

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE STRATEGIES USED BY  
SECONDARY PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING CONFLICTS: A  
CASE OF MIGORI COUNTY KENYA**

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**E55/CE/14281/2009**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AT KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

**JUNE, 2014**

## DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been presented to any other institution for academic credit.

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## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this work to my loving husband Jared. My children Cathy, Stephen, Laura, Dorine and Norah.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to appreciate my supervisors: Dr. Jackline K. Nyerere and Dr. George A. Onyango for their professional guidance. I also wish to appreciate the lectures at the department of Education Management Policy and Curriculum Studies at Kenyatta University for their support and dedication in their work which helped me acquire knowledge that helped me in carrying out this study.

I cannot forget to thank my District Education Officer Migori Mrs. Pamela Akello who granted me permission to carry undertake the study. I cannot forget to sincerely appreciate the work done by the secretaries Leah and Olivia who helped in typing this work. Finally I wish sincerely thank my family members for the sacrifice they made by allowing me to be away from home to undertake this study. I also wish to state that for any error of commission or omission in this study, I will solely be responsible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Contents

DECLARATION .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS .....	xi
ABSTRACT.....	xii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem .....	6
1.3 Purpose of the Study .....	7
1.4 Objectives of the Study .....	7
1.5 Research Questions.....	7
1.6 Assumptions.....	8
1.7 Limitations of the study .....	8
1.8 Delimitation of the study .....	8
1.9 Significance of the Study .....	9
1.10 Theoretical Framework .....	9
1.11 Conceptual Framework .....	11
1.12 Operational definition of terms.....	14

<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 Ideas on Conflict.....	15
2.3 Conflict Management Strategies.....	18
2.4 Reasons for conflict management in schools.....	23
2.5 Summary.....	28
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	30
3.2 Research Design.....	30
3.3 Research Locale.....	31
3.4 Target Population.....	31
3.4.1 Number of schools targeted.....	31
3.4.2 Respondents.....	31
3.5 Sampling Design.....	32
3.5.1 Schools.....	32
3.5.2 Respondents.....	32
3.6 Research instruments.....	33
3.6.1 Questionnaires.....	34
3.6.2 Interview schedules.....	34
3.7 Research validity and reliability.....	35
3.7.1 Validity.....	35
3.7.2 Reliability.....	36
3.7.3 Piloting.....	37
3.8 Data Collection Procedure.....	37

3.9	Data Analysis and Presentation .....	38
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>		<b>39</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	39
4.2	Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	40
4.2.1	Distribution of Respondents by Gender .....	40
4.2.2	Age of Headteachers .....	41
4.2.3	Level of Education .....	41
4.2.4	School Enrolment.....	42
4.2.5	Period of Service .....	43
4.3	Nature of conflicts in schools .....	43
4.3.1	Existence of conflicts in schools as reported by students .....	44
4.3.2	Types of Protagonist in school Conflicts .....	45
4.3.3	Causes of Conflicts.....	47
4.4	Strategies Employed in Conflict Management .....	50
4.4. 1	Conflict Management Strategies .....	51
4.4.2	Training in Conflict Management.....	52
4.5	Impacts of Conflict on Teaching and Learning Processes.....	54
4.6	Measures of Improving Conflict Management in Schools .....	56
4.7	Discussions .....	58
<b>CHAPTER FIVE:SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>		<b>61</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	61
5.2	Summary .....	61
5.2.1	Nature and causes of conflicts.....	62

5.2.2 Conflict Management Strategies .....	63
5.2.3 Impacts of conflicts on teaching and learning process.....	63
5.2.4 Measures of improving conflict management in secondary schools.....	63
5.3 Conclusions.....	64
5.4 Recommendations.....	65
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research .....	66
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>67</b>
APPENDIX I:TIME FRAME.....	70
APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEADTEACHERS .....	71
APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DEPUTY HEADTEACHERS AND COUNSELING TEACHERS .....	79
APPENDIX IV:QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS .....	85
APPENDIX V: BUDGET ESTIMATES.....	90
APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.....	91
APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT .....	92

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	Summary of population samples and percentages of sample sizes.....	33
Table 4.1	Gender of the respondents.....	40
Table 4.2	School enrolment.....	42
Table 4.3	Head teachers period of service.....	43
Table 4.4	Categories of conflicts in schools.....	46
Table 4.5	Frequency of Conflict in Secondary Schools.....	46
Table 4.6	Causes of Conflicts between Students and Teachers.....	49
Table 4.7	Conflict Management Strategies used by Headteachers in Secondary Schools.....	51
Table 4.8	Staff Training in Conflict Management.....	53
Table 4.9	Outcomes of conflicts as reported by students.....	55
Table 4.10	Recommendations to resolve school organization conflicts.....	57

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1.1	cooperative	conflict
theories.....		11
Figure 1.2	Conceptual	
Framework.....		13
Figure 2.1	Three organization's	view of conflict
.....		27
Figure 4.1	Students views on	existence on conflicts in their
schools.....		44
Figure 4.2	Leading causes	of conflict amongst
students.....		48

**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

B.O.G	-	Board of Governors
C.C.R.S	-	Centre for Conflict Resolution in Schools
C.M.S	-	Conflict Management Strategies
G & C	-	Guidance and Counseling
H.I.V	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
K.C.S.E.	-	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
K.I.C.D	-	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
M.O.E	-	Ministry of Education
M.O.H.E.S.T	-	Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology
P.T.A	-	Parents Teachers Association
T.S.C	-	Teachers Service Commission

## ABSTRACT

Conflict Management is a theme that has occupied the thinking of scholars of organizations for a long period of time. Educational institutions of Kenya have experienced conflicts of various nature. The climax of the conflicts was witnessed in the Kenyan Secondary Schools in 2008 when conflicts threatened security in schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies that principals in Migori District use in conflict management and how they affect performance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population was 32 secondary schools, 7823 students and 274 teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules and purposive, simple, random and stratified sampling was done to get samples. The instruments were piloted in four schools which were later not included in the final study sample. Validity of the instrument was done by giving the instruments to education management experts who advised on their validity. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through the Spearman rank order correlation. Qualitative data was coded for easy interpretation. Data was presented tables, bar graphs, pie-charts. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies and percentages through SPSS Programme. From the findings the study identified four types of conflicts in secondary schools in Migori County which included interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional and group conflicts. Competition and collaboration were found to be the most commonly used strategies employed by headteachers to manage conflicts. It was established that conflicts affected performance and various cross-cutting measures were suggested to improve conflict management which included, co-operation between parents and teachers adequate provision of resources, training in conflict management and investment in co-curriculum activities to deal with stress. The study concluded that conflicts are inevitable in schools and it is therefore important that they are managed well. The study recommended that the MoE and TSC conduct regular conflict management trainings. KICD to develop a manual on conflict management strategies and how to apply them. Future researchers should study challenges teachers face as they resolve conflicts in Migori County. Also the study recommends, further study should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of conflict management strategies in all schools across Kenya and across all levels of education

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem the purpose of the study. The objective of the study, research questions, assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter also elaborates the significance of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Conflict is a situation where there is disagreement between parties. It connotes a stressful, unhappy, distressing, depressing annoying and frustrating state of affairs (Sagimo 2002). Schemerton (2008) further asserts that conflict is disagreement between people on substantive or emotional issues. Lussier concurs with Schemerton when he states that, a conflict is a situation in which people are in disagreement (Lussier, 2009). According to Nelson and Quick (2000), a conflict is defined as any situation in which incompatible goals, attitudes, emotions, or behaviours lead to disagreement or opposition between two or more parties. It would therefore be prudent from the afore stated definitions to conclude that a conflict is a state when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and have not been agreed upon yet. This can be within one self or between people.

Conflict is a theme that has occupied the thinking of man more than any other with the exception of God and Love. According to Robbin and Decenzo (2008), conflicts in organizations are inevitable. Whenever you put two people together and arrange them into some structures (formal or informal), there is the probability that some

individuals will perceive that others have negatively affected or are about to negatively affect something that they care about. According to Nelson and Quick (2000). Today's organizations may face greater potential for conflict than ever before in history. This is due to increasing competition and globalization, differences in people in terms of personality, values, attitudes, perceptions, languages, cultural and national backgrounds. They further state that estimates show that managers spend about 21% of their time dealing with conflict. This is equivalent of one day every week. Conflict management skills are therefore a major predictor of managerial success.

Educationists equally agree that most schools now spend little time on academics because discipline consumes so much time. This has had negative impacts on the academic standards and performance. It is also widely acknowledged that violence against teachers, other students and destruction of property both in the learning institution and surrounding communities has greatly increased in past years (Onsarigo, 2007).

According to Card (1990), the first school based conflict resolution programmes began in New York City in 1972. Peer mediation programmes appeared by the early 1980's in San Francisco, Chicago and New York. In Canada, the first high school peer mediation programmes was initiated in Ottawa in 1987. Presently there are over 350. Conflict resolution programmes in schools in the United States and Programmes have been initiated in most Canadian provinces.

When the term conflict is mentioned people think about wars, fight and riots. It is important for Education managers to find ways to legitimize, critique and control controversy within the organizations life. From the United Kingdom, the “Buston” school strike was the center of the longest running strike in British History between 1914 and 1989. This was a result of the sacking of a school principal.

Because conflicts are inevitable in institutions, conflicts management skills determine how effective a leader is. Conflicts have become part and parcel of human organizations world over. According to Okotoni and Okotoni (2003), conflict management is one of the activities that headteachers are exposed to on daily basis as they deal with students, teachers, parents, stakeholders and the community at large. The common types of conflicts usually occur between the students on one hand and school authority on the other. Other forms of conflicts include intrapersonal conflicts, interpersonal conflicts among staff as well as students. High levels of conflicts include the teachers unions and the government.

Onsarigo (2007) in his study to determine factors influencing conflicts in institutions of higher learning established that it was better to expose and resolve conflicts before they degenerated into violence which undermines institutional stability and performance. The study concluded that social conflicts in education institutions demand moral authority and leadership integrity to resolve.

In South Africa, many students lost their lives due to the racial conflicts over apartheid regime. In 1976, the students protested against the of introduction Afrikaan

language as a means of instruction in South African schools through the black consciousness movement (Wanyande 1990).

In Nigeria, 1972 – 1979 and in 1990 educational institutions were in so much conflict that soldiers were deployed to schools to assist in control of students behavior, several conferences were also held on the same without much ado (Ndu, 2000). Violence, which is a sign that some conflict is present in an institution were common phenomenon at the Kenyan National Universities in 1980's and 1990's, when students went on the rampage for a wide range of reasons including power failures, cafeteria, menus and poor diet, protest against political manipulation and general discontent among students. Over the past decade, University strikes have ceased, but the trend has shifted to affect secondary schools. The unrests included arson and other violent attacks.

In 1991, boys in St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School invaded the girl's dormitory and raped more than 70 girls. During the incident, 19 female students died. In another incident in 1999, a group of boys in Nyeri High School locked up four prefects in their cubicles after dosing them with petrol and set them on fire. The worst incident occurred in 2001 when 68 students of Kyanguli secondary school were burnt to death and scores injured when their dormitory was petrol bombed by two boys (Wachira Kogotho, 2009).

Strikes in Kenya Secondary Schools became a worrying trend in 2008, when the Ministry of Education had to form a task force to investigate the cause of the violence. Several reasons have been advanced by different stakeholders as the underlying

causes of the strikes. Over-loaded curriculum, autocratic school administration, drug and substance abuse, poor living conditions, excessive use of corporal punishment, ineffective guidance and counseling services and pressure for academic Excellency among others. None of the stakeholders cited conflict management as a cause of conflicts in schools.

The teachers play an important role in curriculum implementation. The teachers have different professional qualifications. The management system in secondary schools in Kenya is structured in different levels. There are departments HODs co-ordinating activities with the same. Teachers have different qualifications and due to these differences, teachers are likely to experience conflicts as they interact.

The T.S.C. Acts, code of regulation and more recently policies have been developed to guide in the management of teachers. The recently developed policies include HIV/AIDs work place policy, policy on selection and recruitment of teachers. Post basic education policy, policy on communication and salary overpayment. However no policy has been developed on conflict management neither has a manual been developed to guide the headteachers and teachers on how to manage conflicts within the school organization.

Despite the absence of a policy on conflict management, it is important that headteachers handle conflicts in an amicable manner to avoid incidences of conflicts turning into violent situations. It is on this basis that the study focused on the strategies that were employed by secondary school headteachers to manage conflicts in Migori District and how they impacted on school performance.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

So many wish they could escape conflict in their lives, or they seem surprised when conflicts arise yet, conflict is a fact of life in any on-going relationship, whether at home, work, or social living. In Kenya, various legislation and policies serve as guidelines for management of educational institutions. The legislation documents, under the education act established in 1968 gives guidelines on registration and general management of learning institutions. The TSC act also guides on management of teachers (Republic of Kenya, 2012). There are other policies on financial management and policies on physical resource management. Despite all these policies that have been put in place to help in management of schools in Kenya reports on cases of conflict in schools keep on rising (MOE, 2008). According to a report by the ministry of Education (2008), the about 57% of secondary schools in Migori County are faced with a myriad of problems ranging from, inadequate facilities, teachers to the curriculum. Others problem include: how to cope with increased student enrolment, poor performance of students in public examinations, inadequate funding, conflicts between and among staff and students, personality factors, and role conflicts, that may hinder inter-personal relationships (MOE, 2008). Also, the organizational performance of schools in terms of academic results, sports, indiscipline and teachers attitude towards administration tends to be abysmally low.

It was noted by the researcher that a comprehensive study had not been done in Migori district to establish the conflict strategies that principals used in conflict management. It was also noted that despite the introduction of life skills education in schools and the presence of guidance and counseling teachers, conflict was still rampant in secondary school in the region. It is on this basis that the study was

conducted to establish the conflict management strategies that school principals used in Migori district and how they affected performance.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate and analyze the strategies that the secondary school heads employed in conflict management in secondary schools in Migori District and how they affected the schools performance.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To find out the nature and causes of conflicts in secondary schools
- (ii) Identify the methods employed by the headteachers to manage conflicts in schools
- (iii) To examine the impact of conflicts on teaching and learning processes.
- (iv) To establish measures that could be taken to improve conflict management in secondary schools.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- (i) What is the nature of conflicts in schools?
- (ii) What are the strategies that are employed by headteachers in conflict management in secondary schools in Migori District?
- (iii) What are the impacts of conflicts on teaching and learning processes?
- (iv) What measures that should be taken to improve conflict management in secondary schools in Migori District?

## **1.6 Assumptions**

The study was based on a number of assumptions namely:

- (i) The researcher assumed that the respondents would be co-operative.
- (ii) The researcher assumed that conflicts existed in schools.
- (iii) The headteachers applied some strategies in conflict management
- (iv) The headteachers were unaware that some problems experienced in schools were due to the strategies employed in conflict management.

## **1.7 Limitations of the study**

- (i) Migori County is made up of six districts, but the study was only limited to Migori District.
- (ii) The vastness of the county and the poor road network was also a limiting factor. Carrying out research in the whole district would require a lot of time which was not available.
- (iii) Financial constraint was also a limiting factor which would not make it possible for the study to be carried out in the whole county.
- (iv) Due to limited time it was not be possible to carry out the study in the whole county.
- (v) Due to the above listed limitations, the study was carried in Migori District only.

## **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

- (i) The study was delimited to public secondary schools in Migori District.
- (ii) Only those teachers and students present during the data collection day were included in the sample.

- (iii) Even though there were many factors that contributed to school performance, only the strategies employed in conflict management were studied.

### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

Conflicts in schools are inevitable. The study would be beneficial to secondary school managers. The study could help the school managers to establish best ways to deal with conflicts in order to improve performance. The study will enable the students and teachers to know how to manage and resolve conflicts in order to become responsible members of the school and society. The findings from this study would help the Ministry of Education to come up with ways of solving conflicts in schools and this could improve the education standard by limiting misunderstanding in schools. The Ministry can come up with policies or curriculum on conflict management. The curriculum developers could also come up with a curriculum on conflict management in schools so as to enhance peaceful co-existence within the school and violence free schools.

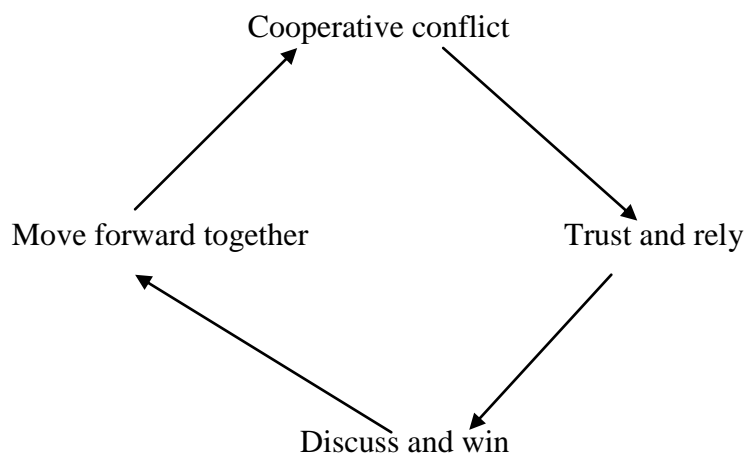
### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

The study was based on Tjosvold cooperative theory 1995. In conflict laden situations one must determine the intention of the other party. One has to speculate the other person's purpose for causing the conflict in order to respond to that behavior. A useful valid theory is critical to diagnosing present attitudes and approaches and understanding how to improve conflict management. Co-operative conflict theory is elegant and powerful. It suggests the kind of relationship that conflicting partners want to establish as well as the actions that complement these relationships.

When people believe their goals are co-operative (we are in this together, we swim or sink together), they are committed to promote each other and help each other be effective. (We must trust and rely upon each other), then they are prepared to consider each others ideas. They try to fit them to fall into mutually beneficial solution. In the school therefore, the principal should develop co-cooperativeness in conflicts to have tasks well-done.

Co-operative conflict builds people up, strengthening their relationships. It helps conflicting people reach agreements and get things done. It is the practiced way of integrating people's needs and the requirement of work. When people believe their goals are competitive or assertive, they create suspicion that people will promote their own interests at others expenses and interfere with each other. Their mistrust restricts the exchange of information and resources and distorts communication.

People often try to avoid direct discussions and when compelled to discuss, try to win and impose their positions and to avoid loosing. Competitive goals make managing conflicts very difficult and can lead to mutual frustration.



**Figure 1.1 Cooperative conflict theory**

**Source:** Tjosvold and Mary (1995)

Co-operative conflicts help people identify problems. This can enable people also identify competitive relationships, poor quality, excessive costs, injustices and other barriers of effectiveness. People can debate opposing views and dig into issues, search for information and insights and integrate instead to create solutions. Co-operative conflicts increase productivity by reducing time wasted by brooding and redoing tasks. This results into more efficient use of resources.

Through co-operative conflicts, people are able to manage change and innovations. This is because conflicts create incentives to challenges and change out-moded procedures, assignments and structures. Co-cooperativeness reduces day to day frustration through discussion and problem-solving. Managers and employees learn how their styles affect others and other competencies they need to develop. Expressing frustrations and important feeling help people accept and value themselves.

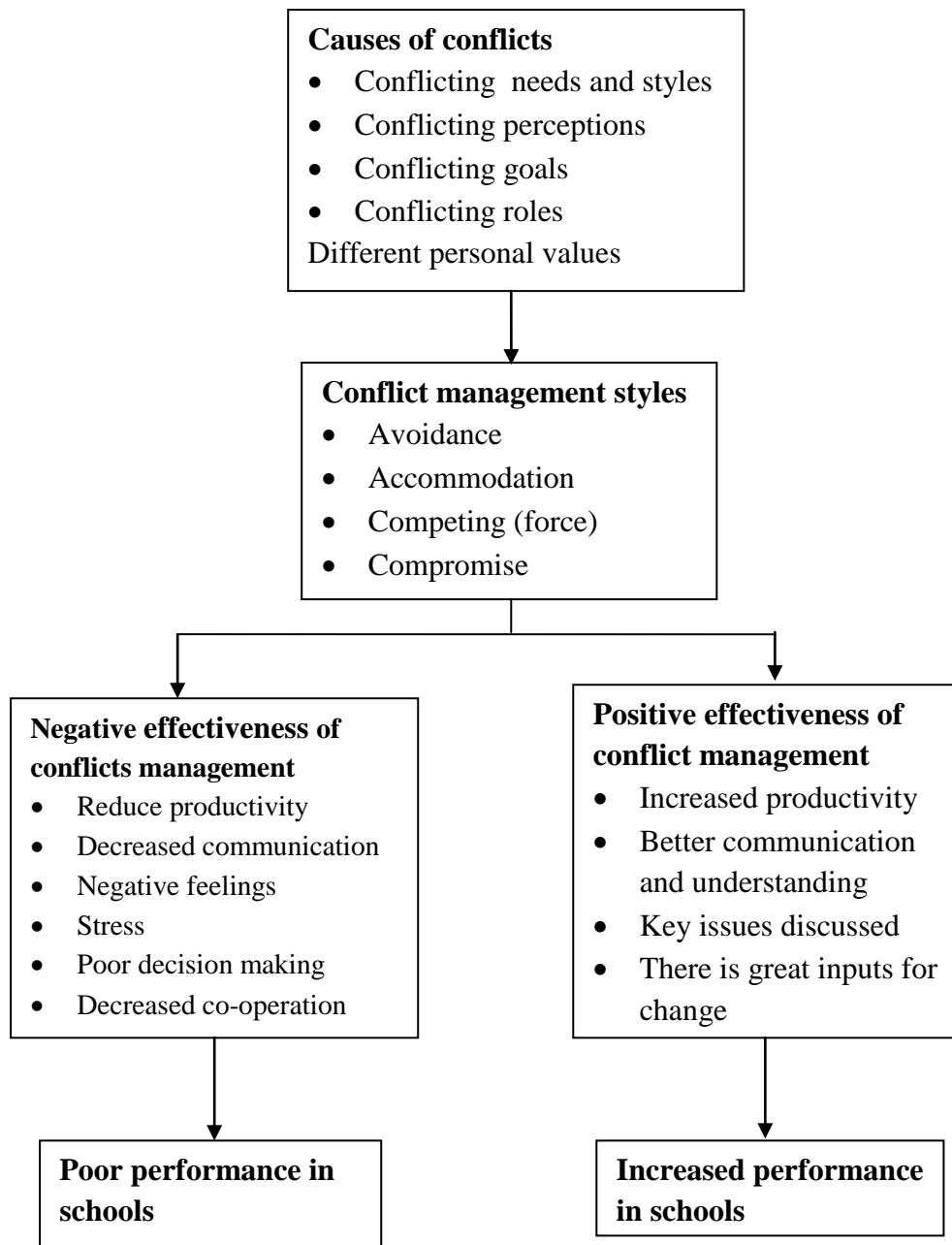
### **1.11 Conceptual Framework**

According to Orodho, (2009) a conceptual framework is a model of presentation where a researcher represents the relationships between variables in the study and shows the relationship graphically. The framework below proposes that conflicts have causes within the school organization. Due to the existence of conflicts, some conflict management strategies are employed to manage the conflicts.

The illustration shows that when conflicts are properly managed, positive effect will be realized and this will lead to high performance in schools. In a school situation, good conflict management or high degree of co-cooperativeness in conflict

management will lead to production of better ideas by teachers, non-teaching staff and students. This can also lead to use of better and innovative ideas in teaching because people will solve their problems amicably. Interest of learners will be enhanced and they will want to put more effort in learning because they feel secure leading to improved performance.

Poor conflict management on the other hand makes people to be demoralized. In school situation, where conflicts are not properly managed there is increase climate of mistrust and suspicion. Individuals concentrate on their own narrow interest. Resistance develops rather than teamwork due to lack creativity and innovativeness. This lead to poor decision-making which leads to poor performance.



**Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework – showing causes of conflicts, management strategies and their effectiveness**

**Source:** The researcher

## 1.12 Operational definition of terms

<b>Assertiveness</b>	the degree to which an individual attempts to rectify the conflict to satisfy other persons concern.
<b>Conflict</b>	a state where two or more people perspectives and opinion are contradictory.
<b>Conflict management</b>	the process of minimizing conflict
<b>Conflict management strategies</b>	conflict management styles
<b>Cooperativeness</b>	the degree to which an individual attempts to rectify the conflict to satisfy other persons concern
<b>Functional conflicts</b>	a situation in which disagreements and Oppositions (conflicts) support the achievement of organizational objectives)
<b>Dysfunctional conflicts</b>	conflicts that prevent the achievement of organizational objectives
<b>Principal</b>	Headteacher of secondary schools
<b>Violence</b>	actions, words, attitudes, structures or systems that cause physical, psychological, social or environmental damage to people or things.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers ideas on conflict management, conflict management strategies and reasons for conflict management in schools.

#### **2.2 Ideas on Conflict**

People want peaceful and quite lifestyles but where two or more people are gathered or are interacting for any length of time. Some conflict will be inevitable. Conflict is pervasive in organizations and to manage it effectively, managers should understand the many sources of conflicts (Nelson and Quick 2000). The sources of conflicts can be classified into two broad categories namely structural factors which stem from nature of the organization and personal factors which arise from differences among individuals.

According to Decenzo and Ribbins (2003), the causes of conflicts related to organizational structure include specializations, interdependence, common resources, goal differences and jurisdictional ambiguities. The personal factors on the other hand arise from individual differences such as skills endowment and abilities, personalities, perception, values and ethics, emotions, communication barriers and cultural differences.

Several forms of conflicts are identified in literature. These include inter-organizational, interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. Inter-organization's conflicts occur between two or more organizations, intergroup conflict occur between

groups or teams in an organization. The conflicts that occur within individuals are referred to as intrapersonal conflict. There are several intrapersonal conflicts and these include intrarole conflict, intrarole conflict and person – role conflicts.

When conflicts occurs between teams or groups, it can have positive effects such as increased group cohesiveness, increased focus on tasks and increased loyalty to the group. There are however negative consequences. Groups in conflict tend to develop an “us against them’ mentality whereby each sees the other team as an enemy, becomes more hostile and decreases its communication with the other group and this can heighten the potential for conflicts (Nelson and Quick 2000).

According to Schemertion (2008), there are two categories of conflicts i.e. constructive conflicts and destructive conflicts. The constructive conflicts are functional and stimulate people’s greater work effort, creativity and co-operation. This helps group achieve their objectives. Destructive conflicts are dysfunctional and prevent organization to achieve their goals. They reduce productivity, decrease cooperation and communication. They decrease communication, create negative feelings, stress and enhance poor decision making.

In a school situation, the difference forms of conflicts are bound to occur. Inter personal as well as intergroup conflicts are bound to occur. These forms may involve students and teachers, students and students, teachers to teachers, students and administration to mention but a few.

Over the years, a number of views have been advanced towards conflicts in organizations. According to Decenzo and Robbins (2001), three views have evolved. The traditional view of conflicts argues that, conflicts are harmful and evil and must be avoided. Conflicts according to this view, indicates a malfunctioning within an organization. Conflicts are associated with violence, turbulence, agitation, destructions and emotionality. Conflicts are a consequence of the management's failure to bind employees and organizations together. The headteachers who have this view about conflict, see conflicts as challenges and therefore evil. They will always want to run away from conflicts and even try to suppress or eliminate conflicts.

The human relation view of conflict argues that, conflict is natural and inevitable in any organization and as such should be accepted. Although the view believed that conflict could be beneficial, they perceived conflicts as harmful, something to be resolved once it arose. The human relations views about human nature were that people were potentially good. Trusts, cooperation and goodness are given in human nature. What induces aggressiveness and conflicts in people are the faulty policies in people and structures resulting in the distortion and breakdown in communication. The managers role in conflict resolution is restore trust, understanding and openness between parties.

Decenzon and Robbin (2000), further assert that, the current thinking is the interactionist view. In contrast to the behavioural view, which merely accepts conflicts as inevitable, the interactionist, not only accept conflicts, but also encourage it. They however, maintain that conflicts must be regulated so that it does not get out of control, producing dysfunctional consequences. The manager's task is not to

eliminate or reduce conflicts, but to manage it in such a manner that its beneficial effects are maximized.

In view of the above concepts about conflicts, conflict management should be a priority of any secondary school head teachers. School managers who engender to have a good performance must accept that conflict is part of the school occurrence. Conflicts cannot be eliminated. Although some form of conflicts may be negative. Conflict has a great deal of destruction or much creativity and positive social change. It is therefore important for head teachers to understand the basic processes of conflict so that they can maximize productive outcomes and minimize destructive ones.

### **2.3 Conflict Management Strategies**

Even in such intense conflicts as those over scarce resources, a win-win strategy can lead to an overall win for the organization. What it takes is co-operative goals i.e. the strategy that seeks a winning solution to both parties. To achieve a win-win outcome, conflicts must be approached with open-minded discussion of opposing views. According to Nelson and Quick (2000) through open minded discussion, both parties integrate views and create new solutions that facilitate productivity and strengthen their relationship and results in feeling of unity rather than of separation.

The overall strategy used in conflict management determines whether the conflict will have a positive or negative out-come. According to Decenzo and Robbin (2008) strategies of managing conflicts can be classified into two dimensions. Co-cooperativeness, which is the degree to which an individual attempts to rectify the conflict by satisfying the other persons concern and assertiveness i.e. the degree to

which an individual will attempt to rectify the conflict to satisfy his or her own concern.

Nelson and Quick (2000) emphasized that the overall strategies of conflict management are competitive versus co-operative strategies. The competitive strategy is founded on the assumption of win-lose and entails dishonest communication, mistrust and rigid position from the conflicting parties. The co-operative strategy is founded on the potential for win-win outcomes, honest communication, trust, openness's to risk and vulnerability and notion that the whole may be greater than the sum of the parts.

It should be noted that actions used in organizations to deal with conflict will lead to negative or positive out comes. When faced with conflicts some managers will do nothing about it in the hopes that the conflict will disappear. Conflicts do not disappear and individuals involved in the conflicts react with frustrations. Attempting to hide a conflict has the potential of creating more conflicts. Character assassination or attempting to label or discredit an opponent can backfire and make the individual who uses it appear dishonest and cruel. These are but ineffective ways of conflict management. One effective way of resolving conflicts is to appeal to super ordinate goals in effect, to focus the parties on a larger issue on which they both agree. This helps then realize their similarities rather than their differences (Nelson and Quick 2000).

Conflict management refers to the long-term management of intractable conflicts. It is the label for the variety of ways people handle grievances. According to UNICEF (2008) C.M. refers to the process of minimizing conflicts.

Thomas Kilmann identified five basic ways of handling conflicts in 1976. The tool involved in conflict management according to Kilmann are accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, competing and compromising. According to Decenzan and Robbin (2001) in a conflict laden situation, one must first determine the intension of the party's purpose of causing the conflict in order to respond to the behavior. One's response will depend on his level of assertiveness or co-cooperativeness.

Avoidance is a strategy also referred to as withdraw. People who avoid conflicts refuse to take a stance by mentally withdrawing or physically leaving. According to Thomas et al (1990), people in conflict do nothing to satisfy themselves or others. Schemerton (2008) agrees with Thomas and emphasizes that this style is un-cooperative, unassertive and involves down-playing, disagreement, withdrawing from the situation and staying neutral at all costs. This style is appropriate when an issue is trivial or there are more pressing issues. It is also used to let people cool down and regain perspective (Nelson and Quick 2000), A loose – lose situation occurs because the conflict is not resolved (Lussier 2009). Hughes et al (2002) also notes that this style is better used in situations where issues are trivial or more important issues are pressing.

Accommodating, also referred to as smoothing style of conflict management is high on co-operativeness but un-assertive. It involves letting the wishes of others rule.

This is smoothing over or over-looking difference to maintain harmony. According to Schemerton (2008), accommodating plays down differences and highlights similarities and areas of disagreement; it ignores the real essence of a conflict.

Accommodating is best used when you find you are on the wrong – to allow better position to be heard, to learn and to show your reasonableness and to allow employees to develop by learning from mistakes. Also used when you want to diffuse tension so that the conflict does not spill over to central work issues, (Hughes 2002).

Competing style is high on concern for self and is dominated by concern for self or individual gains at the expense of others. It is very assertive and uncooperative. The user of this strategy attempts to resolve conflicts by using aggressive behavior to get his or her own way. This also occurs in the form of authoritative command, where forcing is accomplished by higher level superior who simply dictates solutions to subordinates (Schemerton, 2008).

This is a win-lose strategy and it may be necessary to use it when unpopular decisions must be made or when quick resolution is needed in important issues that require unpopular actions to be taken. Relying solely on competing strategies is dangerous. Managers, who do so, may become reluctant to admit when they are wrong and may find themselves surrounded by people who are afraid to disagree with them. In schools where headteachers use this approach, they will be supported in their decision-even when they are wrong.

Compromise (negotiating) strategy is associated with concern for other and self. It is being moderately assertive and co-operative. It bargains for acceptable solutions in which each party wins a bit and loses a bit. (Schemerton 2000). He further says that, trade – offs are made such that each party gives up and gains something of value.

This style is normally used when the goals of the conflicting parties, who are equally powerful, reach an impasse. It is also used to achieve temporary settlement to complex issues and to arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure. Compromise are not optimal solutions. It means partially surrendering ones positions for the sake of coming to terms. The solutions reached may only be temporary and do nothing to improve relationships between parties in the conflict.

Collaborating conflict management strategy, also called problem – solving, is a win-win strategy that is high on both assertiveness and cooperativeness. According to Schemerton (2008) the conflicting parties try to resolve the conflicts by working together to find an acceptable solution. This is the only strategy that caters for a two win-win solution (Lussier 2009). Collaborating as a true problem – solving styles reconcile the underlying differences and is often the most effective conflict management style. Win-win conditions are created by eliminating the underlying causes of conflicts. All relevant issues are raised and discussed openly. Collaborating is best used when time pressure is minimal, when all parties seriously want a win-win solution.

Dean Tjosvold (cited in Nelson and Quick 2008) argues that well-managed conflicts add to organizations innovation and productivity. Steps to create a positive

organization should involve value diversity and confrontation of differences. Differences should be seen as opportunities for innovation. Open and honest confrontations bring out differences and they are essential for positive conflicts. Parties should seek mutual benefits and unite behind cooperative goals. Through conflicts, individual learn how much they depend on one another.

Employees should be empowered to feel confident and skillful. People must be made to feel that they control their conflicts and that they can deal with their conflicts and that they can deal with their differences productively. Employees should be encouraged to appreciate one another strengths and weaknesses and to talk directly about them. They should celebrate their conflict management successes and work out plans for ways they can improve in the future.

#### **2.4 Reasons for conflict management in schools**

Schools have traditionally been expected to teach children academic skills. They are also places where students interact with one another, their teachers and educational administrators. Many educators believe students behavior affect academic achievement (Bradley et al 1993). Eshwani (1993) agrees with Bradley when he says that the quality of education tends to be evaluated in terms of the number of students passing national examinations.

One of the parameters that could be affecting performance in national examinations is conflict management. Therefore, the school managers need to be informed about conflict management. Konchar (1998) argues that: schools are bad or good, in a healthy or unhealthy mental, moral and physical condition, flourishing or perishing as

the principal is capable energetic of high ideals or the reverse. Schools rise to fame or sink to obscurity as the greater or lesser principals have charge of them. It is said that the school is as great as the principal, because of everything in the school i.e. the plant, the staff the curriculum methods and techniques of teaching, human relationships, bear the impress of his/her personality.

Konachar further asserts that the principal occupies a very significant office in any education system. To be effective he needs among others drive, energy, vision, personality and management in conflict resolution techniques. The school is composed of different categories of people who should be co-ordinated so that they work as a co-operative team so as to achieve the educational goals. It is important to note that conflicts are part of life and therefore part of school life and hence are evitable in a school system.

According to Art Bell (2002), there are six reasons for conflict in the workplace, conflicting needs, conflicting styles, conflicting perceptions, conflicting goals, conflicting pressures and conflicting roles. Nelson Quick (2000) elaborates further on causes of conflicts in organizations when he argues that conflicts are pervasive in organizations and to manage it effectively managers should understand the many sources of conflicts. He classifies causes of conflict into two broad categories i.e. structural factors and which stem from the nature of the organization and the way in which work is organized and the personal factors, which arises from differences in individuals. Different personal values and predictable personal policies also contribute to conflicts in organizations Brett (2000).

The principal is the Kingpin in school management. He should be a leader and should be sensitive to conflicts in the school and apply appropriate styles in managing them or empower the personnel in the school with conflict management skills. Cahir et al (2001) say that the major student – student conflict are due to inadequate school resources such as furniture, space in the dormitories, friendship problems over boy-girl relationships. The students conflicts can be exposed in name calling, teasing, exclusion, rumours and fighting. Teacher – student conflict include unruly behaviours among others.

Teachers – Students' conflicts could also be due to failure to achieve objectives due to heavy work –load or teachers neglecting their duties. Teacher conflict occurs when teachers have different agenda.

According to Griffin (1994) a principal's public and professional reputation will depend more on the standards of stability in his school than on any other single factor i.e. good stability brings good results in every field of education endeavor. He further states that a principal who lets any form of conflict out of his hands is risking trouble. Should an instance of mass conflict occur the wise principal will resist the temptation to find a scapegoat, be it the MOE, the BOG, PTA, politicians, parents and staff, but will instead take along hard look at his own conflict management methods. If his school becomes unstable in any way, then it implies that foundations of management in conflict resolutions were not established in the school and the blame is on the principal.

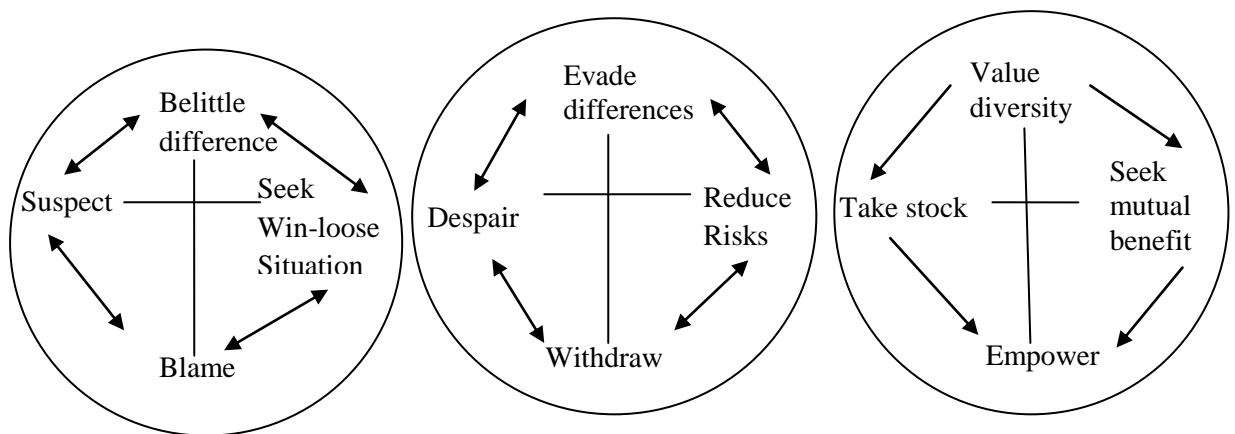
According to Vanslyck and Stern (2001), students need to know to manage and resolve conflicts if they are to become responsible members of the school and society. Some educators believe that competence in conflict resolution can lead to increased social and academic achievement in the long run. They further assert that negative interactions may lead to learning problems because students spend time fighting and arguing and have little time or energy for academic pursuits. Schools frequently appear to be centers of tensions, a manifestation of problems in the society or community.

It is important for the school administrators to be able to recognize conflicts, to view its constructive as well as destructive potential and to apply conflict management styles in a practical way. Conflict management should be a priority of any school manager who aspires to have good performance.

The headteacher should know who the conflicting players are in words of the Decenzo and Robbin (2008), if you choose to manage a conflict situation, it is important that you take your time to get to know the players i.e. who is involved in the conflict? What interest does each present? What are each player's values, personality, feeling and resources. Your chances of success in managing a conflict will greatly be enhanced in your view through the eye of the conflicting parties.

It is the duty of the headteacher to create a conflict – positive school. This is echoed in Dean – Tjosvold as cited in Nelson and Quick (2000). When he discusses procedures for making conflicts positive. He argues that a well-managed conflict adds to organizations innovation and productivity. A teacher who adopts Tjosvold

procedure for making conflicts positive will take a positive view of conflict in contrast to negative view. Tjosvold argues that organizations who view conflicts as negative take a win – loose competitive approach to conflict or avoid conflicts all together. A positive view of conflict leads to win-win solutions. Figure 2.1 illustrates these approaches to conflict.



**Figure 2.1 Three organizations view of conflict**

**Source:** Tjosvold. The conflict positive organization 1991 (pages 41/42)

It should also be noted that the headteacher who takes Tjosvold's view should take steps towards creating a conflict – positive school. He should be sensitive to value diversity and should confront differences. Differences should be seen as opportunities for innovation and diversity and should be celebrated. Open and honest confrontation brings out differences and they are essential for positive conflict.

He/she should seek mutual benefits and unite behind co-operative goals. Conflicts have to be managed together. Through conflicts, individuals in the school will learn how much they depend on one another. The head should empower the personnel in

the school to feel confident and skillful. People must be made to feel that they control their conflicts and that they can deal with their differences productively.

The personnel in the school should be encouraged to appreciate one another's strengths and weaknesses and to talk directly about them. They should celebrate their conflict management success and work out plans for ways they can improve in the future.

## **2.5 Summary**

It is noted that conflicts are inevitable at the workplace and any institution due to conflicting needs, styles, perceptions, goals, pressures and roles. A number of strategies are employed to manage them.

The competing style is high in concern for self, which is characterized by a drive to maximize individual gains even at the expense of others. The collaborating style in contrast, constructs solutions to conflicts to meet the needs of all parties involved. The avoiding strategy is low in concern for self and disengages from conflict. The accommodating sacrifices self interests to satisfy the needs of others. Compromising theoretically straddles the mid-point between cooperativeness and assertiveness and involves making concessions to arrive at resolutions of conflict.

In Kenya, violence was a common phenomenon in schools, especially in the 1990's and 2000's. The government through the Ministry of Education introduced several policies and Acts to help school heads in managing schools, Guidance and Counseling departments were introduced in schools to cater for learners with psychological

problems. Policies on HIV/AIDs, selection and recruitment of teacher's, policy on communication and salary overpayment among others were formulated.

It is noted however, that no guidelines have been provided to school principals on how to manage conflicts. The study sought to identify the conflict management strategies employed by heads in conflict management and how they affect school performance in examinations.

To create a conflict positive school, the headteacher needs to view conflicts as positive and apply the strategies depending on the prevailing circumstances under which the conflict has occurred. This is because conflicts have both negative and positive outcomes and a conflict-free school is a dying school. Through conflicts, people become innovative as they learn new ideas. A win-win approach should be encouraged in conflict management in schools.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the description of the methods that were applied in carrying out the research study or the procedure that will be used in conducting the study. The chapter discusses the research design, research locale, target population, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The design in this study was descriptive survey. This is a method of collecting information by interview or administering a questionnaire to sample of individuals. The design was chosen because it describes the affair or affairs as they are or as they exist. The survey method is the most frequently used method for collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions habits and a variety of other social issues, and hence appropriate in this study.

Descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact-finding, but many often result in the formulation of important principle of knowledge and solutions to significant problems (Kombo and Tromo, 2006). Descriptive approach is designed to obtain information concerning the current phenomena and whenever possible draw conclusions from facts discussed. Descriptive survey produces both qualitative and quantitative data. This being a social study, the design made the researcher able to identify strategies that principals used in conflict management in Migori District - Migori County.

### **3.3 Research Locale**

The study was carried out in Migori District Migori County. The district was one of the districts in Nyanza Province and it is one of the District in Migori County. The district was divided into three divisions. Suba East, Suba West and Suba Central. The area of the district was approximately 493km<sup>3</sup>. The district had 35 secondary schools, 32 public and three private schools. The district headquarters was about 20 kms from Tanzania border. The area was chosen because of the decline in performance among secondary schools in Migori District. In addition, there have been cases of school mismanagement and poor student retention which might be due to conflicts arising within the school management (District Education Officer's Office).

### **3.4 Target Population**

The target population is the set of elements that the researcher focuses upon and to which the results are obtained by testing the sample should be generalized (Orodho, 2009). The following describes the target population of this study.

#### **3.4.1 Number of schools targeted**

All the 32 secondary schools in the District were targeted. The secondary schools that were be included were those who had presented students for K.C.S.E for the last three years. This included one boy school, 3 girl schools and 8 mixed schools.

#### **3.4.2 Respondents**

The target respondents were focused on all the principals of the 32 secondary schools, 274 teachers and 7853 students.

### **3.5 Sampling Design**

Sampling design refers to how cases will be selected for observation. The sampling designs that were used in the study were stratified and simple random sampling.

#### **3.5.1 Schools**

Stratified sampling was used to select six high performing and six low performing schools in K.C.S.E in the district. The identification of schools was based on K.C.S.E mean score. The high performance were those who had scored a mean of 5.0 and above, while those with M.S.S lower 5.0 than were be considered low performances.

After the schools have been clustered into high performing and low reforming schools. Simple random sampling was used to select six schools in each cluster. Twelve schools were selected because this was 30% of the total school population.

#### **3.5.2 Respondents**

The respondents included the 12 headteacher, 12 deputy headteacher 12 Guidance and counseling heads of department selected through stratified sampling.

Form three and four students were used because they had taken long in the school and hence familiar with the procedures used in conflict management in their schools.

Random sampling was used to select a total of 710 students.

**Table 3.1 Summary of population samples and percentages of sample sizes**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Categories of sample</b>	<b>of Sample size</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Schools	32	Low Performing	6	38
		High Performing	6	
Teachers	274	Headteachers	12	13
		Deputy	12	
		Headteachers		
		Guidance and Counselling	12	
Students	7853	Boys	393	10
		Girls	393	

### **3.6 Research instruments**

The data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Questionnaires are sets of questions used to obtain important information about a population. According to Kasome (2006) questionnaires consist of questions and statements carefully designed for collecting data from people.

Interview schedule is a set of questions that an interviewer asks when interviewing respondents. It is an oral administration of a questionnaire or interview schedule (Mugenda 1999). According to Orodho (not dated), it can be defined as any instrument for assessing individual differences along one or more dimensions of behavior.

### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from the deputy headteachers guidance and teachers and students. Questionnaires were used because they allow the researcher to reach a large sample within a limited time. It also ensures confidentiality and hence gathers more candid and objective replies. In questionnaires, questions are standardized and everyone gets the same questions. This ensured that big variations in answers given by respondents were minimized. The questionnaires used to get information from 12 deputy principals, teachers and students, guidance and counseling teachers.

The Questionnaires were filled by the deputy principals and guidance and counseling teachers contained questions on what conflicts management was frequency of conflicts between the personnel in the school. How the conflict management strategies are used, views on the contribution of conflict management to performance.

The students answered questions on common conflicts in schools, causes of conflicts; results of conflicts, conflict management strategies and how conflict management strategies contribute to performance.

### **3.6.2 Interview schedules**

This involves oral or face to face interaction between the interviewee and the respondent. It involves oral questions by the researcher. It will involve preparation of an interview guide or schedule.

Interviews guard against the respondents confusing the questions since the interviews can clarify the questions thereby helping the respondents to give relevant responses (Mugenda 1999). There is a possibility of the researcher elaborating the importance of the research. The researcher can get more information by using probing questions. The interviews yield higher responses rates. Mainly because it will be difficult for the respondent to completely refuse to answer questions or to ignore the interviewer.

The interview schedule was prepared for the headteachers because they are sometimes very busy and may not get time to respond to questions on questionnaires. They answered questions on what a conflict is, whether the schools have experienced conflicts, how often schools experience conflicts and conflict management styles applied.

### **3.7 Research validity and reliability**

#### **3.7.1 Validity**

In research, it is fundamental to get accurate information. This implies that what is used to get that information must also be accurate. The concept of accuracy is what is called validity (Kasomoko, 2006). According to Mugenda (1999), validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from analysis of the data actually represents the phenomena under study.

The instrument was valid depending on how the data collected was related in terms of how effective the items were sampled significant aspects of the purpose of the study (Orodho, 2005). Content validity of the instruments was used to measure the degree to

which the items will represent specific areas covered by the study. Therefore, content validity of the instrument was determined by colleagues and experts in research who looked at the measuring technique and coverage of specific areas (objectives) covered by the study. The experts then advised the researcher on the items to be corrected. The corrections on the identified questions were incorporated in the instrument hence fine tuning the items to increase its validity.

### 3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to how consistent a research instrument or procedure is. It implies the stability or dependability of an instrument to provide information (Kasomo, 2006). There are four methods of measuring reliability. These include: test – retest method, split – half method, equivalent form method and internal consistency method.

The researcher however used the test – retest method. The method involved administering the same instrument twice to the same group of subjects. In this case, the developed questionnaires were administered to four schools in the District, which were later not included in the actual study.

The completed questionnaires were analyzed. After a period of two weeks, the same questionnaires were administered to the same respondents and again the score were analyzed.

A comparison of answers made in the two tests was analyzed. Spearman rank order

correlation  $\rho = 1 - \left( \frac{(\sum d_i^2)}{n(n^2 - 1)} \right)$  was employed to compute the correlation coefficient

in order to establish the extent to which the contents of questionnaires were consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument was administered. The reliability was found to be 0.85, 0.89 and 0.79 for headteachers questionnaires, G & C and students respectively. According to Orodho (2009), a correlation coefficient  $r$  of about 0.75% should be considered high enough to judge the reliability of the instrument.

### **3.7.3 Piloting**

After drawing the questionnaire, it was important to pilot the questionnaire. This was done with a small representative of sample schools, but which were not to be included in the survey.

Piloting was done to ascertain whether the questions were measuring what they were supposed to measure. This was done to find out whether the answers to questions were giving appropriate information.

The researcher checked whether the wording to questions was clear i.e. whether everyone understood the questions. Ambiguities were checked i.e. check to find out whether the respondents interpreted the questions in the same way, and in the right way.

Piloting can also help in drawing coding form for open ended questions.

## **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher collected an introductory letter from the department of education management at Kenyatta University to enable her get assistance during data

collection. The researcher sought permission from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MOHEST) to allow her carry out research in the secondary schools in Migori District. The researcher sought permission from the Provincial Director of Education and the District Education Officer respectively. The researcher sought permission from head teachers from the selected schools to enable her collect data from the respective schools by visiting the schools. She agreed with the head teachers on the dates on which to collect the data. Data collection was done using the collection instruments identified in the study.

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Usually after data collection the researcher ends up with a huge data which does not make sense. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), data analysis refers to examining what has been collected and making interference and deductions. The data was categorized into variables such as ‘causes of conflict and conflict management strategies coding of the variable was then done to convert the data into forms that permit accurate statistical analysis. The data collected was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies, charts and percentages. Frequencies and percentages easily communicate research findings to majority of readers. Frequencies easily show the number of subjects in a given category. Tables and pie-charts were used to present the data findings. Data were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter gives presentation analysis and interpretation of data which was collected through the use of questionnaires and interview schedules. The general objective of this study was to investigate the strategies used by secondary school principals to manage conflicts in secondary school in Migori District, Migori County Kenya. The findings of the research were organized and presented in line with the research questions. The data was calculated and analyzed using the SPSS program.

The respondents in the study included 710 students, 10 headteachers, 12 deputy headteachers and 9 head of guidance and counseling in the sampled schools. This is 91% success in data collection in view of the 834 respondents who were targeted by the research initially.

The secondary data mostly constituted information on past performance of students in various subjects and student enrolment numbers. The primary data was collected from various respondents who included head teachers, deputy head teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers and students.

Analysis of data was carried out using descriptive statistics after converting the collected data to writing by use of pre-determined coding categories related to the research questions so as come up with useful conclusions and recommendations. The findings were analyzed and presented under related headings. Results were shown

using descriptive statistics, with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Questionnaires and Interview schedules were administered in the 12 schools where the research was carried out. In distribution, 786 questionnaires were given to students. 24 were given to Deputy headteachers and guidance and counseling teachers. 12 interviews schedules were administered to headteachers. Items on the questionnaires which investigated strategies that were used by secondary school heads to manage conflicts were tallied into frequencies and presented in tables and charts.

## 4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

### 4.2.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender, and the responses obtained are summarized in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Gender of the respondents**

Respondent Category	Female		Male		Total
	n	%	N	%	
Headteachers	7	70	3	30	10
Deputy Headteachers	5	41.7	7	58.3	12
G& C teachers	5	55.6	4	44.6	9
Students	400	56.3	310	43.7	710

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender. It indicates that majority (70%) of headteachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers (55.6%) and students (56.3%) used in the study were females.

In the overall analysis, most of the respondents (427, 57.6%) were female, and 314 (42.4%) were male. There was female dominance because there are more girls secondary schools than boys in Migori County and even mixed schools are dominated by girls, similarly there are more female teachers than male. It was not therefore possible to base the results on gender. But the proportions of males and females are nearly the same, indicating that gender of respondents was evenly represented in the sample.

#### **4.2.2 Age of Headteachers**

Among the respondents who participated in this study, 70% of the headteachers were aged between 40-49 years while only 30% were over 50 years.

#### **4.2.3 Level of Education**

##### **4.2.3.1 Headteachers' level of Education**

Of the 10 headteachers that participated in this study, 70% of them were holders of a Masters degree while only 30% of them have a Bachelors degree.

##### **4.2.3.2 Students' level of Education**

As indicated before, a total of 710 students participated in the research. This involved only Form 4 and Form 3 students. The researcher chose these group because of the longevity of their stay in their respective schools, and therefore, ability to give a more

comprehensive and accurate picture of conflict in the school. Of the 710 respondents, a total of 374 students (52.6%) were in Form 3 while 336 students (47.4%) were in Form 4.

#### 4.2.4 School Enrolment

From the initial demographic information, a total of 12 schools were sampled for this study. Below is a breakdown of the enrolments in the different schools based on the information provided by the 10 headmasters that were interviewed.

**Table 4.2 School Enrolment**

Level of Enrolment	No. of Schools	
	n	%
Less than 300 students	5	42
301 – 600 students	5	42
More than 600 students	2	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

This indicated that most of the schools were two or more streamed schools. The MOE recommendation for a stream in secondary school in Kenya is 40 students. Most of the schools had more than 300 students i.e. 5 had between 301 – 600 students, while two had more than 600 students. Since most people have different interest and needs in a situation where there are more students than the level of conflict are also likely to be given high.

#### 4.2.5 Period of Service

The research sought to establish the period that the headmasters had served in that capacity. This was meant to gauge the length of experience. This is shown in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Headteachers period of service**

<b>Year of service</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
5-10	3	30.0
10-15	5	50.0
15-20	1	10.0
20-25	1	10.0

From Table 4.3 above, the results of the findings indicate the majority of the headteachers (50%) have been in those positions for a period of 10-15 years while only one head teacher from those interviewed has held that position for between 20-25 years.

This meant that majority of headteachers had held the position of headship for a long duration. This also meant therefore that they had experienced many conflicts which had used different strategies to manage. They had interacted with many students' teachers and support staff and hence experienced in conflict management.

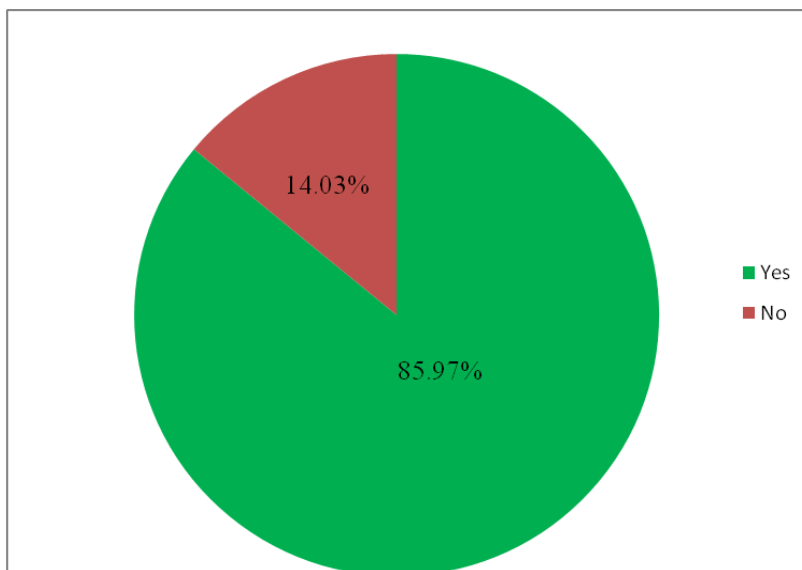
#### 4.3 Nature of conflicts in schools

The first objective of this study was to determine the type and causes of conflicts in secondary schools in Migori County. To understand the nature of conflicts in schools,

the study interrogated a number of aspects. These include existence of conflicts, type of protagonists and causes of conflicts between different protagonists.

#### **4.3.1 Existence of conflicts in schools as reported by students**

The study sought to establish whether conflicts do occur in schools, from the perspective of various key stakeholders, namely teachers, students and the administrators. From the analysis, all the headteachers, deputy headteacher and guiding and counseling teachers agreed that conflicts do exist in the school. However, there was a split of opinion on the part of the students. This result was presented as shown in the figure 4.1 below.



**Figure 4.1 Students' Views on Existence of Conflicts in their schools.**

Although the majority of students (85.9%) indicated that there were conflicts in their respective schools, 14.1% (101) students indicated that conflicts did not occur in their schools.

Conflicts occur in everyday life within a person when faced with problems and possible options within either a formal or informal setting. According to M.Pendharkar (1995) people who interact have different opinions; there may be inadequate resources, different culture and different styles of working.

These differences create conflicts in organizations. Because of these therefore, there will always be conflicts in schools whether people have been trained in conflict management or not.

Being in conflict is therefore not bad or abnormal, but the most important thing, is for the schools to train students and teachers to be in a position to resolve conflicts when they do occur. Researchers searching for a way to reduce negative interactions and increase positive ones find that school based conflict management and mediation programmes can provide structures for students to acquire positive interaction skills (Vanslyck and Stem, 1991). He further says that improved social skills can help students achieve success at school and in the job market.

#### **4.3.2 Types of Protagonist in school Conflicts**

The research established that the conflicts that occurred in the sampled schools come in varied forms. In terms of protagonists, conflicts usually occurred between the following categories as described in table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 Categories of conflicts in schools**

<b>Categories of conflicts</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Students and students	377	50.9
Students and teachers	76	10.3
Teachers and teachers	67	9.0
Teachers and School administration	97	13.1
Teachers and Parents	49	6.6
Parents and School administration	75	10.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings from the table 4.4 above reveal that majority conflicts exist among the students themselves as reported by majority of the respondents (50.9%). This implies that students' rivalry was common due to personality indifferences, socio-economic status and personal background factors. However, conflicts between teachers and parents were found minimal in secondary schools. This is represented by only 6.6% of the respondents. This implies that parents and teachers in schools rarely interact as far as teaching and learning is concerned.

Further, the research interrogated the rarity or severity of conflicts between the aforementioned protagonists. The respondents were expected to indicate whether the frequency of the conflicts between the protagonist could be measured in one of the following scales: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. The following are the results;

**Table 4.5 Frequency of Conflict in Secondary Schools**

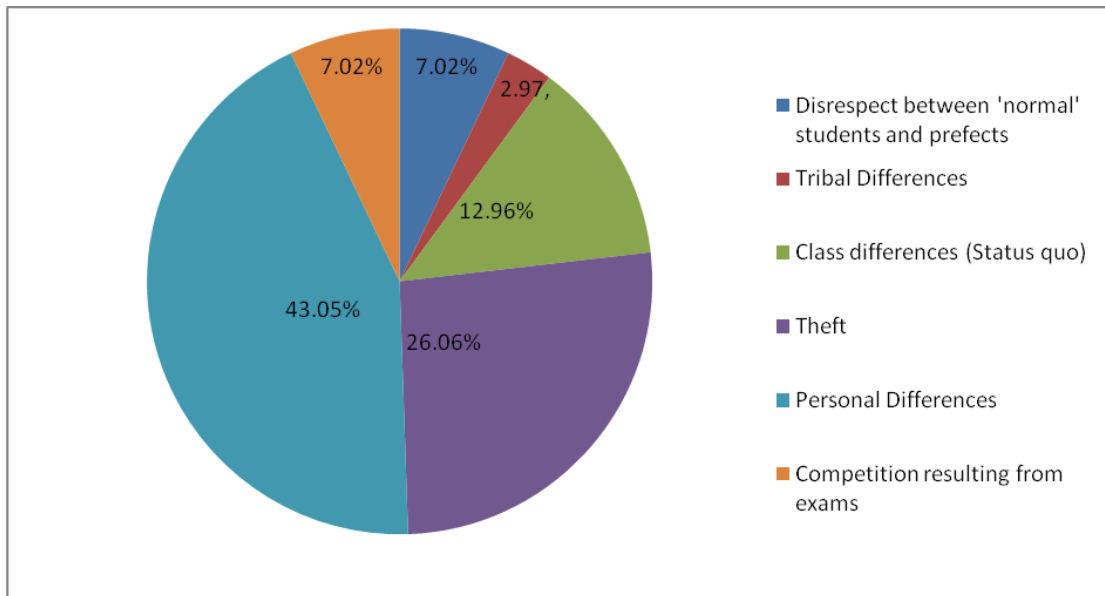
Nature of Conflict	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Intrapersonal	424	57.2	221	29.8	0	0.00	96	12.9	741	100.00
Interpersonal	457	63.1	62	8.4	80	10.8	59	8.0	142	100.00
Emotional	80	10.8	224	30.2	216	29.1	221	29.8	362	100.00
Group	71	9.6	165	22.3	155	20.9	350	47.2	362	100.00

Table 4.5 reveal four basic types of conflicts in secondary schools in Migori County. The study established that the most frequent type conflicts were interpersonal conflict manifested through disagreement with colleagues over issues or policy followed by intrapersonal conflicts which include problems emanating from personality. The third most frequent type was emotional conflict resulting through verbal outbursts. Group conflicts rarely occurred as reported by 20.9% of the respondents, this manifested through having difficulty in sharing resources or depending on others. The study therefore identified four main types of conflicts in schools which include intrapersonal, interpersonal, emotional, and group conflicts in this order.

#### **4.3.3 Causes of Conflicts**

From the findings of the study, it was revealed that there were various causative factors that fueled conflicts in secondary schools in Migori. These ranged from individual and institutional shortcomings to other factors that were beyond the control of the key stakeholders in the school system. The causes of these conflicts also largely depended on the profile of the protagonists. For instance, the cause of conflicts between two students was very different from the causes of conflicts

between a student and a teacher. Causes of conflicts amongst students are illustrated in figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2 Leading causes of Conflicts amongst students**

From figure 4.2, personal differences amongst students was one of the key causes of conflicts with 43% of the students indicating as such. This was followed by theft (26%). Tribal differences (3%) registered the lowest incidences as a leading cause of conflict. Disrespect between students and student leaders contributed to 13% of the causes of conflicts. Conflicts between students are likely to occur because student come from different background hence have different view, needs, and values.

These factors are likely to cause conflicts that may lead to violence if not properly addressed. This concurs with Madhuri (1995) who found that a learning environment of safety and stability was key to the academic advancement of children and the creation of this environment was challenged by conflict between students incompatible learning styles repression of community social conditions and the inability of teachers.

To avoid violent conflicts teachers need to develop conflict management abilities, strategies that effectively maintain appropriate social behavior, make schools safer. Safe schools are more effective learning environment.

#### 4.3.4 Leading causes of Conflicts between Teachers and Students

The study did a composite analysis that factored the reasons given by the students, guidance and counseling teachers and the deputy headteachers. This means the views of 741 respondents were analyzed and generalized. The following are they Key responses;

**Table 4.6 Causes of Conflicts between Students and Teachers**

<b>Reasons for conflicts</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
General unruliness (absconding from class, shirking assignments etc)	400	54
Teachers asking for sexual favours from students	22	3
Negative attitude of students towards some subjects	126	17
Harsh/Corporal punishment by teachers to errant students	52	7
Lack of forums for students to ventilate their grievances about the teachers	141	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table 4.6, general unruliness on the part of students in the key reason for conflicts between teachers and students, at 54%. The errant students break school rules fully aware of the consequences and prohibitions. However, when their mistake attracts punishment from the teachers, it becomes a bone of contention. In any normal school setting, teachers exercise the school's authority directly on student either by

way of interacting in the classroom, as boarding masters/chaperons or as teachers on duty.

In addition, 19% of the respondents reported that conflicts were caused by lack of forums for students to ventilate their grievances about the teachers and 17% of the respondents were of the opinion that conflicts were caused by negative attitudes of students towards some subjects. This could be due to poor teaching approaches by the teachers, or due to inadequate resources. Only 3% of the conflicts were caused by teachers asking for sexual favours of the students.

Interestingly, the respondents in this question did not list lack of training in conflict management as a cause of conflicts. This means that there has been adequate training as indicated previously, with 77% of students and 58% of staff members answering in the affirmative on the question of whether they had undergone training or not. The challenge lies on implementation and application of the gained knowledge on conflict management.

#### **4.4 Strategies Employed in Conflict Management**

The first concern of the second objective was to identify the conflict management strategies used in secondary schools in Migori County. The study also measured the level of usage of each strategy (on a high to low scale) from the same scale and the number of teachers who use the strategy and the level of use of the strategy by each teacher.

#### 4.4.1 Conflict Management Strategies

The results are summarized in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Conflict Management Strategies used by Headteachers in Secondary Schools**

Conflict Management Strategy	High		Moderate		Low		Total	
	N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
Compromise	2	20	3	30	5	50	10	100
Accommodation	1	10	4	40	5	50	10	100
Competition	7	70	2	20	1	10	10	100
Collaboration	6	60	1	10	3	30	10	100
Avoidance	2	20	7	70	1	10	10	100

Five main conflict management strategies used in the secondary schools the county were identified. Table 4.7 shows conflict management strategies and their degrees of usage by head teachers in the secondary schools in Migori County. From the interview schedules, headteachers reported that management strategies commonly used in the secondary schools were; avoidance, collaboration, competition, compromise, and accommodation. The most popular management strategy was competition which was used by 70% of the teachers interviewed followed by collaboration 60%. The third most popular strategy was avoidance 20%, then compromise 20% and the least common management strategy was accommodation 10%.

This finding can be explained from the views of Zartman (2000) and Cohen (1997) who argue that avoidance is a negative method because it does not solve the conflict. Rather, as Cohen (1997) argues, avoidance only prolongs conflicts till the time the person takes stock of the situation and tries to solve the problem. The findings also agrees with the views of Whetten and Cameron(2002) that avoiding is not paying attention to the conflict and not taking any action to resolve it, as such it cannot solve a conflict. Hence, schools that tended to over rely on it ended up having too much conflicts among the students.

Nebgen (1998), like Kelley (1979), directs her research on conflict management toward the educational administrator. She, however, focuses on specific strategies as used in educational settings. She lists four conflict management strategy categories: avoidance techniques, use of force, use of a third party, and rational approaches. Avoidance techniques (withdrawal, isolation, procrastination, and smoothing) usually are a temporary solution. The use of force may resolve a conflict, but the lingering feeling of dissatisfaction may breed another quickly. The use of a third party is effective in many situations, such as conflicts caused by communication. The effectiveness of the use of rational approaches to conflict management varies according to the cause of the conflict.

#### **4.4.2 Training in Conflict Management**

This study sought to find out whether training could be a determinant of effective conflict management. This established the training levels of staff and students in the secondary schools as reported below.

#### 4.4.2.1 Staff Training

The staff members who were part of the research were asked whether they had attended any conflict management courses, since this is a challenge that they encounter on a daily basis. The staff members included the headteachers, deputy head teachers and guidance and counseling teachers. The findings are indicated in table 4.4.

**Table 4.8 Staff Training in Conflict Management**

Staff Member	Trained		Not Trained	
	n	%	n	%
Headmasters	7	70	3	30
Deputy Headmasters	7	58	5	42
Guidance & Counselling Teachers	4	44	5	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>

From table 4.4, the majority of the headmasters 70% had undergone the training in conflict management as compared to the other two respondent categories of deputy headteachers and Guidance and Counseling teachers, 58% and 44% respectively. This could have a positive impact as conflict management in the school. The headteacher could act as a referral centre for conflicts the teachers could not handle. This could also be an indication that the headteachers could be overwhelmed with conflicts as the deputy and G & C teacher in most schools were not in position to handle conflicts due to lack of skills hence leading to application of some skills due to time pressure.

Taking into consideration the current challenges facing schools including economic challenges and increase of class sizes, leaders must help their peers to resolve the

interpersonal conflicts that prevent them and their schools from being the best they can. The headteacher is the chief management officer in the school system, he oversees, co-ordinates and supervises the activities of the other staff hence the need for headteacher to be knowledgeable in such issues as conflict management.

#### **4.4.2.2 Student Training**

A total of 554 students (78%) indicated that they had undergone training on how to manage conflicts amongst students, while 156 students (22%) said that they had not received the training. It is noteworthy that in spite of the high number of students who have received the training, cases of reported conflicts remain high. This therefore indicates that it is not the training that determines the existence of conflicts or not. Conflicts will always be there as long as people continue interacting.

The findings concur with Robin and Decenzons (2008) view that conflicts is inevitable. The most important thing is that they should be well managed so that they do not get into the crisis level.

#### **4.5 Impacts of Conflict on Teaching and Learning Processes**

This study sought to establish how conflicts influence teaching and learning process in secondary schools. This was based on a myriad of problems like inadequate facilities, how to cope with increased student enrolment, poor performance of students in public examinations, inadequate funding and personality factors that may hinder inter-personal relationships. The table below represents the outcomes of conflicts as reported by the students.

**Table 4.9 Outcomes of conflicts as reported by students**

<b>Possible outcome of conflicts in schools</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Inadequate funding	340	47.9
Low students' retention	74	10.4
Poor performance of students	95	13.4
Lack of effective communication	201	28.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings from the above table indicate that conflicts in secondary schools majorly result to inadequate funding in school; as reported by majority (47.9%) of the students. This implies that the conflicts between head teachers and staff led to poor school budgeting, thus making working funds to be inadequate. A good number of students (28.3%) also reported lack of effective communication in their school organizational structure as an outcome of conflicts in secondary schools while 13.4% gave the opinion of poor performance of students in the schools. Proper conflict management could have enhanced the trust between the learners and the teachers, where problems were highlighted, exposed areas of weakness were addressed, and modification of policies made. This could have relieved anxiety, suspicion and stress hence leading to the improved performance particularly in the low performing schools. In addition, conflicts in schools affect the relationship between teachers and students leading to lack of cooperation. However, only 10.4% of the students reported low students' retention in secondary schools.

These findings coincide with the findings of Hocker and Wilmot (2005) who emphasized that Schools frequently appear to be centers of tension; on occasion, they

are perhaps a manifestation of problems in the community. In their study, the respondents reported that the communication system among the school community has not been effective and they define conflict as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals. According to Hocker and Wilmot (2005), certainly conflict cannot be fully discussed without linking it to communication. Thus they note that communication and conflict are related in three ways; communication behavior often creates conflict, reflects conflict, and is the vehicle for the productive or destructive management of conflict.

#### **4.6 Measures of Improving Conflict Management in Schools**

From the findings of the study, it was revealed that various cross-cutting measures were suggested by students, headteachers, deputy headteachers, and counselors towards improving conflict management in schools. Table 4.8 gives the suggestions.

**Table 4. 10 Recommendations to resolve school organization conflicts**

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Frequency</b> <b>n=31</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Proper communication	3	9.7
Encourage participative discussion	3	9.7
Elimination of mistrust	1	3.2
Amicable conflict resolution measures	4	12.9
Teachers and support staff should be obedient	3	9.7
Encourage transparency	2	6.5
Teachers be trained on conflict management	4	12.9
Encourage students practice high level of maturity	1	3.2
Student leaders to take control in absence of teachers	3	9.7
Train principals on conflict management	2	6.5
Democratization of all elective posts to reduce conflicts	3	9.7
Draw a clear distinction of roles of each organization	2	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

13% of the teachers responded that teachers needed to be trained on conflict management and use of amicable conflict resolutions measures, about 10% of the respondent teachers, responded that proper communication was supposed to be enhanced and democratization of all elective posts to be done to reduce conflicts. Participative discussions to be encouraged. About 7% of the teachers responded that there was need for principals to be trained on conflict management transparency to be encourages especially in utilization of schools funds and roles of each stakeholder in the school needed to be spelt.

#### **4.7 Discussions**

The analysis set to try to answer the researcher questions and to meet the research objectives. When analysis on nature and causes of conflict was done, it was establish that the nature of conflicts consisted of intrapersonal, interpersonal, emotional and group conflicts. These were caused by competition among students, personal differences, unmet needs, unruliness poor communication and lack of forums for students to their views, among others. This concurs with Madhir (1995), who found that learning environment of safety and stability was key to academic advancement of children, but the creations of this environment was challenged by conflict between students, incompatible learning styles repression of community and social conditions. The potential for conflicts in schools therefore exists. The challenge for schools and the wider community is to find ways to manage conflicts constructively so that those involved can learn and grow from the experience.

On strategies employed by principals to manage conflicts, it was established that the principals use five strategies to manage conflicts in Migori District. These were

collaboration, competition, compromise, accommodation and avoidance, but the most popular strategies used were competition and collaboration. The least used strategy was avoidance, compromise and accommodating. This concurs with Kamau (2008), who established that headteachers largely used the integrating approach to manage a wide range of conflicts, but used avoidance and compromise to manage certain conflicts. The fact that, headteachers have been trained in conflict management means they have ideas on different conflict management strategies. Thomas and Kilman (1970), conflict management model should be adopted by headteachers to manage conflicts. He suggests that Conflict management strategy should be applied depending on the situation, problem, people interest, time available and should mend the damaged working relationship.

This is also consistent with Ramani et al (2010), who maintained that specific conflicts require specific strategies since their route causes may be unique. The study established that conflict management had an impact on teaching and learning process. Positive conflict management enhanced academic excellence, promoted mutual understanding and co-operation between stakeholders. Negative delayed or incomplete resolution of conflicts affects school performance as it waste time and energy that could have been used to teach students and productively channeled towards enhancing academic excellence. Conflicts strain relationship between teachers and students. This in turn affects the level of interaction which negatively impact on the teaching and learning process.

The finding supports Morgans (2010). Where he asserts that conflict resolutions education has increase students performance, co-operation skills, self-control the

development of language skills, perspective awareness and general understanding of the school institution.

Investigations on measures that could be taken to improve conflict management in secondary schools in Migori District revealed several suggestions. According to headteachers, sensitization on the need for greater co-operation between parents and school administration. They suggested that provision of adequate facilities to students could minimize triggers on conflicts. Majority of the deputy headteachers and teachers suggested that there was need for headteacher and Guidance and counseling teacher's capacity to be enhanced on conflict management skills.

This is consistent with Ramani et al 2010, who observed that the best way of resolving conflicts, is by educating stakeholders on best ways of resolving conflicts starting with student peer educators and guidance and counseling teachers.

There should be creation of platforms and forums where groups could air their grievances. This could help stem the problems of built up anger and frustrations. Democratize elective posts to reduce conflicts. Conflicts affect teaching and learning process in Secondary schools in Migori District. Conflicts were inevitable in schools since students and teachers had different needs, views and values. The headteachers should not only be knowledgeable in conflict management and should put the knowledge into practice and when this is done, the schools will experience less conflicts and do well in academics and many activities and areas.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study, draws conclusions and makes suggestions for further research.

#### 5.2 Summary

The main objectives of the study were to find out the nature and causes of conflicts in secondary schools, the strategies employed by the principals in managing conflicts, to examine the impacts of conflicts on teaching and learning and to establish the measures that could be taken to improve conflict management in secondary schools in Migori District. To achieve these objectives, Literature review on concepts of conflicts, conflict management, strategies and reasons for managing conflicts in secondary schools was done.

The researcher used the descriptive study design which is qualitative in nature. This approach was appropriate since it enabled the researcher to assess the people's opinions, attitudes and affairs as they existed on the ground and the demographic information on conflict matters that were affecting the headteachers as they managed conflict.

Out of the total sampled population a total of 720 (95%) of students 10 (83%), 12 (100%) deputy headteachers and a9 (75%) of the guidance and counseling. Students and teachers were interviewed. The data was analyses qualitatively and quantitatively guided by the research objectives.

The qualitative analysis was done using responses from the respondents while quantitative analysis was done using frequency tables, absolute percentages and charts.

Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data was done by the use of frequency tables, percentages and graphs. Critically drawing observations from the analysis which are guided by the research objectives, results were obtained based on the elements of the research questions.

### **5.2.1 Nature and causes of conflicts**

The study established that conflicts are prevalent in schools, and identified four types of conflicts in secondary schools in Migori County as interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional and group conflict. Interpersonal conflicts in an organization like a school are often not so visible. Of all the types of conflicts, interpersonal stands out as the most common type that really need managed for peaceful coexistence in a school organization. The study also explored causes of conflicts and established that the main causes of conflicts are competition, incompatibility of needs and interest, miscommunication, unmet expectations, personality differences and contradictory opinions. This study found unmet expectations; contradictory opinions, personality difference and miscommunication always cause conflicts in most of the school. However, incompatibility of needs and interest and competition rarely caused conflicts in schools.

### **5.2.2 Conflict Management Strategies**

This study sought to find out management strategies used in schools. The management strategies commonly used in secondary schools as identified by this study were avoidance, collaboration, competition, compromise and accommodation. The most popular strategy was competition, collaboration and avoidance. Compromise and accommodation were least common.

### **5.2.3 Impacts of conflicts on teaching and learning process**

All the respondents agreed that if conflicts were not properly and quickly managed and resolved, they would have adverse effect on the teaching and learning process. Improper conflict management increased the number of disciplinary matters on the school officials, drop out rate and suspension rates among the learners. Poor conflict management discourages the development of language skills, perspective awareness and general understanding of the school institution. This led to a decrease in social and academic achievement in the short run and harmonious world in the long run. Negative social behavior was related to low academic achievement.

### **5.2.4 Measures of improving conflict management in secondary schools**

For effective conflict management in secondary schools in Migori County such measures were suggested by the respondents as, sensitization on the need for greater cooperation between the parents and the school administration. There should be creation of platforms and forums where different groups could air their grievances; the capacity and competence of Guidance and Counseling teachers should be strengthened in all secondary schools and extra curricula activities to be adequately invested in. This would give them opportunity to relax, steam off and deal with any

developing stress/strain. Schools should ensure that there are as many outdoor and indoor games as possible to meet the varied interest of their students.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The study concluded that conflicts were inevitable in schools and it is therefore important that they are managed well. The study established that conflicts of various natures were prevalent in schools and included that four types of conflicts were prevalent namely interpersonal, intrapersonal emotional and group conflicts. The study established that interpersonal conflicts were the most type of conflicts reported by respondents, then intrapersonal emotional and group conflict in that order.

Conflicts don't occur from thin air but have causes; the main causes of conflicts in secondary schools were unmet expectations, contradictory opinions, personality differences, and miscommunication, incompatibility of needs and interests, and competition. It is important to note that unmet expectations, contradictory opinion, personality differences and miscommunication were the major causes of conflicts in schools while, incompatibility of needs and interest and competition were the least causes of conflicts.

Conflict management affects performance. Proper conflict management enhances trust among teachers, students and the administration. Positive conflict management enhances academic excellence; promote mutual understanding and cooperation among stakeholders.

The study established that avoidance, compromise and accommodation strategies had significant effects on the magnitude of conflicts in secondary schools in Migori County. But competition and collaboration strategies did not have significant effects on the magnitude of conflicts in secondary schools in Migori County.

The study concludes that the conflict management strategies used in secondary schools in Migori County is effective, but the most effective were collaboration and competition since it was used by most of headteachers in the schools.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

In respect to the findings summarized in 5.2, and the conclusions drawn in 5.3, the study makes the following recommendations:

The Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission conduct regular management training seminars to educate teachers on the verity of conflict management strategies and their strengths and weaknesses as well as where and when they can be used. Otherwise, the tendency to rely on a few techniques for all situations will continue and this is not healthy for the schools.

There was a mismatch between the effectiveness of a strategy and the use of the strategy. Most poor strategies were found to be overused while the effective strategies were found to be underused. This was due to failure of staff to correctly diagnose a conflict and determine the right method for resolution. The study recommends that Kenya Institute of curriculum development develops a manual on identification of conflicts and their appropriate management strategies.

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

A school set up involves parents, learners, teachers and the non teaching staff. The present study has only dealt with teachers and students in relation to conflicts and their management in secondary schools. Since parents and non teaching staff play an importance role in school, further research should focus on how they manage conflicts with either teachers or students.

Further research should be done in secondary schools to investigate obstacles teachers face as they manage conflicts among students.

This study was localized in secondary schools in Migori County, yet conflicts are widespread and cover all levels of education. The study recommends that a study be conducted to determine the effectiveness of conflict management strategies in secondary schools across Kenya and across all levels of education in Kenya.

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**APPENDIX I****TIME FRAME**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
January – April 2011	Collecting of information, writing and typing of draft proposal.
April – May 2011	Collecting and typing of final proposal and submission
May – August 2011	Data collection and analysis
August 2011 – January 2012	Drafting the research report and making corrections
February 2012 – March 2012	Re-submission of research report

## APPENDIX II

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEADTEACHERS

#### SECTION A

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender.....
2. Age .....

Between 20 – 29

Between 30 – 39

Between 40 – 49

Above 50

3. What is your marital status

Married ..... Single ..... Widowed .....

4. What is your level of education?

Masters .....

Bachelors .....

Other (specify) .....

5. Number of years as headteacher.

.....

6. Category of school.

(i) National ..... Provincial ..... District .....

(ii) Type of school

Boys ..... Girls ..... Total .....

7. Enrolment

Boy ..... Girls ..... Total .....

8. What is the performance in K.C.S.E in the past three years (Give the mean score)

Year	Mean Score
2008	.....
2009	.....
2010	.....

**SECTION B**

**Conflict management strategies**

9. (i) What are conflict

.....  
.....

(ii) Are conflicts positive or negative

.....  
.....

(iii) Give reasons for your answer

.....  
.....

10. Have you had an opportunity to attend courses in conflict management? (tick as appropriate)

Yes       Always       No       No response     

11. Do you experience conflicts in your school? Tick as appropriate

Yes       No     

12. If the answer to question 5 is yes, what are the types of conflicts experienced?

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

iv) .....

13. What are the major causes of conflicts among the groups of people below (list according to order to importance).

**a) Among the teachers and teachers**

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

iv) .....

**b) Among the students and students**

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

iv) .....

**c) Among the teachers and support staff**

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

**d) School administration and parents**

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

iv) .....

8. How often does conflict occur between the following categories of people (tick to

level of occurrence) Never (1) Hardly ever (2) Somewhat (3) Always (4)

	1	2	3	4
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Students/teachers				
b) Teachers/teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Teachers/students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Teachers/school administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Teachers/parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) School administration/parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. How often do you use following conflict management strategies to resolve conflicts

between the following categories of people.

Never (1) Hardly ever (2) Somewhat (3) Always (4)

**a) Students and students**

	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins

a bit and loses a bit				
iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Asking some students to let wishes of others rule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Helps students find solutions that satisfies all parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>b) Teachers and students</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4</b>				
j) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony				
ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a bit and loses a bit				
iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Asking one party to let wishes of others rule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Helps students find solutions that satisfies all parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Teachers and Headteachers**

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony				
ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a bit and loses a bit				
iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Let wishes of teachers rule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Find solutions that satisfies all parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**c) Students and parents**

**3 4**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony				
ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins a bit and loses a bit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Asking one party to let wishes of others rule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Helps them find solutions that satisfies all parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**d) School administration/parents**

**3 4**

- i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony
- ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins a bit and loses a bit
- iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all
- iv) Letting wishes of parents to rule
- v) Find solutions that satisfies all parties

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony				
ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins a bit and loses a bit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Letting wishes of parents to rule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Find solutions that satisfies all parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. What are the challenges you face in conflict management?

i)

.....

ii)

.....

iii)

.....

iv).....

**SECTION C**

**How conflicts affects performance in school**

11. How does the conflict management affect performance in your school?

i)

.....

.....

ii)

.....

iii)

.....

12. Give any three suggestions on how conflict management can be improved in secondary schools.

i)

.....

.....

ii)

.....

iii)

.....

**THANK YOU!**

### APPENDIX III

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DEPUTY HEADTEACHERS AND COUNSELING TEACHERS

I am student at Kenyatta University undertaking a research project and is requesting for your assistance through responding to this questionnaire.

The aim of this study is to access the conflict management strategies employed by headteachers in management of conflicts in secondary schools. The information you will provide will help in developing knowledge on how conflicts can be managed to improve performance in school. Please respond to items in this questionnaire.

1. Have you attended any course in conflict management

Yes  No.

2. (a) Are you aware of any conflicts that occur in your school (tick as appropriate).

Yes  No.

(b) If your answer to question one is yes how common are the following responsible for causing conflicts between people in your school.

Never (1)      Hardly ever (2)      Somewhat (3)      Always (4)

	1	2	3	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Allocation of resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ii) Communication

iii) Structure of the organization

iv) Interpersonal relationships

3. How often do you handle conflicts between the following categories of people in your school (tick according to level of occurrence)

Never (1)      Hardly ever (2)      Somewhat (3)      Always (4)

	1	2	3	4
i) Students and students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Students and teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Teachers and teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Teachers/School administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Teachers and parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi) School administration and parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How often do the headteacher in your school use the following strategies to manage conflicts between the following categories of people in your school (tick as appropriate)

Never (1)      Hardly ever (2)      Somewhat (3)      Always (4)

a) **School and students**

	1	2	3	4
j) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins

a bit and loses a bit

iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all

iv) Asking some parties to let wishes of others rule

v) Helps find solutions that satisfies all parties

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**b) Teachers and students**

**3 4**

i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony

ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins

a bit and loses a bit

iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all

iv) Asking one party to let wishes of others rule

v) Helps find solutions that satisfies all parties

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**c) Among teachers**

**3 4**

i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony

ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins

a bit and loses a bit

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all

iv) Asking one party to let wishes of others rule

v) Helps them find solutions that satisfies all parties

**d) Teachers and support staff**

**3 4**

**1 2**

i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony

ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins  
a bit and loses a bit

iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all

iv) Asking one party to let wishes of others rule

v) Helps students find solutions that satisfies all parties

5. What are the major signs of existing of conflict among the following people  
in your school (please list)

**i) Among students**

a) .....  
.....

b) .....  
.....

c) .....  
.....

d) .....  
.....

**ii) Between teachers and students**

a) .....  
.....

b) .....  
.....

c) .....  
.....

d) .....  
.....

**iii) Among the students**

a) .....  
...

b) .....  
...

c) .....  
...

d) .....  
...

6. Please give the mean standard score of your school performance in K.C.S.E in the five years.

7. Do you believe that conflict management could be responsible for the performance? Tick as appropriate.

i. Strongly disagree

ii. Disagree

iii. Somewhat

iv. Agree

v. Strong agree

8. In your view how can conflicts be effectively minimized in your school?

.....  
....  
.....  
....

**THANK YOU!**

## APPENDIX IV

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

I am a student at Kenyatta University undertaking a research, and is requesting for your assistance through responding to this questionnaire.

The aim of this study is to access the conflict management strategies employed by headteachers in management of conflicts in secondary schools. The information you will provide will help in developing knowledge on how conflicts can be managed improve performance in school. Please respond to item in this questionnaire.

#### SECTION A

Background information

Name .....

(i) Sex of the student (tick as appropriate)

Boy

Girl

(ii) Class .....

#### SECTION B

1. Information on conflicts that occur in your school.

Yes

No

2. How common are conflicts between the following groups of people in your school.

Not sure (1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Always (4)

	1	2	3	
4				
i) Students and students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
ii) Students and teachers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
iii) Teachers and teachers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
iv) Teachers/School administration	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
v) Teachers and parents	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
vi) School administration and parents	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

4.What are the common causes of conflicts between

**a) Students and students**

- i) .....
- ii) .....
- iii) .....
- iv) .....

**b) Students and teachers**

- i) .....
- ii) .....
- iii) .....
- iv) .....

**c) Students and administration**

- i) .....
- ii) .....
- iii) .....

iv) .....

**d) Students and support staffs**

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

iv) .....

5. How often do students express conflicts in the following ways

i) Name calling

ii) Teasing

iii) Fighting

iv) Rumours

v) Reporting to the authority

vi) Strikes

6. How often does the head teachers manage conflict between students.

i) Ignores conflict to maintain harmony .....

ii) Looks for solutions in which each party wins a bit and loses a bit. ....

iii) Dictating solutions which must be accepted by all. ....

iv) Asking some students to let the wishes of other rule. ....

v) Helps students find solutions that satisfies all parties.

.....

7. How good is performance of students in KCSE in your school.

Very Poor    Average  Good

Excellent

8. Performance in exams is influenced by conflict management. Do you agree with this statement?

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Somewhat  Agree  Strong

Agree

9. (a) Have you been trained on how to manage conflicts between yourselves as students?

Yes  No

(b) If yes the answer to question 9 (a) is yes, how frequently is it done through the following ways.

i) Life skills teachings .....

ii) Guidance sessions

.....

iii) Through class meetings

.....

iv) Through open school forums .....

10. Suggest three ways that the school management would use to make conflict management more effective in your school.

i)

.....

ii)

.....

....

iii) .....

**THANK YOU!**


**APPENDIX V: BUDGET ESTIMATES**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Total cost</b>
Collection of preliminary information	4 X 2000	8,000.00
Typing services and correction	4 X 1000	8,000.00
Photocopy services	4 X 40 X 2	320.00
Binding of 4 copies of proposal	1,000	1,000.00
Piloting and data collection	8,000	8,000.00
Typing and correction services	4,000	4,000.00
Photocopy services	2,000	2,000.00
Binding 4 copies	6,000	6,000.00
Miscellaneous	6,000	6,000.00
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>43,200.00</b>	<b>43,320.00</b>

## APPENDIX VI

## RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Telephone: 254-020-2213471, 2241349  
254-020-310571, 2213123, 2219420  
Fax: 254-020-318245, 318249  
when replying please quote  
secretary@ncst.go.ke

P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA  
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/012/1540**

Date: **6<sup>th</sup> November 2012**


Mary Akinyi Odhong  
Kenyatta University  
P.O.Box 43844-00100  
Nairobi.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority dated *1<sup>st</sup> November, 2012* to carry out research on "*An analysis of the strategies used by secondary principals in managing conflicts: A case of Migori County, Kenya,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in ~~Migori County~~ for a period ending **31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012.**

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioners and the District Education Officers, Migori County** before embarking on the research project.

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



**DR M.K. RUGUTT, Ph.D. HSC.**  
**DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY**

Copy to:

The District Commissioners  
The District Education Officers  
Migori County.

*"The National Council for Science and Technology is Committed to the Promotion of Science and Technology for National Development".*

# APPENDIX VII

## RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

**CONDITIONS**

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.

2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.

3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.

4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.

5. You are required to submit at least two (2) / four (4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.

6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT**

**GPK6055mt10/2011 (CONDITIONS-see back page)**

**PAGE 2** **PAGE 3**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:** **Research Permit No. TICST/RCD/14/012/154**

**Prof. Dr. Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution** **Date of issue**

**Mary Akinyi Odhongo** **6<sup>th</sup> November, 2012**

**of (Address) Kenyatta University** **Fee received**

**P.O. Box #3844-00100, Nairobi.** **KSH. 1,000**

**has been permitted to conduct research in**

**Location**


**District**

**County**


**on the topic: An analysis of the strategies used by secondary principals in managing conflicts. A case of Migori County, Kenya.**

**For a period ending: 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012.**

**Applicant's Signature**



**Secretary's Signature**



**National Council for Science & Technology**