

The Role of Mobile Phone Technology in Resolving Communal Conflicts in Mandera County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented global adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is rapidly changing the way people are communicating in solving problems. For several years now, the role of ICTs has become important in the way people construct their relationships in conflict resolution. Yet little is known on the dynamism of this interaction. It is not clear how mobile technology has contributed toward conflict resolution, and this study will contribute to the knowledge on the role of mobile telephones in conflict resolution. The purpose of this study was to explore how the mobile phone technology contributed in resolving communal conflicts in Mandera County, Kenya. This study was guided by three theories: conflict transformation theory, diffusion of innovations theory and social representation theory. The conflict Transformation Theory is adopted as the main theory of analysis. The main idea of this theory is transforming negative conflict into constructive conflict, deals with structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict. This study adopted a descriptive survey. The population for this study consisted of 301 employees in ICT and security department where stakeholders in technology and security sectors and the public. Primary and secondary data was analysed according to the objectives. Primary data was derived from questionnaires formulated to target employees in ICT and security department. The data analysis included qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data was summarized and categorized according to common themes and was presented using frequency distribution tables, graphs and charts. Content analysis was used mostly to arrive at inferences through a systematic and objective identification of the specific messages. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results confirmed that short message service, social media platform, instant messaging applications, and video conferencing play a role in resolving communal conflicts in Mandera County. The study concludes that Short Message Service, Social Media Platforms and Instant Messaging Applications can be used conflict such as communal conflicts. Video Conferencing can be used to solve conflict such as relationship conflict, arises from differences in personality, style, matters of taste, and even conflict style as well as conflict in the workplace like task conflict. County government of Mandera must come up with ways of incorporating mobile phone technologies such as Short Message Service, Social Media Platforms, Instant Messaging and Video Conferencing on matters conflict resolution. The study recommends that the County Government of Mandera in collaboration with the National Government need to come up with agencies to regulate the use of social media as a medium to communicate in times of conflict since they are sometimes prone to misuse.

Key Words: Mobile Phone Technology, Resolving Communal Conflicts, Mandera County

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1. Introduction

The world has experienced an unprecedented growth in advancements in information and communication since the 1990s. According to International Telecommunications Union (ITU, 2017), by the end of 2018, globally there were more than seven billion people with mobile phones which is about 97% penetration rate an increase from 738 million subscriptions in 2000 which is about two billion people from developing nations (ITU, 2017). ICTs are generally described as including a wide range of technologies used to access, generate and share information: from traditional broadcasting media such as television and radio to newer kinds of technologies such as computers, mobile phones, and networked communication systems. This has certainly altered the way society is structured (Murray, 2018). Information and communication technologies are without a doubt a decisive aspect that should influence the outcome of war or conflict. The adoption of ICT in the Iraqi war was seen as the revolutionary change needed in relation to how conflict is perceived, spheres of the conflict and the organization of the actors. The dominance of ICTs in modern life are generally recognised to be useful for the management of crises and conflict (Leaning & Meier, 2009), as well as for their monitoring and prevention (Mancini, 2013; Stauffacher et al., 2005). This implies and involves improved communication that increases transparency and trust-building, which in turn may facilitate negotiations by building pressure from the bottom-up, as became evident in Bosnia's 'baby-lution', a movement which was the end to an extraordinary situation that had left all children born without an identity number. Not having an identity number means that these babies cannot, theoretically, access public healthcare. More worryingly, they cannot be given travel documents, an issue that sparked the protests after a three-month-old girl was unable to go to Germany for essential medical treatment because she didn't have a passport.

The adoption of ICTs is one of the possible ways of transforming conflict dynamics and enhancing post-conflict peace building (Bratic and Schirch, 2007; Mannergren, 2013), or the commonality of problems affecting everyday life, as in Israel's and Palestine's case of the Parents Circle Families Forum (Castelnuovo, 2013). Today, Facebook and Twitter can be far more catalytic for peace initiatives, since 'the bottom-up spontaneity and authenticity as well as the power of citizen is with the grassroots' (Hilmerfab and Chabalowski, 2008). Turkey's 'Gezi park protests' in the early summer of 2013 are indicative of that empowerment, but even more important is the Turkish government's decision to form a 6000-member social media team to promote the ruling party's perspective, after months of trying to discredit and control Facebook and Twitter (Albayrak and Parkinson, 2013). Along those lines, the use of new media has also opened up possibilities of dealing with conflict in non-conventional ways. Strategies, such as digital storytelling (Burgess, 2006), the facilitation of grassroots participation and network building (Hattotuwa, 2004) can indeed be said to open up new channels of participation for previously excluded actors, while at the same time not serving as a panacea against exclusion and discrimination due to limitations in accessibility as well as inherent power dynamics.

For more than a decade, information and communication technologies have been in used to preach peacebuilding situations. However, its focus by researchers and practitioners has only started recently. The New Technologies for Development and Peace special collection was launched in 2013 while earlier academic work focused on the impact of what is called the "digital diasporas" thus the use of cyberspace by diasporic groups (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Turner, 2008). Moving beyond diasporas, an argument by Larrauri and Kahl is that ICT can give people a voice and help them connect which allows for new methods of engaging in peacebuilding situations. They propose that technology can have a four-fold outline of functions that can be used in peacebuilding and peacebuilding programmes. These include

engagement, gaming, data processing and communication which can be employed in the promotion of peaceful attitudes, exploration of early warnings, influencing policy as well as fostering collaboration (Kahl & Puig Larrauri 2013). Building on early practical assessments (Mancini & Reilly, 2013), Welch et al (2014) identify five key ways ICTs have been conceptualised in governance building contexts: as a way to generate data; share information; as a management tool; an alternative space and, finally, as an empowerment tool.

The security sector represents an important element of peacebuilding and an EU priority, through its military and civilian missions. Importantly, there is also emerging practice among police forces of using new technologies and data streams; with a long history of how technological developments have changed the way policing is delivered (Manning, 2008). ICT is currently being used across a range of different areas of policing. These include, but are not limited to: as a tool to reach out to the public; as an evidence gathering and processing device and as an operational oversight planning and management instrument such as the CopCast app piloted in South Africa and Brazil (Siqueira & Muggah, 2015). In Africa new ICT has had an influence on when and how people know about certain events and their choice of response. How people engage in the world has also been affected by the internet and mobile phones usage and respond to emergencies including conflicts With ICT usage expanding rapidly in the developing countries particularly in Africa, there are new ways to participation, accountability and engagement emerging. More people are able to participate in practices which impact the societies they live in arising from the opportunity to use tools provided by ICT. The opportunity for engagement in new methods and opportunity for participation has enhanced new ways for resolving conflicts. To empowerment people locally thus participating in efforts to resolve conflict has been the most important creation of ICT innovation and opportunities. By offering tools that enhance collaboration, giving a stronger voice to communities and transforming attitudes ICT has greatly contributed to conflict resolution (Larrauri & Kahl, 2013). Other empirical work have focused on specific tools, such as the Voix des Kivus project in Eastern Congo which used cell phones for its crowd-seeding scheme (Van der Windt & Humphreys, 2014).

While the digital divide is indisputable, ICTs (and mobile technologies specifically) have an incredibly fast penetration of societies that are currently considered 'developing' (BBC News, 2011). For that matter they offer the potential for empowering citizens through open spaces for participation and enhancing local ownership on matters to do with peace formation and conflict transformation. Western actors have over time been advocating for democracy inclusivity and human rights yet in terms of peacebuilding, statebuilding policies and development applications have been unequal (Richmond, 2009). One must also bear in mind that ICT does not have the capacity to benefit all post-conflict regions due to a number of obstacles, such as lack of widespread use, often combined with technological illiteracy, and lack of electricity. This tends to be associated with the 'digital divide', which has reinforced universal inequalities in relation to who gets which technologies and who does not benefit from cross-cultural discourses and cross-societal (Warschauer, 2003). This claim, however, points to the rarity with which the international community of donor states and organisations (with the exception of UNDP and USAID) has promoted the initiatives of local civil society organisations that have established ICT platforms which facilitate an agenda of peace and/or conflict transformation (Hoffmann, 2014).

Conflict constitutes one of the major recurring problems bedeviling the socio-economic and political landscape in Kenya and Mandera County in particular. New and quicker ways of resolving conflict would therefore go a long way to reduce communal strife. Achieving total conflict resolution has become a difficult task in many nations, in spite of efforts by economic development experts to bring about desired improvement in welfare. According to

Robins (2001) the most important method in managing conflict is through the understanding and management of intentions of parties that are involved in the conflict. Intentions are in reference to the decisions made to act in the conflict situation under review. The prevalence of crisis in Mandera County indicates that an adequate ICT related approach has not been given to the area in the management of the crisis. The right ICT mix seeking conflict resolution is a necessary element of harmonious co-existence. In peacebuilding, ICT interventions are more likely to have a greater impact when used after peace agreement or a ceasefire. This is so because the dynamics at the conflict zone are more receptive on issues to do with collaboration, need for information sharing, development mechanisms which might be virtual or physical and appropriating technology enabling people and communities to deal conflict non-violently and creatively (Hattotuwa, 2004). Possible ways of transforming conflict dynamics and enhancing post-conflict peacebuilding through ICTs can be found in the assembly of joint narratives of suffering (Bratic and Schirch, 2007; Mannergren Selimovic, 2013), or the commonality of problems affecting everyday life, as in Israel's and Palestine's case of the Parents Circle Families Forum (www.theparentscircle.com) (Castelnuovo, 2013).

2. Statement of the Problem

While the use information technology has spread rapidly in Africa, studies have concentrated on mass media in the traditional sense more than the emerging role and the different media in social processes more than information mobile phone technology. In the last few years, the role of ICT has for several years been the topic of discussion in areas such as humanitarian, socio-political movements and development. However, little research has been undertaken on the role they might play in conflict resolution. The role of these technologies in political contexts has so far focused on socio-political movements (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Shirky, 2011) and peace building (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013), and research on the effect of uses of ICTs in conflict resolution contexts remains at an embryonic stage. While these studies have touched on technologies and contexts such as peacebuilding, political and socio-political none has touched on how the role of ICT in resolving communal conflicts which is the focus of the current study. The use of technological advancements in Africa and most relevantly in Mandera County is at very low levels leave alone being used for purposes of resolving communal conflicts. Despite the fact most parts of the world including Mandera County perceive conflict as something which is dysfunctional, abnormal and thus despicable nothing much has been said on how ICT and more specifically mobile technologies can be used in resolving communal conflicts. Yet conflict is a part of life and can be used for positive change. Through conflict challenges a rational man is forced to seek alternative ways to meet contesting interests and needs of man which has continued unabated in Mandera County over time. With this underlying fact it is therefore necessary to come up strategies that to bring peaceful co-existence of the communities through the use of ICT. While there has been rapid changes on the way people are communicating occasioned by unprecedented worldwide ICT adoption rates not so much is coming up on conflict and conflict resolution in not only developed countries but also in developing countries leading to the current study.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to explore information mobile phone technology role in resolving communal conflicts in Mandera County, Kenya.

The following specific objectives guided the study:

- i. To establish the role of mobile phone short message service in resolving communal conflicts in Mandera County.

- ii. To assess the role of mobile phone social media platforms in resolving communal conflicts in Mandera County.
- iii. To examine the role of mobile phone instant messaging applications in resolving communal conflicts in Mandera County.
- iv. To establish the role mobile phone video conferencing in resolving communal conflicts in Mandera County.

4. Theoretical Orientation

This study was guided by three theories as discussed in the following section:

4.1 Conflict Transformation Theory

Conflict transformation theory aims at transforming negative conflict to conflict that is constructive, dealing with behavioural, attitudinal and structural elements of a conflict. This term discusses both the means of the process as well as the process itself. Owing to that it integrates events which include conflict transformation and prevention. In this study the conflict transformation theory describes the engagements that alter the different indices and features of conflicts that are ferocious since it addresses the main reasons for conflicts over a long term. In this study, it will be used as a process where intra-clan conflicts lead to transformations in outcomes that are peaceful. Therefore, this is the process that transforms and engages discourses, interests, relationships and where necessary the structure of culture in support of extension in relation to violent conflict (Kaminski, 2011; Dearing, 2009). Since there are perennial inter-clan conflicts in Mandera County emanating from perceived bias in resource allocation and unpopular intervention measures by the government, the conflict transformation theory will therefore be deemed relevant in this study.

4.2 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Through technological advancements diffusion of innovations theory strives to give an explanation on why, how and the rate at which new concepts can spread among and within the various social systems. Rogers (1995) describes diffusion of innovations as the process which invention is communicated using certain networks over a specific time period among social system members. An object or practice and an idea that is perceived to be fresh by a unit of adoption as an individual or unit are considered an innovation. Interpersonal communication channels and mass media are what entail diffusion of innovations. People can get as much information as possible of an invention and its perceived usefulness through sharing communication channels like mass communication and interpersonal communication (Dearing, 2009; Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Rogers, 2003). There has been an attempt through diffusion research to give an explanation of the variables that impact why and how users embrace new information medium like the internet and cell phones. Since the unit of analysis is an individual interpersonal influences are considered important. Another important factor is the critical mass since they are essential for many users in gaining efficiency for being the interactive tools. Therefore when people get benefits more will embrace the use of ICT. Following this argument diffusion theory therefore is related to not only digital divide but also applies to things that are practical (Rogers, 2003). Since communication technologies during the information age are imperative in daily life, this theory will be useful in determining the prevalence and efficacy of ICTs use in conflict resolution and management endeavours.

4.3 Social Representation Theory

The social representation theory is a framework of ideas and concepts in social psychology to help in the study occurrences in psychosocial in contemporary societies. According to this theory social psychological processes and occurrences can be understood properly if they are

rooted in cultural, macrosocial and historical conditions. In doing that they are able to overcome limitations of those approaches and theories that are widespread in social psychology in terms of individualism in methodology as well as on epistemology that is able to separate functionally the object from the subject (Farr, 1996). Moscovici (2008) terms social representation theory as a process making sense which communities involve whenever faced with new confrontations. For purposes of communicating and behaving the social representation theory is understood to represent the collective elaboration of the community social object. When the object it elaborated it becomes social reality for the reason of its representation by the community. Thus, object and subject are not considered to be functionally different. An object is considered by a group of person to be an extension of their behavior once it is positioned in the setting of an activity (Moscovici, 2008). Social representation is described as a system of practices, ideas and values which have two functions. The first function is the establishment of an order that will enable people to familiarize with in their social and material world as well as master it. The second function is provision of a code for classifying and naming unambiguously and codes for social exchange in communication the different features of their worlds in their group or individual history.

5. Conceptual Framework

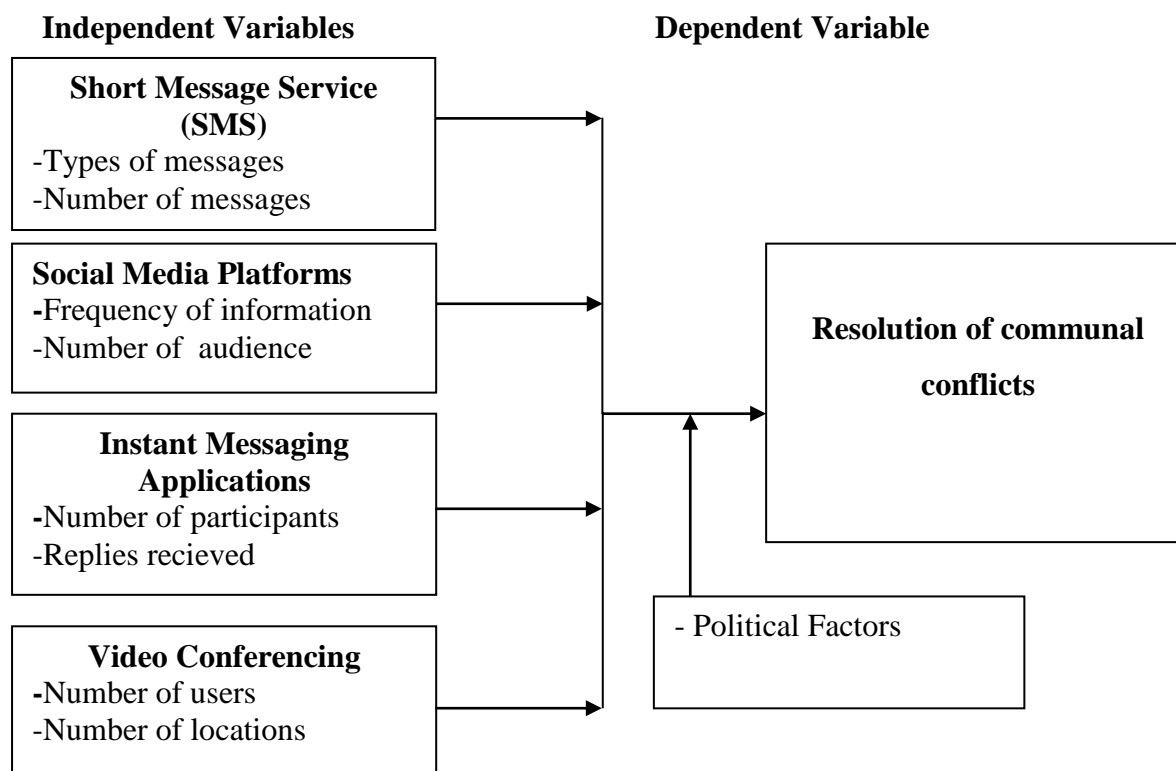


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is described by Serakan (2003) as a network of interrelationships among variables that are logically developed and are deemed as an important part of the problem under investigation. This section presents the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The controlled variables in this paper included short message service, social media platforms, instant messaging applications and video conferencing whereas the dependent variable was resolving of communal conflicts in Mandra County. This paper was guided by intervening variables such as political factors.

6. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey. This study design was considered in this study since it provides so much information on the population reviewed in regards to on ICT role in resolving communal conflicts. The population for this study consisted of 301 people from the public, county employees and stakeholders in the security department and ICT department. This groups of people were picked to participate in this research since they have information required for the objective sought. Since the number of people targeted in this study was small thus 301 in number a census survey was carried for all the 301 target respondents. Employees in the departments of ICT and those in the security were given questionnaires to fill. This was in addition to relevant stakeholders as well as the public so as to access the study parameters on the entire population. Data collected quantitatively was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The use of SPSS software package this was made possible. Data analysis was necessary so as to provide explanations on dependencies and associations of research variables and answers to research questions. The results was presented in figures and tables.

7. Data Analysis Results

The research was interested in establishing from the participants whether they used mobile phone technology in conflict resolution. The study results are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Mobile Phone Technology Usage

Mobile Phone Technology	Yes (Frequency)	Percentag e	No (Frequency)	Percentag e
Short Message Service	140	61.1	88	38.9
Social Media Platforms	87	37.9	142	62.1
Instant Messaging Applications	134	58.5	95	41.5
Video Conferencing	151	65.9	79	34.1

The study results in Table 1 shows that most of the participants (151) stated that they used video conferencing as a tool in conflict resolution representing 65.9% followed by those who used short message service at 140 respondents at 61.1%. The study findings indicate that 134 respondents representing 58.5% used instant messaging applications for purposes of conflict resolution while 87 participants representing 37.9% stated that they used social media platforms for conflict resolution. The study sought to investigate when the respondents used mobile phone technology in conflict resolution. The study findings are as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Mobile Phone Technology Use in Conflict Resolution

Mobile Phone Technology	Before	During	After conflict
Short Message Service	56(24.5%)	91(39.7%)	82(35.8%)
Social Media Platforms	14(6.1%)	67(29.3%)	148(64.6%)
Instant Messaging Applications	92(40.2%)	75(32.8%)	62(27.0%)
Video Conferencing	82(35.8%)	79(34.5%)	68(29.7%)

The research results presented in Table 2 show most participants used short message service during conflict representing 39.7% while most of the participants used social media platforms

after conflict. The study findings indicate that instant messaging applications was used by most participants before conflict. The study was interested in establishing from the respondents what type of conflict they used the different mobile phone technologies reviewed. The study results indicated most participants used short message service, social media platforms and instant messaging applications in conflict such as communal conflicts as well as those conflicts arising from differences that were fundamental in terms of values and identities which includes opinions on religion, norms, ethics, politics and other beliefs that are held deeply. Participants in this study argued that video conferencing was used on conflict such as conflict in relations which arises from being different in style, personality, taster matters as well as workplace conflicts like conflict in carrying out tasks.

The paper wanted to find out from the participants their preferred tool of communicating conflict matters. The study findings are as indicated in Table 3

Table 3 Preferred Tool of Communicating Conflict Matters

Mobile Phone Technology	Tick preferred tool (Frequency)	Percentage
Short Message Service	82	35.8
Social Media Platforms	8	3.5
Instant Messaging Applications	60	26.2
Video Conferencing	79	34.5
Total	229	100

In Table 3 results show that most of the participants` most preferred tool of mobile phone technology was short message service with 35.8% followed by those who preferred video conferencing as the tool they use in communicating conflict matters at 34.5%. The study results show that 26.2% of the respondents preferred instant messaging applications as the tool used for communicating conflict matters while 3.5% preferred social media platforms. The research wanted to find out which other information mobile phone technology tools can be used in conflict resolution. According to the respondents tools such as the ability to make phone calls and access to the internet which is a worldwide connectivity has produced the opportunity to share exceptional volumes of data which can be used as tools in prevention and management of conflict. The respondents argued this has the ability visualizing dynamics, recognizing signatures and patterns and manipulation of large volumes of data occasioned from information mobile phone technology tools can create openings that can be used for development and humanitarian assistance on environments that are dangerous and complex.

The respondents further stated that cell phones which are open source and /or free foundations for technology can be used in conflict areas with less centralized organizational framework to decentralize two-way information service for collection and dissemination of the required information, GIS and open-source satellite imaging, mobile phones and proprietary software with structured reporting and coding protocols can be used in areas which have local networks but are in conflict with systems that are able to identify conflict and have links that are stronger that can facilitate response monitors and mechanisms thus serve as the first response team. They further argued that the use of internet focusing on e-mail and websites can be used for conflict detection with limited response but mainly for recommendation purposes. According to the study findings information mobile phone technology tools such as crowdsourcing by combining automated data mining and crowd sourced human intelligence is influences not only how people recover from or responde to

conflict but in the way in which they are able to engage in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The main aim of creating communities is to be able to advance peacebuilding agenda through the power of technological advancements in bringing people together, promotion of management and resolution of conflict and a creation of public to change their behaviours and attitudes. The study further highlighted the importance of tools such twitter which can be used to coordinate and YouTube which is used tell the world.

The study also sought to find out from respondents the role of short message service in conflict resolution. Majority of the respondents stated short message service can play an important role in conflict resolution taking an example Sisi Ni Amani short message to cell phones supporting the need for peacebuilding since it there is provision of communication on local news and leadership and at the same time providing a neutral source for people to get information in times of elections which are tense periods to avoid conflict among supporters. The respondents argued that message-sending only in discrete events occurring in particular periods are more likely to be effective especially in the political calendar, rather than during period where there is warfare that is sustained but are seen to be effective in resolving conflict. The respondents stated that sending messages in addition to having all-inclusive methodology that involves extensive range of actions like training or dialogue can be used for purposes of conflict resolution. The respondents were of the opinion that in circumstances where communities do not trust each other, it is important to have NGOs or rather United Nations to monitor and respond to reports from citizens lends official credibility of the information that local citizens are sharing since they validate and rebroadcast these information coming from crowd sources SMS.

The study findings established that since by using cell phone networks as the platform, SMS is considered cost effective and real time almost instant message delivery and ubiquitous communication too, people will usually use SMS as a form of succinct and clear communication means, users can practically send SMS anywhere and anytime they want therefore the respondents stated that it was found to be able to allow people to alter plans spontaneously thus plays a key role in conflict resolution. Avoiding conflict is a recognized form of mechanism used to prevent conflict or avoid disagreement and confrontation with other parts part thus the respondents regard SMS as a tool in communication that can be used for conflict management. These results agree with those of Kim et al (2008) who posited that both conflict avoidance and privacy protection would have a momentous but controlling impact on association between perceived effectiveness of SMS for communications and attitude towards sending SMS via a mobile phone. It is induced by the facts that 43% the respondents that had used instant messaging argued that in most times they use internet-based type of instant messaging in deliverance of information or message that has personal touch which they would otherwise not say to someone in person. This phenomenon would be related to the issues such as conflict management, avoiding direct conversation and privacy protection making sure that the communication is private and confidential in an Internet-based platform.

The research sought to find out the extent role social media platforms like Facebook play in conflict resolution. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that social media platforms especially Facebook plays a significant role in conflict resolution in that it gives users the opportunity to use the application in resolving disputes with one another over posts that are upsetting or offensive which may include photos, insults, among others. Social media platforms can be used by users to facilitate negotiation offers, offer bargaining strategies and provide skills for negotiation. Through the use of face those in conflict areas for example those in hostage situation can get the information needed and bring the same to negotiation table whenever there is need for hostage negotiations. The respondents stated that the use of

social media platforms and specifically Facebook particularly on issues to do with political expression it can represent a challenging and complex impression for management which might lead to conflict. Therefore there is need to accept using coping strategies that are integral to political expression delicate act of management impression. According to the study findings users of social media platforms like Facebook are allowed numerous tools allowing for better control of their impression management in terms of conflict resolution it encourages positive political conversations, mobilization and learning. The respondents stated that the social media users can use platforms like Facebook to put pressure on nations, discourage human rights abuse using power of witness, forecasting semi-accurately political instability, conflict without any positives and empower civil society. These study findings agree with those of Murlidhar (2010) who opinioned that social media platforms like Facebook discussion intensifies at times of crisis. In this sense Facebook communication is more aligned with war journalism and its focus on negative dramatic news. Social media platforms such as Facebook can make communication easier between people from different groups, which can have a humanizing effect. They can be a way for minorities like women to air their views in a patriarchal society. This good way to air their views` can also cool down emotions, which might otherwise have been directed at the enemy.

The study was interested in establishing the role of instant messaging applications such as Whatsapp in conflict resolution. Most participants in this study argued that Whatsapp as an instant mobile communication application gives the users the opportunity to communicate real-time through mobile testing, sharing of contacts as well as sharing graphical content. They further argued that this application also offers video and voice call using internet connections therefore making it easy to for conflict resolution since information can be exchanged easily. The respondents stated that instant messaging applications like Whatsapp can be used in conflict resolution since it gives the message recipient the leeway to accept or reject messages from different recipients and it has the capability of group-formation where a message can reach different recipients therefore enabling most people to get the information and act therefore beneficial in conflict resolution. The respondent were also of the opinion that instant messaging applications like Whatsapp are important for conflict resolution since it appeals amongst its users and is attributed to its capability and features and has the capability of sending location information to the recipient. The respondents argued that instant messaging applications like Whatsapp can play a role in conflict resolution since it is able to create a sense of belongingness, nearness and can also create a psychological experience of being close and caring among community members or those in conflict. These results agree with those of Riyanto (2013) who found out that WhatsApp as an instant messaging application can work as a cultural or social medium offering individuals the tool to communicate with friends but at the same time raise alarm incase of a conflict through acquiring original information on WhatsApp message exchanges and thus can be an effective tool in conflict management. The current study findings also agree with those of Bouhnik and Deshen (2014) who found out that WhatsApp as an instant messaging application can be used for forum discussions enabling people to initiate discussions that would improve their knowledge and information on conflict and conflict management.

The study sought to investigate the relationship between conflict resolution and video conferencing. In the study majority of those who responded were of the opinion that use of video conferencing is easy to set response systems and early warning which would prevent conflict that is violent thus saving lives, information is passed through videos highlighting the need for peace and inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict. The respondents further stated that video conferencing plays a role in conflict resolution by promoting stronger interactions between warners and responders, and exchanges to discuss strategies for

response, giving timely and quick responses to warning and monitoring the impact of responses to conflicts to inform decision-making and strategies which can be captured on camera. According to the respondents video conferencing give a clear view of the value-added of among institutions and individuals, the proximity and quality of the interface between early warning and response mechanisms and helps in designing evidence-based response instruments to adequately respond to warning through videos that can be shared among the parties. The respondents stated that through video conferencing warring communities can receive information on the need to resolve conflict peacefully, information on mediation techniques, conflict resolution and transformation strategies, communication skills and dialogue as well as information on how best to inspire creativity and self-reflection on matter conflict resolution all in form of video conferencing. These findings are in tandem with those of Belmudez, (2014) is of the opinion that the use of video is more than just a way of improving on the telephone. It is part of a new strategy for conciliation, in that once the parties have met separately with the conciliator and there is some solid common ground, they can set up a video conference as an intermediary stage before a full meeting of all parties face-to-face. He argues that one of the disputants may have a physically intimidating presence something that cannot be projected as easily in a video link as in a face-to-face meeting so this can make negotiation easier. In this way video conferencing forms another tool for conciliators and mediators.

8. Conclusions

The results confirmed that short message service, social media platforms, instant messaging applications and video conferencing play a role in resolving communal conflicts not only in Mandera County but where there is conflict. The study concludes that short message service, social media platforms and instant messaging applications can be used conflict such as communal conflicts as well as those conflicts arising from differences in ethics, norms beliefs held deeply as well as politics. Video conferencing can used on conflict such as to bring about positive energy. Tools such as the ability to make phone calls and access to the internet which is a global interconnectivity can produce an unprecedented volume of data that can be an influential application for preventing conflict and management. Information mobile phone technology tools such as crowdsourcing by combining automated data mining and crowd sourced human intelligence is which influences how people can respond and recover in case of conflicts while at the same time engaging in peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy Implications

The study proposes the following recommendations based on the findings and conclusions. Short message service, social media platforms, instant messaging applications and video conferencing are undoubtedly an important mobile phone technology tools of passing information relating to conflict resolution therefore the County Government of Mandera must come up with ways of incorporating them on matters conflict resolution. The study also recommends that the County Government of Mandera in partnership with the National government need to come up with agencies to regulate the use of social media as a medium to communicate in times of conflict since they are sometimes prone to misuse.

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