

**HEAD TEACHER'S ROLE IN MANAGING CONFLICT AMONG TEACHING
STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THIKA DISTRICT, KIAMBU
COUNTY, KENYA**

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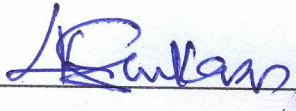
**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or for any other award.

 Date 5/12/12

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This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the university supervisors:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role that head teachers in Thika District play in managing conflict among the teaching staff. The objectives of the study were: to identify the main sources of teachers' conflicts in public secondary schools; to determine methods used by head teachers to manage teachers' conflicts; to identify the challenges facing head teachers in managing teachers' conflicts and determine the effects of staff conflict. Four research questions covering the main sources of conflict, methods of managing the conflicts and their effects guided the study. Literature on conflict and its management from an international to national perspective was reviewed to give useful insights. The study applied the descriptive survey design. The target population was 1576 teachers and head teachers. The sample consisted of 14 head teachers, 178 teachers and the District Human Resources Officer (DHRO). Data were collected using questionnaires for head teachers and teachers and an interview schedule for the DHRO. The sample was selected through stratified random sampling. The researcher sought out the views from a panel of three experts to assess instrument validity. The split half method was used during the pre-test to establish the internal consistency of the instruments and also calculate the reliability of the instruments. Reliability was found to be 0.89 for head teachers and 0.94 for teachers. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. The findings revealed that conflicts identified includes allocation of resources, very close supervision of teachers, the grievance handling mechanism and also unsatisfactory Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results. The findings also revealed that head teachers, largely, use the integrating approach to manage a wide range of conflicts. The compromising and avoiding strategies have also been used to manage certain conflicts. The challenges identified include inadequate information to assist both the head teachers and teachers in settling disputes. The study concluded that the conflicts identified by head teachers and teachers come from different sources. Some conflicts occur due to lack of capacities to manage conflicts by both the teachers and head teachers. Other conflicts are from outside the school like impractical/difficult policies from the ministry; the expectations of good performance from the various stake holders. The effects of conflicts on inter-personal relationships were identified in the study. These include lack of team work; poor morale and posting of poor results. The challenges identified include inadequate information to assist both the head teachers and teachers in settling disputes. The study concludes there is need to empower and increase the capacities for the head teacher and teachers to manage conflicts in secondary schools. The study recommends that teacher education curriculum at all levels of training, should include conflict management to empower teachers to handle the same when in the field and that all head teachers should undergo a mandatory conflict management course. Further research on the effectiveness of conflict management strategies in secondary schools and the strategies of managing students' conflicts in secondary schools should be conducted.