIGNATURE)

CHAIR PERSON ....

MEMBER   ....

APPEVDIX III
INFORMED CONSENT

I'm giving my consent to be part of the research study of Mr.Gitonga John Joshua

That will focus on conflict resolution and administrative efficiency

I shall be assured of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality and that I will be given the option to refuse participation and right to withdraw my participation anytime.

I have been informed that the research is voluntary and that the result will be given to me if I ask for it.

Initials ....

Date ....

APPENDIX IV

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT – QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

I am a post graduate student in Kampala International University, Pursuing a Master of Education in educational Administration and management. I am conducting a study on conflict resolution and Administrative efficiency in selected secondary school in Tharaka South District, Kenya. Therefore I request you to be as honest as possible in your response to the questionnaire and give your answer to the best of your knowledge.

The information you will give will be treated with outmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purpose only. Please note that there is no right or wrong answers.

Regards

GITONGA JOHN JOSHUA

MED/24460/111/DF

Researcher Kampala International University

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please do not write your name
2. Kindly answer all questions
3. Select the appropriate answer and tick where appropriate

SECTION A- Demographic aspect of respondents

Tick (√) where necessary and cross (x) where is not applicable

Gender

_____Male

_____Female

Age range

_____between 31- 40 years

_____between 40-50 years

_____more than 50 years

What is your marital status?

_____Single

_____Married

_____Divorced

_____Widowed

Level of education

_____Certificate

_____Diploma

_____Undergraduate

_____Postgraduate

SECTION B: Questionnaire to determine the level of conflict resolution

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on methods of resolving conflicts among the secondary schools. Given that

1= Strongly Agree,   2= Agree,   3= slightly disagree

4= disagree   5= strongly disagree

Arbitration

_____Desire to fully satisfy the interest of both parties

_____Mutually beneficial to both parties involved in conflict

_____Its a win-win approach of conflict solving

_____Dialogue is encouraged

_____Its done collaboratively and the parties involved are well
   represented

_____resolve issues at some middle ground between the positions of
   held by the disputant.

Competition

_____There is desire to win at the other's expenses

_____It's a win-lose approach

_____The opinions and interested of others have little concern

_____Requires little effort on the part of the administrator.

_____Use of mental or physical power to bring about compliance

_____The long term side effect can be devastating.

Compromise

_____Involves splitting the differences fo the conflicting parties.

_____Leave no one entirely happy.

_____Involves giving up something to get something.

_____Compromising of the conflict to both parties

_____Involves sharing hence its lose-lose approach of conflict
   resolution

_____Side of payments and submission of the issue to a neutral third
   party

Avoidance

_____There is withdrawal of the administrator

_____Being unassertive and uncooperative

_____There is a delay tactic

_____There is evasion of the administrator

Accommodation

_____Submission to others at your own expenses

_____On occasion it can represent generosity

_____May mean conserving energy and resources by giving up a few battles in order to win the war.

SECTION C: questionnaire to determine administrative efficiency

_____The staff is trained to handle conflicts so as to be administrative efficient.

_____The school always train administrators on how to resolve conflicts.

_____Resolving conflict is a slow process within the administration.

_____The students in schools are given a platform for resolving conflict among themselves.

_____The School has a board to resolve conflict within the school.

_____Conflict is often resolved among students and teachers

_____Conflict is rampant in schools.

_____Conflict resolution affects administrative efficiency in secondary schools.

_____Administrative efficiency is highly depending on the way conflicts are resolved.

_____Administrative efficiency can be improved by conflict resolution.

Tick (√) where necessary and cross (x) where it is not applicable.

Administrative efficiency is measured on

_____Academic output /performance

_____Student and staff behavior /discipline

_____number of students

_____Number of teachers and administrators.

Indicators of conflicts in this institution are:-

_____Criticism and mistrust

_____Arguments due to disagreement

_____Fighting and destruction of property

_____Shouting and quarrelling in school

Improving administrative efficiency should include _____in conflict resolution

_____Use if a dialogue /integration

_____Use of domination/competition

_____Compromise /sharing

_____Avoidance

The greatest challenge faced during conflict resolution in schools is;

_____Lack of training by head teachers and staff on conflict resolution

_____Corruption cases in school which lead to favourism

_____Lack of platform for resolving conflict

Conflicts may be eliminated or avoided by

_____Carefully specifying job descriptions

_____Proper structuring of the school in order to have a clear chain of command

_____Establishing clear rules and procedures to meet various
   contingencies

As an Administrator you should employ ___ Approach during conflict
resolution in order to be most efficient

_____Win___ Lose

_____Lose ___Lose

_____Win ___ Wine

The most common source of conflict in this school is

_____Communication problems

_____Resource scarcity

_____Ambiguous rules

_____Different ventures and objectives

_____Incompatible goals

APPENDIX V

PROPOSED BUDGET

ITEM	AMOUNT IN (KSHS)
Stationary	3000
Traveling	24,000
Accommodation	10,000
Research assistant	5,000
Security	4,000
Printing	2,000
Final report writing expenses	15,000
Grand total	63,000

APPENDIX VI

TIME FRAME

EVENT	TIME
Proposal development and writing	January to February 2012
Research piloting	March 2012
Typing of the proposal	April 2012
Submission of proposal for approval	April 2012
Data collection	May to June 2012
Data analysis	July 2012
Writing final draft	July 2012
Research submission for approval	August 2012

RESEARCHER'S CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

A: PERSONAL PROFILE

NAME	:	GITONGA JOHN JOSHUA
DATE OF BIRTH	:	1st December 1982
STATUS	:	Married
PROFESSION	:	Teacher
GRADE	:	Graduate
RELIGION	:	Christian (Protestant)

B: CONTACTS : Mobile phone No +254724682342

E-mail:gitongaj30@yahoo.com

C: EDCUATION BACKGROUND

YEAR	INSTITUTION	CERTIFICATE
2010-2012	Kampala International University	MED
2008-2010	Kampala International University	BED (Science)
2003-2005	Kagumo Teachers College	DIP (Science)
1997-2000	Chogoria Boys High School	KCSE (B plain)
1989-1996	Ruungu Primary school	KCPE (B plain)

D: WORK EXPERIENCE

YEAR	STATUS
January 2006 to August 2008	TEACHER AT MUGUNAANA EDUCATION CENTRE
September 2008 to date	TEACHER AT CHUGU BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

E: WORKSHOP ATTENDED

- Conflict resolution and peace building
- HIV and AIDS awareness
- Strengthening mathematics and science education (SMASE)
- Chemistry workshop
- Biology workshop
- Guidance and counseling
- Entrepreneurship

F: RESPONSIBILITIES

- H.O.D Chemistry
- Peace club patron
- Christian Union patron
- Volleyball coach
- peer counseling
- member of academic committee in the school
- member of disciplinary committee in the school