

# Methods used by Head of Schools in Managing Conflict in Improving Teachers Morale in Public Secondary Schools in Chato District in Tanzania

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## Abstract

Head of schools in public secondary schools play a key role in establishing the adhesive that links the outdoor environment and while doing such important duty, conflict during implementation is not too far especially during conflict management. At the same time head of schools have different alternative in attacking the challenges. This study examines challenges which head of schools encounter during resolving conflict and techniques used to stand as way forward towards challenges. Primary data were collected using questionnaire and focus group discussion tools from 133 respondents who are teachers, 30 school board members, 6 head of schools and 1 district education officer. The sample was chosen from each selected secondary school within Chato district by simple random sampling technique. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS ver. 20, IBM, USA). The high spot that some challenges faced by heads of school in managing conflict are lack of conflict management skills, biasness, scarce financial resources, low awareness on responsibilities to some teachers, lack of evidence, and political interference. The study revealed that the possible solutions used by the head of school in arguing conflict included the use of school board members, avoidance of favoritism, availabilities and good distribution of resources, ignoring conflict and collaborating. In this matter conflict is inevitable in secondary schools; however, there are means of managing challenges that are encountered in the course of managing conflict in schools. Therefore, government through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should focus on great need for heads of secondary schools and teachers to be trained in conflict management.

**Keywords—** Solution, Teacher, Management, Leadership.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Head of school manage a school which is an educational organization including collection of several individuals who play an important role in school management activities (Gaol, 2021). Each individual has their own uniqueness and different motivation in the involvement of school management in accordance with their duties. Competition between individuals is a normal and reasonable occur because each individual wants to show the best performance. Individual conflict affects the extent to school management since when conflicts rise between individuals become conflicts between units or parts of the school's organizational structure. Head of school and leaders in schools confront with the potential for conflict that can lead to problems (Pasathang, Tesaputa & Sataphonwong, 2016).

Jantzi & Leithwood, (2016), unresolved conflicts can lead to job dissatisfaction, high absenteeism and turnover,

prolonged disruption of activities, and lack of concerted effort by organization members. Methods used to manage conflicts in school are needed to solve conflicts and find solutions in the form of solutions as a form of organizational optimization (Holloway, 2020). Conflicts that occur in schools need to be managed properly by the head of school so that they have the potential to make the organization effective. Ghaffar, (2019) suggested that general conflict management methods include win-lose method, a lose-lose method, and a win-win method. By using the method of win-lose, one side wins and one side loses, including the use of authority or power to suppress another party. Could be, the losing party behave non-productive, less active, and not identify themselves with the goals of the organization. A lose-lose strategy means that all parties to the conflict become losers. This method can be in the form of a compromise which comprise both sacrificing their interests, and arbitration (using a third

party). Win-win strategy, namely conflict is solved through the method of problem solving or problem solving (Omboko, 2020).

In other side, school leadership has become a peak importance all over the world since it is expected to play a key role in establishing the glue that links the outdoor environment with friendless classrooms, school policies and classroom practice. Problems of conflicts in public secondary schools in Tanzania have been renowned severally in various districts and schools, whereby in Chato district, conflicts in public secondary schools have alike been renowned. Head of school required to be able to master and condition conflicts that occur in schools that must be managed properly in secondary school. Ability and skills possessed by the head of school have an impact on the conditions and situations of conflict in schools is becoming energy positive are able to boost the management of all the components that exist in schools. The head of school must be able to carry out his role as an organizer, manager, educator, leader, and education supervisor. Carrying out their role as managers and educational leaders, the head of school faces various components that have the potential to cause conflict. This is caused by the heterogeneity of the resources being managed, the large number of interests between units in the overall organizational structure, personnel supporting the implementation of education who have varied backgrounds, interests, tasks, authorities, and responsibilities.

Despite the potential strategies employed by the head of school towards reducing conflict and reframing teachers to be as one team as part of managerial members in running the school, there is limited empirical evidence on challenges facing head of school in managing conflict and possible solution used to solve the challenges. The study therefore aimed at assessing the challenges facing head of school in managing conflict to teachers and methods which are employed to manage conflict towards improving morale to teachers for the purpose of drawing practical lessons for sustainable way of ensuring no conflict in public secondary school is managed properly.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Olaleye & Arogundade, (2017), revealed that the head of school use stakeholder meetings and consultations at their schools on a regular basis to resolve issues and suggested that schools should provide training on conflict resolution tactics to aid in dispute resolution. The study implies that conflict management mostly resolved by using staff meeting and consultations techniques while training stands as the major principal of imparting knowledge to the head

of schools and teacher about the best method of resolving conflict. Okumbe, (2018), discovered that schools used dispute resolution approaches and when it came to resolving disagreements between principals and teachers, mediation was frequently used. Techniques for conflict resolution were found to have a positive linearly significant impact on conflict resolution tactics. Secondary schools have conflict management methods, according to the survey, and mediation was often utilized to resolve problems between principals and instructors. More capacity building for school administrators on the usage of conflict management tactics currently in use in schools was recommended in the study. This is because, despite the fact that schools have conflict management procedures in place, conflicts still occur, necessitating more training. Thus this study aims to assess the method used by the head of school to manage conflict in public secondary schools based on chato district.

Eze & Victor, (2022) demonstrated that head of school techniques such as forcing, avoidance, and silence are unhelpful in resolving conflict. On the topic of managing conflict in organizations in New York, Rahim (2016) analyzed the various styles of behavior by which interpersonal conflict may be handled, and as a result, he developed a model of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict by quoting the results of theories done by Follet, 1926/1940, who discovered three main ways of dealing with conflict: dominance, compromise, and integration. Okumbe, (2018), concluding that students are not just raw materials in the education business but also valuable human resources and as a result, effective student management is required. The school administration must ensure that the actions of pupils and the operation of the organization are closely monitored. This necessitates the use of an educational manager who is well-versed in educational management practices. This study checks into whether or not the head of school employs an effective student manager, as well as whether or not he or she is a consistent user of management techniques.

Nafukho (2021) the college changed into like a middle of enterprise wherein income making changed into crucial. Head instructor's with inside the twenty first century is anticipated to run establishments of gaining knowledge of like enterprise worries and be loose from political interference if conflicts ought to be averted in schools. Politicians and different folks now no longer immediately concerned in college control ought to now no longer intrude in control of schools. Head of schools can prevent conflicts in their schools if the community fully supports the educational programs (Nukus, 2020). The school and community connections should be marked by collaboration, engagement, and dialogue. The community

must be aware of the school's activities. The administrator's job is to teach the community not only what it wants, but also to increase aspirations for what the school is doing. Conflicts can be avoided if the principal is able to communicate the educational programs to the community (McCorkle & Miller, 2017).

Ates & Yilmaz, (2018), revealed that, in order to improve employee productivity and morale, it is important for managers to allow employees to help set department or organizational goals and resolve their conflicts amicably. Employees will work harder to reach goals if they're involved in setting them. Employees resent being left out of the loop, especially when changes are going on, which can cause them to be cynical about future endeavors, their supervisors, and the company. If kept uninformed, they may also assume the worst - which their jobs are at risk. Managers need to stress both positive and negative aspects of change and be honest about the company's future. Open communication should especially be a priority when introducing any new initiatives. Cerit, Kadioglu, & Yilmaz, (2017), viewed that, informed employees are happier employees; they function better, feel like part of the team, and adjust to change more easily. If management's goal is to maintain high employee morale within their organization, part of the process will involve empowering employees to act independently when appropriate by being able to resolve conflicts that arise from within and from outside. Giving employees the room to grow professionally - and that includes allowing them to make mistakes - will increase their self-esteem and self-efficacy, thereby boosting their morale in the midst of conflicts.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target populations were teachers and head of schools, the survey included other actors along the education sector. Simple random sampling techniques were employed. The sample size involved 170 respondents from the chato district. The sample size was calculated based on the formula described by Kothari, (2004). Data collection was achieved using structured questionnaires and focus group discussion from key actors in the education sector: mainly teachers, head of schools and District education officer. Both descriptive analyses were employed. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS ver. 20, IBM, USA) was used to analyze descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics and responses information trends about challenges during conflict management. Descriptive analyses included frequency and percentages which are statistical measures of central tendency.

### Findings of the Study

#### Methods used by Head of School in Managing Conflict

The results revealed that, the head of school use table discussion as methods of resolving conflict. A table discussion organized by conversation between the two side, several chosen solve and bring a variety of perspectives to a subject, and an audience who may simply observe by asking questions. Some events use the table discussion format as a breakout exercise during a conflict management. Also the study findings revealed that formulating different school committees (SCs) at school help in conflict managements which is evidenced in high response by the teachers. The SCs carry out a variety of critical functions in the development of the school. These include formulation of the School Development Plan (SDP), provision of school infrastructure, resource mobilization, financial and asset management, creation of learner-teacher friendly schools, as well as managing conflict with the ultimate goal of improving learning outcomes. If these duties and responsibilities are executed efficiently and effectively the desired outcomes realized. The successful conflict's management calls upon skillful and competent SCs to plan, manage funds and assets, provide infrastructure, mobilizes resources and manage conflict. Ultimately this will improve the teaching and learning environment.

Furthermore, the study findings show that, team work method used by head of school and team work involved more than one person in a process to achieve a school target. Team work emphasized in the strategic management of a school organization in forming a working team that actively and abled to work together to achieve school objective hence help in conflicts managements. In general, the team group of quality built in order to create a rule that strive for excellence. Therefore, the success of the efforts of a group that was formed, the spirit of cooperation and good relations among group members need to be nurtured hence reduce conflicts in school. The importance of team work in schools include effective team work, make decisions together, the emphasis on action, leaders and group work, teamwork is a skill for life, the refusal fostering teamwork in schools, Extra teamwork, and good team building methods.

On other hand good communication between school organization in one way or another used as method in managing conflict supported by 72.9 percent. Conscientization as methods a method used by head of school in managing conflicts scored 69.9 percent of response from teachers. Regular conducting staff meeting scored 51.9 percent, motivation to teachers' 42.9 percent, provision of punishments 39.1 percent, warning

responsible person 39.8 percent and delegation of power 19.5 percent were methods used by head of schools as stated by teachers participated in the study (Table 4.6).

In response to the question whether Board of schools knew of any conflict management methods the head of school used to resolve conflicts in school. Conclusion from Board of schools indicated that they knew the conflict management methods. Board of schools members further asked to cite the specific methods used by head of school to deal conflict in school. The Board of schools suggested that head of school sit the conflicting parties down and investigates the main cause of the conflict. The involved parties in the conflict are also enlightened about the backlash of the particular disagreement. Further, the offender is warned not to repeat the action otherwise faces stiff punishment. If there is no change the offender is instructed to come with parents or guardians to the school for further disciplinary action. Board of schools stated that if the conflict was monumental, a punishment is given to both parties but they need to do it together as a team this facilitates cooperation between them. In all these processes, the head of school takes the mediator roles.

During the interview with head of school from the sampled schools were also asked to indicate the conflict management methods they use to resolve conflict in secondary school. The following conflict management strategies were pointed out: mediation, arbitration, negotiation and counseling. To add on the aforementioned list, the respondents mentioned open dialogue which allows the students, teachers and staffs to sight their feelings and look for possible solution to the conflict. Furthermore, the respondents also stated that open dialogue entails talking to the students, teachers and staffs involved warning and cautioning them about conflict. However, some cases require parental concern such as parents are called in to assist in resolving children's conflicts in school.

During the interview with DSEO responded that, Head of school are directed to solve conflicts through rules and regulations guiding public servants. Hence failure to compile with those rules and regulations make it difficult in managing secondary school. Specifically, DSEO stated that;

*“It is very difficult to say exactly kind of conflict management technique used by head of school in managing conflict because of diverse and varied types of conflicts and its*

*managing techniques also vary considerably. Sometime head of school decides to take no action, sometimes give second chance and sometime use aggressive language even to be rude just for the sake of the schools. Like I said it is difficult to use the only one conflict management technique in all types of conflicts...”* (Interviewee August, 2021).

The results imply that the conflict management methods hired by head of school in secondary schools include mediation, arbitration, negotiation, dialogue and counseling. Mediation and dialogue have been found to be the main methods used to resolve conflicts. Additionally, the findings revealed that open dialogue such as offering the chance to express their views as to why they were involved in conflict and explore possible solution of the conflict was used by head of school also. The study further reputable that the other methods used were mediation and arbitration, with mediation taking center stage in most conflict resolution cases. In line with the results, Dady, (2015), noted that when conflict occurs, head of school most commonly employs one or a combination of these conflict resolution styles and generally respond to conflict using what skills they have learned and moreover, are most comfortable with. Like parenting where most people receive no formal instruction but engage in it on the basis of what has been modeled for them in the past, so do people learn how to resolve conflict through experiencing one or more of these problem-solving styles in use?

Similar studies have found varying conflict management strategies; these include the studies by; Robbins (2002) concentrated on strategies specifically labeled as resolution techniques. Lists eight techniques such as: problem solving, super ordinate goals, avoidance, smoothing, compromise, authoritative command, altering the human variable and altering structural variables. Sang, (2019) effective communication described as the best because it would make the group aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem solving. Altalhi & Alshammri, (2018) identified five methods of solving conflicts which are; smoothing, compromising, forcing, withdrawal and problem solving. In most of these studies compromise has been found to be the common strategy which most of the researchers mentioned above identified in their studies. In our case, negotiation is however similar to compromise which all other studies found.



Table 1: Response of Methods used by Head of School in Managing Conflict

Methods	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Team work method	99	74.4	34	25.6
Motivation to teachers	57	42.9	76	57.1
Table discussion	125	94.0	8	6.0
Good communication	97	72.9	36	27.1
Punishments	52	39.1	81	60.9
Warning	53	39.8	80	60.2
Formulating committees	105	78.9	28	21.1
Delegation of power	26	19.5	107	80.5
Regular staff meeting	69	51.9	64	49.1
Conscientization	93	69.9	40	31.1

Source: Field Data (2021)

**Usefulness of Methods employed by Head of School in Conflict Managements**

The study findings (Table 4.8) revealed that the majority strongly agreed with the opinion that welfare issues (motivation to teachers) at 41.3 percent while only 6.0 percent strongly disagreed about the subject matter. Other methods which were used by head of school in managing conflict in lager extent included performance of duties effectively, good allocation of inadequate resources available, avoid favoritism, avoid absenteeism to workers and syllabus coverage with the scores of 58.6 percent, 39.8 percent, 35.3 percent, 84.9 percent and 57.9 percent respectively.

During the focus group discussion with members revealed that some of head of school methods were effective in such a way that students involved in conflict may be suspended or expelled from school because conflict was serious offence as stated in the school rules. The expulsion may lead to students’ difficulties in finding another school hence for fear of expulsion; students avoid involving themselves in conflicts. This makes students involved in conflict to change which has helped in the reduction of conflict in the school thereby increasing peace building in the school. This has helped with the effective coordination of the schools.

Board of school members were then asked to explain what they thought should be done to impart conflict management skills among head of school. In responding to the question, they discussed that conflict management skills can be imparted in learners by teaching them the importance of friendship and the importance of peace and

justice among them and by teaching them how to solve arguments or misunderstandings among them. They further stated that head of schools should consider forming clubs which teach on the importance of peace and demote conflict. The schools should come up with dialogue programs so that learners can learn how to solve conflict in a peaceful manner. They also indicated that schools should consider involving anti-conflict groups to talk about what causes learners to have conflicts among themselves and how to resolve such conflicts.

The study is in line with Shanka & Thuo, (2017) who revealed that collaborating is effective in that it enables people to work together so that everyone can win. Collaborative strategy involves a behavior that is strongly cooperative and assertive which reflects a win-win approach to resolving conflict. Commenting on the compromise strategy, Altalhi & Alshammri, (2018), posit that compromise is an attempt to have a partial satisfaction for both parties in the sense that both receive the proverbial “half loaf” and this compels both parties to make sacrifices to obtain a common gain. This style is effective in that both parties gain in the process of conflict resolution. He asserted that collaboration and compromise are the most effective and productive forms of addressing conflict because there is not a winner or loser but rather a working together for the best possible solution. On the other hand, found that those who adopt a competitive style try so hard to get what they want that they ruin friendships or relationships in the process.

On other hand head of school were asked to state the support government gives to secondary school in conflict management. In responding to the question, head of school

stated that government is encouraging school head of school to undergo conflict management courses. Government does this by organizing workshops on conflict management that school managers attend. Also, government organizes a lot of workshops through the ministry of education on conflict resolution. Further, they indicated that government has embarked on training more head of school in conflict management skills so that they become fully equipped to solve conflict among learners in schools. Through the creation and promotion of guidance and counselling department in schools, government is trying to support secondary school conflict management.

Generally, the methods used by heads of schools in managing conflict in the secondary schools involved team work method and stakeholders' meetings and consultations in their schools as a way by head of school in resolving conflicts. Similarly, motivation to teachers, table

discussion, good communication with teachers, provision of punishments, warning responsible person, were used also by head of school in resolving conflict. Lastly formulating different committees at school, delegation of power, regular conducting staff meeting, and conscientization were also conflict management methods used by head of school. The results coincide with skill theory of leadership skills are learned, not innate and any person can be a leader. From this perspective, ordinary teachers have the right like any other people to hold head of school position as to influence teachers at the job. However, the appointed school head of school should enhance the school effectiveness by increasing teacher motivation, good communication with teachers, provision of punishments and warning responsible person at the job through manifesting their leadership skills - technical, human and conceptual skills.

Table 2: Opinion on the Extend of Applicability of Conflict Methods

Statements	Level of Usefulness				
	1	2	3	4	5
Welfare issues	8(6.0)	38(28.6)	27(20.3)	5(3.8)	55(41.3)
Effective performance of duties	10(7.5)	2(1.5)	35(26.3)	78(58.6)	8(6.0)
Allocation of resources	12(9.0)	8(6.0)	53(39.8)	52(39.2)	8(6.0)
Distribution of responsibilities	10(7.5)	27(20.3)	15(11.3)	34(25.5)	47(35.3)
Avoid favoritism	36(27.0)	35(26.3)	2(1.5)	47(35.3)	13(9.8)
Opportunity to attend courses	2(1.5)	34(25.7)	87(65.4)	0(0)	10(7.5)
Equal appointment	10(7.5)	8(6.0)	68(51.1)	0(0)	47(35.3)
Avoid absenteeism to workers	10(7.5)	2(1.5)	0(0)	113(84.9)	8(6.0)
Syllabus coverage	8(6.0)	2(1.5)	38(28.6)	77(57.9)	8(6.0)

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree

Source: Field Data (2021)

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Methods used by heads of schools in managing conflict in the secondary schools in Chato District, the majority of the respondents frequently had team work method and stakeholders' meetings and consultations in their schools as a way of resolving conflicts. Similarly, motivation to teachers, table discussion, good communication with teachers, provision of punishments, warning responsible person, were also used in resolving conflict. Use of Student Representative Council, adequate coverage of syllabus, transparency and accountability in financial and resource allocations and absence of political interference and patronage were also found out as conflict management methods. Lastly formulating different committees at school, delegation of power, regular conducting staff

meeting, and conscientization were also conflict management methods used by head of school.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Since conflict is inevitable in secondary schools and is often caused by many factors, head of school need to limit personal issues in the management of secondary schools as these stimulate conflicts, ensure transparency and effective communication are important should be considered as a must implement policy in public secondary schools. The school administration should try to find out the root cause of conflicts in public secondary schools and involve all the education stakeholders in the school in order to enhance discipline for effective conflict management strategies to be put in place.

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