Causes of Conflict in Public Secondary Schools in Mukaa Sub County, Makueni County

Phyllis Koki Kilonzo[1], Michael Munyao Ivita (PhD)[2]

[1](Tutorial Fellow, School of Education, Scott Christian University, Kenya)
[2](Lecturer, School of Professional Studies, Scott Christian University, Kenya)
Corresponding Author: Michael Munyao Ivita

Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to establish causes of conflict in public secondary schools in Kenya a case of Mukaa Sub- County in Makueni County. In public secondary schools conflict occurs among teachers and their colleagues, teachers and the principals and teachers and students. The study used descriptive research design in order to gather detailed information from the field. The target population was 39 public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub- County in Makueni County. The sample size was 10 schools out of 39 public secondary schools which were sampled using stratified random sampling. The respondents were teachers and principals of the public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-County, Makueni County. The data were collected using questionnaires with structured and unstructured questions. The data were analyzed using descriptive method where both qualitative and quantitative analysis was used. The information was presented in form of tables, and figures. The findings showed that perceptions, communication problems, authority structures and differences in attitudes. Conflicts in public secondary schools were high among the teaching staff and between the teaching staff and the administration but moderate between the teaching staff and the union. The study conclude that major factors that influence conflict included conflicting needs, conflicting roles and pressures, unpredictable policies conflicting styles, conflicting perceptions and conflicting goals and values.*
Keywords: Conflict, Public Secondary Schools, Organizational Factors, Relational Factors, External Factors

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Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Conflicts are an integral part of human organizations all over the world according to [6]. They occur in all kinds of human relationships and all social settings. The potential differences among people are wide and so the absence of conflicts would signal the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict is a process of social interactions and situations, in which people's interests and activities confront, block and disable the realization of one party's objectives. [12] define conflict as the differences between and among individuals. Psychologists like [8] described conflict as an interactive opposing behavior between two or more people, organizations or systems over incompatible goals, interests, scarce resources, values, belief system, power and prestige, nature of relationship as well as performance.

Conflict in any society could range from intellectual jostling or malicious gossip all the way to use of physical force to influence destruction of property or physical injury. However, when it reaches the extent of violence, destruction and killing, it could no longer be a healthy part of living and might need to be managed effectively. Conflict is considered a characteristic of human existence considered to be part of the dynamic of life that drives individuals into the future [8]. They are integral part of any social system but need to be properly managed in order to create a healthy organizational climate that is important for effective performance of responsibilities.

Employee conflict in the workplace had been reported by ILO as a common occurrence, resulting from both organizational and employee differences and values. According to [18], the workplace setting could be a fertile breeding ground for conflicts because of the dynamics and interdependency of the employee-to-employee, customer-to-employee, and employee-to outside vendor relationships. Moreover, [19] asserted that conflict was a normal and natural part of both the workplace and personal lives.

[4] argued that in a company, an agency or a small scale business, conflict could be the very essence of what the organization is about and if conflict was not occurring, then, the organization had no reason for being. This meant that conflict in most cases uprooted the very impediments that undermine the organizational development and if absent, the management of the organization might be off-track in managing the affairs of the organization.

According to [27] the evolution of conflicts in school set ups is mainly influenced by threats to resource supply and demand which may be real or perceived. However, the school has the responsibility to develop favorable attitudes towards learning and relationships in each child and therefore all efforts must be employed to reduce conflict incidences. This is important because it is in the schools that the students are expected to interact with one another, their teachers and educational administrators for purposes of social development.

[7] argue that the function of organizational culture is to define the way of doing things in order to give the meaning to organizational culture. [45] observe that in strong organizational cultures, core values are strongly held and shared widely. This means that when organizational members accept the shared beliefs values, they become more committed in conflict and its resolution. A weak culture is one in which organizations members do not subscribe to the shared beliefs, values and norms and as such, different departments within such organization have different beliefs that do not necessarily address the core issues on conflict [13]. Individuals have a variety of personalities, values and attitudes, when they enter organizations and their stable characteristics affects how they behave and perform.

Personality traits are structures and propensities inside a person that explains his or her characteristic patterns of thought, emotions and behavior [11]. A number of theories on personality traits have been developed to explain individual differences in personality. A school administration may influence conflict resolution approaches in a variety of ways. The different kinds of leadership styles administrators' use may impact the employees positively or negatively. Leadership styles are autocratic, democratic and participative. These different styles are needed for different situation and each leader needs to know when to apply a particular approach. Not one leadership style is ideal or the best for every situation. A leader may have knowledge and skills to act effectively in a situation but may not emerge as effectively in a different situation.

Financial managements by administrators of schools influence conflict resolutions [9]. Preferential treatment by administrators influence conflicts at the school. Ineffective communication by administrators may create conflict even where there are no basic incompatibilities. In addition, the other party in a school organization may have different perceptions as to what are the facts in a situation. When the principals lack skills in communicating in resolving of conflicts, this results to tension and misunderstanding. This study intended to find the types, causes and conflict resolution approaches in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Conflict in secondary schools like any other organizations is a reality. [8] argue that there have been fights between school deputies and principals that are geared by the parents. In secondary schools conflict occurs among teachers and their colleagues, teachers and the principals and teachers and students. Unfortunately little attention is paid to how these conflicts are resolved. The Ministry of Education science and technology (MOEST) has indicated that in spite of policies put in place, Kenyan educational institutions have continued to report increased cases of conflict. Conflicts in Kenya's public Secondary schools have become a major problem that all stake holders in education should take a great concern. The researcher believes that best conflict resolution approaches should be engaged in order to deal with conflicts in the public secondary schools. This study therefore attempted to investigate the causes of conflict in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-County in Kenya which are both internal and external.

1.3 Objective

Determine the causes of conflict in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub County, Makueni County.

Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Conflict

Conflict may be viewed as occurring along cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions which helps in understanding the complexities of conflict and why conflict seems to proceed in contradictory directions [36]. As a set of perceptions, conflict is a belief whereby needs, interests, wants, or values of one individual are incompatible with someone else's. It also involves an emotional reaction to a situation or interaction that signals a disagreement of some kind. The behavioural component may be minimal, but the conflict is still very real to the person experiencing the feelings [20].

Conflict also consists of the actions that one takes to express their feelings, articulate perceptions, and get needs met in a way that has the potential for interfering with someone else's ability to get his or her needs met. This conflict behaviour may involve a direct attempt to make something happen at someone else's expense, it may be an exercise of power, violent or destructive. Conversely, this behaviour may be conciliatory, constructive, and friendly. The purpose of conflict behaviour is either to express the conflict or to get one's needs met. Obviously, the nature of a conflict in one dimension greatly affects its nature in the other two

dimensions. People can go rapidly in and out of conflict, and the strength or character of conflict along each dimension can change quickly and frequently [51].

2.2 Causes of Conflicts

Some schools associate conflicts in their schools with poor working conditions and lack of clear work and remuneration policy by the government. Schools face a lot of difficulties in providing the necessary facilities and even teaching materials. According to [42] schools did not have basic facilities including staffroom and teaching materials while some head teachers lack even offices to transact official duties. [37] indicate that teachers work in highly de-motivating conditions due to poor pay by the government coupled with lack of clear increments in salaries.

[48] Head teachers were unable to adopt and respond to complexities in their institutions that fast. Some boards got impatient because they expect quick positive change, and when changes fail to occur that fast, the principal is accused of being low performer. The head teacher was quickly ejected out of the school and a new one brought in. [36] shares the above views and indicates that some head teachers display poor leadership qualities that created conflicts in schools.

[19] indicate that inexperienced head teachers sometimes ran into serious problems when they fail to use their scarce resources properly. Resources available in the school may be used on trivial projects while major ones were untouched. He further reveals that some head teachers have been locked out of their schools due to poor financial accountability. Some head teachers are not transparent in their financial matters of their school. The head teachers do not discuss financial issues of their school with their boards. When financial issues are brought in the agenda of the board meeting, it is usually the last item of the agenda when the member was tired and unable to discuss the item in detail, he further asserts.

Members authorize use of *school* finance hurriedly without counter checking the implications. This gives a leeway to some head teachers to misappropriate school funds. Parents go to such schools and evict such head teachers withdrawing their children and sponsorship to the school. Some head teachers are not transparent and accountable in financial issues of the school. They do not let people see value for money and how the money collected in school is used. The findings of [42] indicate that head teachers create conflicts in their schools because of applying wrong managerial skills in planning, budgeting and expenditure control. In some cases, head teachers do not apply proper use of accounting instructions provided by the Ministry of Education.

This leads to misallocation of resources resulting to lack of essential commodities and services. The Report also indicates that some head teachers are not transparent and accountable in handling the financial issues of their schools [42]. Survey studies carried out in the university college of Cape Town by Wyllie and reported by [43] indicate that over working cause conflicts in educational administration with teachers who are unmotivated in their work. Some teachers go into teaching profession as a last resort when other alternatives are absent. They work to earn a salary with the hope that they will soon leave the profession.

[18] affirm this view and indicate that unmotivated teachers will not produce good results because complaint, laxity, grumbling and fighting the head-teacher characterizes their work. The head teacher will always be in the center of blame. He or she will not get anything done without running into trouble with the teachers. [25] agrees that men and women who have no calling to teaching vocation take up the training as teachers but have no interest in looking after the young people. These teachers find themselves inside the classroom doing a job they do not like but because they need money, they stick.

It is also argued that due to lack of interest in teaching, the teachers become increasingly brutal to the students. Such teachers also become patronize to the politicians and receive protection. A teacher in this category causes trouble to the head teacher because he is sure of protection from the politician. [42] demonstrate that some teachers are forced to teaching profession without commitment. These teachers cause problems, lack discipline, and are chronic absentees in schools. Some engage in immoral acts with students or incite them against the school administration. [41] indicate that there are teachers who take up the noble teaching profession yet they have no interest in it. These teachers display incompetence, laziness and lack interest in students' work. They lack self-discipline and are biased and inconsistence negative interdependency.

Consistent in their application of punishment meted out to students who break school rules. These teachers have no respect for school administration and sometimes incite students against the principal. Some administrators perceive causes of conflicts in their school as due to lack of commitment to work in their schools. There are things that principals do in their schools that posed a serious challenge to school management. Some of these include absenteeism, perennial lateness, dishonesty, inaccessibility and being autocrat or dictatorial according to [25]. He further reveals that some head teachers have been negative interdependency.

Head teachers may fail to perform well in educational administration because of frequent absenteeism in their schools. [37] concur with these views and indicated that situations sometimes arose where the conflicts developed serious personal differences between the stakeholders were transferred into school environment.

Cases arose sometimes when the head teacher was engaged in conflicts with a BOG member due to differences traced way back in their neighbour hood at home.

[49] indicate that principals run into conflicts with other stakeholders because of the way they view their office. Such principals tend to be taken up by the status of their position and occupy its authority and privileges. They see the need to defend the sanctity of their office as a fundamental obligation. He emphasizes that such head teachers regard themselves as inseparable from the status of the office. They often react with threat and counter aggressive behaviour when under attack.

Principals sometimes find themselves in problems with the perceptions of the stakeholders that sometimes the head teacher favours the other stakeholders and other students. A case of such favouritism was reported by [38] where a head teacher was accused by the parents that he favours some BOG members to an extent of allowing their children to remain in school without paying fees. In some cases, some BOG members are allowed to express authority to supply goods to schools at inflated prices. This special treatment results in discontentment among the stakeholders.

School managers perceived conflicts in educational administration with absence of needed financial resources. According to [43], shortage of finances makes it hard for the head teacher to forge ahead in educational programmes. He indicates that head teachers have been forced to make ends meet in their schools where there is lack of finance and material resources. The situation is made worse by low student enrolment in some secondary schools. Lack of finance and resources in school sometimes is blamed on the head teacher. Once in a while, parents blame the head teacher for not trying to provide the required learning facilities.

[46] emphasize the fact that principals face difficulties in their schools due to problems associated with lack of finances to run education programmes. The situation is made complicated when the board is left to decide on fees to be paid by the parents and draw a budget. Estimates are made and forwarded to the central office. Sometimes the central office rejects the proposals from the board and cut down the budget. The two authors further indicate that some parents fail to pay fees yet they expect their children to participate in education programmes like other students who have paid fees. The head teacher is left in dilemma on how to provide quality education in the absence of money. The case becomes more complex when the central government insists there must be education for all. When students fail to perform well due to lack of learning facilities it is the head teacher who is blamed by some parents who fail to pay fees.

According to [46] there are three types of conflicts. First is conflict over image perceptions. This is usually revolves around such questions as who is informed? Who has what kind of authority or power? Who has what duties or obligations? Who has what social habits or behaviours? and who has what 'personality traits'. The second is role conflict. This arises over different interpretations of what is; that is discrepancies in the various roles we play. Conflict over basic values is the third type of conflict. These conflicts are relatively rare. Most of the day–to–day disagreements are over image perception, or content. Usually not resolvable, but can be handled interpersonally, for instance differences of ideology and religious beliefs, it mainly occurs over fundamental beliefs for example, corporal punishment is necessary in our schools and there is life after death.

According to [37] when students fail in national examinations head teachers face conflicts from parents, students and the community. Conflict can be said to be a contest or disagreement between two or more opposing parties with differing needs, ideas, beliefs, values and goals co-existing in the same organization and can be harmful to employee satisfaction and job performance if it becomes excessive and unmanageable. When conflict occurs there is a tendency for morale to be lowered hence it connotes a stressful, unhappy, depressing, annoying and frustrating state of affairs that may adversely affect teaching, learning and Causes of conflict among school personnel. Within the school institutions conflict makes the educational process more complicated [23].

[21] found out that head teachers who are gifted in leadership experienced minimal brush conflicts in their institutions. Schools that experience fewer conflicts have a link between motivation, commitment and capacity building. Research done by [20] on motivation indicated that teachers who have control over their work activities and are able to exert reasonable influence become satisfied. These teachers also develop personal responsibilities for their work and are personally accountable for the outcome.

[40] concurs with the above author and points out that some teachers have taught for many years without being recognized or given promotion. Such teachers lack motivation because there is nothing to look forward to in their work. The head teacher needs to find out the potentials and aptitudes then assist the teachers to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes for effective job performance through in service and undertaking of courses related to conflict resolutions [23]. Teachers should also be helped in career growth where they will use their talents and have aspirations. He further showed that those teachers who temporarily or permanently stops in their career promotional grades. He asserts that a teacher in this state suffers from stress and psychological withdrawal. A teacher of this nature can be a problem to the head teacher.

[27] indicate that teachers are less troublesome when they have job security, high interaction opportunity and institutional support. He indicated that teachers are motivated to work when their efforts are recognized. He also indicates that teachers need good working conditions such as quality teaching materials, supervisory,

supportive services and opportunities for initiative. Besides these, teachers need to be accorded with working environment conducive to efficient and effective delivery of educational services.

[22] reported a general theory on human relations. The theory indicates that human relation was an important asset in school administration. It also indicates that understanding workers behaviour was important. Understanding similarities and differences in age, sex and outside interest are important for an administration creating good working relationships in place of work. [18] concurred with the above view and indicate that head teachers need to relate in a way that teachers are ready to work with them. He indicates that the head teacher should be concerned with the needs of the teachers both emotional and material.

The teachers must also be insulated from aggressive parents. When teachers are aware that the administration is concerned about them they will conform when the head teacher uses pressure and independent decision-making. [33] shares the above view and asserts that a successful administrator has concern for people but at the same time keeps the overall objectives of the organization in view. He has also shown that teachers have needs which if not met will affect their output and morality in their place of work. Positive working relations enhance productivity. [29] affirm the above view when they emphasize that the principal encounter students, teachers and parents on daily basis and require the value of caring. Head teachers therefore require knowledge in conflict management in order to handle various situations well. The principal should communicate trust through actions.

When teachers know that they can count on the principal's support and interest they may become more willing to try new practices, share information and are ready to co-operate with the principal. Sound management requires that the head teachers should gain knowledge by all means and all the time and build on knowledge. He also indicates that attitudes of the head teacher should shift depending on change in the society. The head teachers should be facilitators of learning who encourage teamwork among teachers and not agents of political personalities. There should be a shared vision for the school and both teachers and students should have a mission [34].

Community norms need to be taken into consideration. The principal needs to change the education programmes that are in conflict with the norms of the community. When the school interferes with the norms of the community, then the community will tend to negatively act, causing difficulty to the school and the principal, they further assert. Parents and other members of the community no longer accept the word of educators that the school is doing well. The people want to see the results of the schools' effectiveness and even be involved in decision-making process of the school [22].

Principal can avoid conflicts in their schools if the community is in full support of the educational programmes. The parents on the other hand should be made to feel that their children are in good hands. Partnership, participation and conversation should characterize the school and community relations. To achieve the community needs to be aware of what the school does. It is the work of the administrator to teach the community not only on what it desires but also raise aspiration level about what the school is doing. He has also indicates that conflicts can be avoided if the principal can interpret the educational programmes to the community. The citizens need to be aware of what is happening in the school this is according [24].

The principal needs to work closely with official representatives of the community. These include members of the board and parents representatives. The school administrators need to work closely with those interested in the school and particularly the youths. By linking together various agencies, the school principal plays a key role in dealing with problems in secondary schools created by family, economic and social conditions. The head teachers should develop lines of communication and transmit information to the community. The principal also needs to seek information from the community [47].

[17] agree with the above authors and indicated that parents need to be involved in the schools mission; making them develops an ownership in the school's mission. The principal needs to interact with parents and other community members. Through interaction with the community the principal will get an opportunity to prevent fighting or if a rumour is loose the principal should share the truth so that people are equipped to deal with it in a healthy way. The principal should arm the community with facts so that they can act as rumour exterminators and keep in contact with the community and let them know the school and its mission.

[13] carried out research study in Missouri and North Carolina and found out that head teachers may minimize conflicts if they understood the people they work with. There is need to collaborate with the families and the community. There is also need to understand the political, social, legal, economic and cultural climate of the community. [15] share this view and indicate that the head teacher needs to study his or her environment and develop leadership style that suit the school community.

[19] concurred with the above view and indicated that the school principal needed to understand the total community and develop good relationship with the local community that the school serves. The author indicated that it was necessary for the principal to know the people who reside around the school. It is also necessary for the school administrator to know the groups and organizations available in the community where the school is found. It is important for the principal to meet the leaders of these groups and organizations because they are

useful in time of crisis. By trying to understand the community, the administrator will know the expectations and the attitudes of the people in the community.

2.3 Game Theory

Game theory provides analytical tools for examining strategic interactions among two or more participants. It was developed by Fisher in the twenty first century. By using simple, often numerical models to study complex social relations, game theory can illustrate the potential for and risks associated with cooperative behaviour among distrustful participants [23]. Though, less familiar than typical board or video games, the lessons from these more abstract or hypothetical games are applicable to a wider array of social situations. Games used to simulate real life situations typically include five elements: players, or decision makers; strategies available to each player; rules governing players' behaviour; outcomes, each of which is a result of particular choices made by players at given point in the game; and payoffs accrued by each player as a result of each possible outcome. These games assume that each player will pursue the strategies that help him or her to achieve the most profitable outcome in every situation.

Real life is full of situations in which people -intentionally or unintentionally - pursue their own interest at the expense of others, leading to conflict or competition. Games used to illustrate these relationships often place the interests of two players in direct opposition: the greater the payoff for one player, the less for the other. In order to achieve a mutually productive outcome, the players must coordinate their strategies, because if each player pursues his or her greatest potential payoffs, the shared outcome is unproductive. This concept is illustrated below, using the Prisoner's Dilemma Game.

This and other games illustrate the potential for cooperation to produce mutually beneficial outcomes [47]. However, they also highlight the difficulties of obtaining cooperation among distrustful participants, because each player is tempted to pursue his or her individual interests. Cooperation requires that both players compromise, and forego their individual maximum payoffs. Yet, in compromising, each player risks complete loss if the opponent decides to seek his or her own maximum payoff. Rather than, risking total loss, players tend to prefer the less productive outcome.

2.4 Environment Factors

Organizations are associative social systems where participants engage in organized activities to attain collective goals and personal goals and interpersonal interactions are fundamental to these organizational activities [47]. Although a relatively large proportion of peoples' daily interactions at work are positive [14], evidence suggested that negative events, such as episodes of interpersonal conflict, hold more potency than positive events with regards to their effects on individual well-being [21]. Research by [37] has showed that intimacy and closeness do not seem to exclude disagreement or conflict and that conflict cannot be eliminated when people work or live in close proximity and is why conflict is not ruled out in friendships despite the fact that most people consider the level of compatibility before choosing friends.

[17] argues that it is significant therefore to note that no matter how much one party might tolerate the other or ignore conflict situations; conflict develops progressively such that even if there is tolerance, one party is likely to react strongly to a situation and respond to conflict in a more hostile manner at a certain point in time. The idea is that even the best of friends or colleagues at work are likely to face conflict of a sort at a point in time. Creating a work environment in which employees are productive is essential to increase profits for the organization, corporation or small business. In looking at the relationship between work, the workplace and the tools of work, workplace interactions become an integral part of work itself.

How well they engage with the organization, their immediate environment influences to a great extent their error rate, level of innovation and collaboration with other employees, absenteeism and ultimately and how long they stay in the job. Researchers such as [47] explained in their report that this is further linked to decreased job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, higher turnover intentions, and increased counterproductive work behavior. It was therefore noted that conflict in the work place was not easy to avoid but should never be ignored if it occurred.

According to [51], ignoring workplace conflict, whether in the substantive or personality based sets destructive forces in motion and spread the conflict to others, subsequently reducing morale and productivity to irreparable levels. [25], organizational consultants in mediation, collaboration and conflict resolution, noted that managers in conflict sensitive organizations spend 25-40 percent of their time resolving workplace conflicts. This obviously affects the productivity of both managers and associates (employees) and can have a far-reaching impact on organizational performance.

[12] defined a system as an entity composed of many elements or components that interact in a positive manner to reach a specific goal. Schools can therefore be viewed as organizations and as system as well because they are human institution that are made up of a collection of people, infrastructure, equipment, material resources, rules and conventions and there is interaction between its individuals. It interacts with the society

within which it is situated. [19] explained that systems and subsystems are critical, in that they function as a unit and interact in a way that either stimulates or retards more interaction. Besides, [3] confirmed that the interactions within a system are important for the system's organizational health.

The school as an organization of individuals cannot escape conflict because it is made up of individuals. [43] explained that parents and teachers are the two centers of conflict in schools. [31] conducted a research on Conflict Resolution between Head teachers and Teachers in Masvingo Zimbabwe and concluded that the main source of conflict in schools is the administration and how it treats the individuals or groups of individuals within the system. [30] believed that when there is a school-based conflict, it is almost always desirable to avoid a win or lose outcomes because the players will continue to work together in the best interests of the child. This is because relationships between parents and the schools continue long after the conflict is over. The last thing that is needed in conflict in the school situation is for one party to feel like a winner and the other a loser because these stakeholders need to coordinate to ensure better education of the children.

[22] affirmed that there are some common factors which cause conflict in relationships. They explain these as situations or circumstances which people choose to be in or just find themselves in. The personality of the individual or people, and the urge or desire for power was identified as major factors in conflict situations. [5] suggested six reasons for conflict in the workplace to include conflicting needs, conflicting styles, conflicting perceptions, conflicting goals, conflicting pressures, and conflicting roles.

2.4.1 Organizational Factors
[6] defined organization as a system inside which several networks of individuals interact, and which itself interacts with the wider social and economic environment. A typology that further categorizes sources of conflict is offered by [49] indicated that the organizational factors or causes are the ones that develop from within the organization and originate from the organizational internal environment. [21] reported that causes of conflict at the level of the organization could also include resource availability and distribution; affirmative action programs; the scope and content of workload; the introduction of new management techniques; and differences of a cultural and racial nature.

[48] asserted that increasing uncertainty and complexity in the operating environment of organizations provide fertile ground for the onset of conflict in the workplace. The organizational climate maybe expressed by the description of desired conditions and the level of satisfaction about those conditions [9]. The organizational factors of conflict are mainly those associated with job- and work environment–related stressors that cause conflict by adversely affecting resources, safety and health as well as job security. A study by [37] identified many stressors, including role ambiguity, role conflict, heavy work-load, pressure, and physical discomforts as being important when it comes to organization based conflict generation.

The school as an organization is a system in which several networks of individuals interact, and which itself interacts with the wider social and economic environment. These individual interactions can be categorized as Head–Teacher, Teacher–Teacher, Teacher–Pupil and School – Community interactions or relationships. In school setups, work stress has been shown to result in job dissatisfaction, burnout (physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion), staff turnover, occupational illness and injuries, reduced mental health, depression, and even suicide, [50].

Some of the organization related factors that influence conflict have been identified to include conflicting needs, conflicting roles, conflicting pressures and unpredictable policies. Experienced long serving teachers and inexperienced young teachers have recently graduated from training with the most recent teaching ideas. As such, staff members in a school or department have different levels of specialized subject related knowledge. It is this specialized training and knowledge that trained teachers use to devalue the untrained non degreed and degreed temporary teachers deployed in the Secondary schools resulting in conflict among the parties [1].

Conflict can result when an experienced teacher must work with a novice who has good theoretical knowledge but few practical skills. For example, a long-serving teacher in the school who is familiar to teach in the old way will have a conflict with young newcomer teacher who has an advanced technique of teaching. The young teachers may perceive the elderly teachers as old fashioned. The two different perceptions of teaching held by the recently graduated young teachers and by the experienced long serving teachers may result in conflict when the two groups are unwilling to work together.

Indiscipline among the teachers may be a source of conflict in schools. [27] argue that some teachers go into the teaching profession as a last resort when other alternatives of employment have failed to materialize and it is these teachers that never settle in their jobs as teachers. [27] argues that such teachers work only to earn a salary and they are bound to complain, murmur, grumble, relax and even fight the school head who demands that work be done. To them, always the head is in the centre of blame. The current economic problems have resulted in lack of employment forcing many young people drop out of school.

In this case heads of schools are likely to encounter challenges when dealing with such teachers who lack commitment and dedication to the profession. On the other hand, [27] postulates that it is not only indiscipline from teachers, but other behavior committed by the school heads that also pose a challenge to school management and these include absenteeism, lateness, dishonesty, inaccessibility and autocracy. Such school heads as argued by [27] find it very difficult to enforce discipline among their own teachers. Status differences can be another source of conflict in schools. In many organizations, including schools, principals are granted privilege denied to other employees or teachers. For instance, managers and principals may enjoy flexible hours, free personal long-distance calls, and longer breaks.

According to [27] some school heads tend to be taken up by status of their position that they regard themselves as inseparable from office. Whoever challenges such authority often has to encounter aggression and threats. Such actions on the part of the school head also cause conflict between the teachers and the head. Provision and sharing of scarce resources is a common cause of conflict in schools. Schools have limited resources that must be shared equitably among teachers and learners of which some might get less than what they desire. According to [44] in many schools teachers are obliged to share the scarce resources and the scarcer the resources are, the greater is the potential for conflict. [30] argue that in schools it is not feasible for all departments to get a budgetary allocation of funds that enable the departments to purchase all their requirements. Hence some are likely to get more and others less.

2.4.2 Relational Factors

These are factors which emerge as a result of individual differences among employees. According to [32] relational factors are those which are related to interpersonal conflicts which they defined as a negative interpersonal encounter characterized by a contentious exchange, hostility or aggression. Interpersonal conflict is overlapping yet distinct from several other negative workplace phenomena. Interpersonal conflict may be an isolated incident or a common occurrence and, in this sense, it is broader in scope than bullying or social undermining, [18]. Interpersonal conflict may include rude behavior but, unlike workplace incivility, interpersonal conflict would also include instances of respectful yet contentious disagreement.

[35] referred to interpersonal conflict as clashes that involve two or more individuals who perceive each other as being in opposition to preferred outcomes, goals, attitudes, values or behaviors. [34] indicate that interpersonal conflict is a situation in which one or both individuals in a relationship are experiencing difficulty in working or living with each other. He further, states that interpersonal conflict usually occurs due to conflicting styles, perceptions as well as differences in goals and values. Similar to this assertion is [40] that in interpersonal conflict, the values of different individuals or groups openly clash. Daily work hassles raise the likelihood of daily occurrence of conflict with coworkers or supervisors at work and have established that work hassles in general and interpersonal conflict in particular have a direct effect on employees' negative affect [45].

Average levels of self-reported interpersonal conflict have correlated moderately with negative emotions (state anxiety and frustration) and with symptoms of depression [35], and there is also evidence to suggest that interpersonal conflict has a strong effect on the work output and is related to other daily stressors such as the workload and availability of resources. [5] observed that no part of one's life has more effects on the person than one's relationships with others. Although relationships can be frustrating, disappointing and painful, they can also be satisfying, fulfilling and a source of pleasure and growth.

Based on this statement, [29] explained that a good interpersonal relationship is one of the factors which promote effective school administration, teaching and learning. According to [16], pleasant interpersonal relationships between these groups are indisputably one of the factors which promote effective school administration and teaching and learning. [35] the relational factors that affect interpersonal relationships are based on the observation include personal goals and values, conflicting styles and conflicting perceptions. The personal factors relate to differences between organizational members. The most common personal factors associated with personal conflict are the level of skills and abilities, different personalities, poor communication, favoritism at work and feeling insecure at work by leadership.

Teachers as human beings have different personalities which result in them doing things differently. These diverse personalities can create the potential for conflict. [24] admitted that different personalities are a reality in any group setting, including the school workplace as there always seems to be one co-worker who is difficult to get along with. There are some people who are generally referred to as difficult to deal with conflict identified the following as the difficult people to deal with in conflict resolution: the bulldozer, the exploder, the complainer, the wet blanket, the know it all, the abrasive person and the staller.

Different personalities, according to [24] can result in underlying tension between school heads and some teachers. Some teachers are reluctant to obey the principals, they do not like to follow rules or accept extra work, hence do not easily get along with their principals. This is because most people do not like being told what to do. According to [44] principals too adopt an authoritative leadership style, for example they pressurize

teachers for an uninterrupted working of the school activities hence conflict between teachers and the school principal occurs frequently at any time in the school.

According to [38] some teachers just do not like the fact that certain people are their administrators. Some of the teachers feel more competent than their administrators and as such do not always cooperate with them. Such teachers literally do not have regard for the ranks of such heads. They believe they are more capable especially if they possess higher qualifications than the school head. Another common cause of conflict is poor communication, which can lead to misunderstandings and allow barriers to be erected [44].

[24] contend that both too little and too much communication can lead to conflict. They argue that when there is too little communication, teachers and departments do not know enough about each others intentions, goals and plans and coordination can become difficult and misunderstandings are more likely to occur which can result in conflict. According to [24] too much communication on the other hand can result in misunderstandings that cause conflict too. [44], [24] contend that perhaps the easiest way to prevent conflict is to ensure good communication. The school head therefore needs to constantly meet with all sectors of the institution to speak out and set the record straight to avoid distortions that may lead to conflict.

Under such an environment, members are filled with distrust towards the head of institution and disputes are not easily resolved. Favoritism is a natural phenomenon and as such it is bound to affect any organization, including schools. Usually, teachers in a school have different levels of qualifications, skills and abilities. [24] cite [21] contend that conflict can result when an experienced employee works with a novice who has good theoretical knowledge but few practical skills. According to [26] insecurity has to do with the feeling that one is not up to the tasks they face.

2.4.3 External Factors

External conflict is conflict that originates from an external source outside of the person and the organization. The important thing to note about these factors is that both workers and management respond to them. Some of the external causes of conflict may however not directly instigate industrial action but they do influence general social expectation. [36] stated that the causes of industrial conflict is due to the lukewarm attitude of employers and government in responding to the demands of the workers or treating their demand with levity, and also, non-recognition of the Nigerian Labour Congress [NLC] as an organ for harmonizing possible conflict between the employers of labor and employees. [33] indicated that the union, the parents and the employer policies on promotion, remuneration and job security plays a very important role in funning conflicts among the staff.

Unions are also known to fan conflicts. In a research conducted by [2] to determine the causes of conflict in schools in South Africa, all the participants highlighted how union conflicts could affect the operations in the schools. However, recent studies by [33] in Ghana, pointed to the positive role played by unions in helping to resolve workplace disputes. Research by [41] found that autonomy from management and greater dispute resolution skills and expertise allowed union representatives to play a more constructive role than non-union representatives in disciplinary proceedings.

Managers in workplaces generally felt that union representatives helped to ensure that disciplinary hearings operated in a more procedurally fair and efficient manner than might otherwise have been the case. Such outcomes were most likely in workplaces where there were high levels of trust between union representatives and managers [45]. A recent survey conducted on conflict resolution in Africa revealed that union officials were far more inclined to take a conciliatory rather than antagonistic approach when negotiating with employers. Over 50 per cent of officials agreed strongly that they would seek a compromise solution, whereas 15 per cent agreed strongly that they would opt for positive outcome on behalf of their members at any cost.

Studies show that workers in enterprises where unions are present are likely to have greater capacity to assert their rights and improve their conditions beyond the statutory minimum than those in non-unionized workplaces [10]. Unions provide the rights and scope to organize workers; writers such as such as [35] indicated that unions have incorporated the expansion of worker rights around issues such as conflict management, promotion and salary adjustments into their traditional collective bargaining strategies with some success. Contrary to this, [36] argued that most union leaders are politically motivated by making a big case out of nothing in order to obtain cheap popularity.

Conflicts of this nature arise when employees have grievances and objections about the way an employer is handling an existing contract for all or specific individuals in a school setup. A typical grievance involves accusing the employer of doing something that violates the union contract, such as firing an employee without just cause, salary disputes, disciplinary cases, job security issues among others. Currently the teacher management in Kenya is under the Teachers Service commission; A constitutional commission established under Article 237(1) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 whose mandate includes the following: To register trained teachers; to recruit and employ registered teachers; to assign teachers employed by the commission for service in any public school or institution; to promote and transfer teachers, to exercise disciplinary control over

teachers; and to terminate the employment of teachers. These activities are regulated by various policies which if not administered in a fair manner, can be a source of conflict among the teachers [42].

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed descriptive research design. The major purpose of descriptive research design is a description of the state of affairs as it exists at present [28]. The researcher applied this design to investigate the current situation on the conflict applied in public secondary schools in Makueni County. This design was adopted because it allows the collection of large amounts of data from the target population and gathered information through interviews.

3.2 Target Population

This study targeted secondary principals and the school teachers in Mukaa sub-county Makueni County. According to the information obtained from the Makueni County education department; service commission office, Makueni County has six sub counties and 254 public secondary schools. The researcher picked Mukaa sub-County through stratified sampling to represent the schools strata. Mukaa sub-county has a total of 5 private schools and 39 public schools, a total of 44 secondary schools. The researcher only worked with the public schools in Makueni County to enhance the research reliability and uniformity and comparison purposes.

Table 3. 1: Target Population

School category	No. of Schools	10%	No. of Head teachers	10%	No. of Teachers	20%	No of S.R.C.	10%
Mixed day & boarding	15	2	15	2	70	14	95	9
Mixed Boarding	9	1	9	1	75	14	120	12
Mixed Day	6	1	6	1	35	6	79	8
Single Boarding	9	1	9	1	75	14	99	10
Total	39	5	39	5	255	48	393	39

3.3 Sampling Procedure

According to [39], a sample can be said to be a section of population that is selected for investigation since the need to sample is key in any research. Ten (10) schools out of the 39 public secondary schools in the sub-county was sampled using stratified random sampling to ensure that all the categories of schools were represented. The study was drawn from the 39 public secondary school teachers and principals in Mukaa sub county. The school administrators were basically the deputy principals and senior Masters because they mainly deal with discipline cases.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The data were collected using structured questionnaires. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the sampled respondent within the schools. The research also involved structured interviews to help the researcher collect an in-depth information from the Head teachers and the Teachers who are the key decision makers in the organizations.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The exercise involved administering qu   to teachers and head teachers. The researcher personally visited the sampled schools, introduced herself to the head teachers and explained the purpose of the study. The researcher advised on how the questionnaire should be completed independently by the head teachers and teachers. The researcher primarily relayed on primary sources of data. The questionnaires were administered to the respondent using the drop and pick technique of visiting the sampled schools to distribute the questionnaires then came to pick them from the principal later a few days through arrangement after they are filled. The interviews were carried in the same period.

Data Analysis And Presentation

4.1 Respondents Opinion on Presence of Conflict among Staff Members

The respondents were asked to provide their opinions on the existence of conflict among the staff members. The results as indicated in the table 4.1 show that majority 39 (78%) of the respondents were in agreement that there were cases of conflicts among the members in the schools while 11 (22%) were contrary to the opinion that there exist conflicts among the members in the schools. The interpretation here is that in Mukaa Sub County schools there exist conflicts among the teaching staff hence the need to resolve the conflicts using

appropriate approaches within the secondary schools. Further conflicts are best resolved when they are acknowledged to be existing.
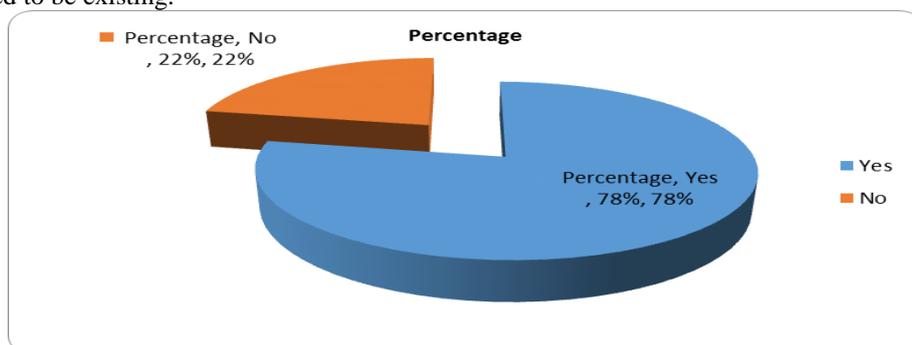
Figure 4.1: Existence of Conflict among Staff Members

4.2 Respondent's Opinion on Rate of Occurrence of Conflict among the Teaching Staff

The respondents were asked to provide their opinion on the frequency of occurrence of Conflict among the teaching staff. The findings from the Table 4.2 showed a majority of 29 (58%) were of low extent, 17 (34%) were of moderate opinion, 4 (8%) were of high extent, and none of the respondents were of very high extent. The findings obtained showed that in Mukaa Sub County schools there is a low frequency of occurrence of conflicts among the teaching staff due to the conflict resolution approaches put in place. The occurrences of conflict are based on personal and organizational issues that arise within the secondary schools.

Table 4.2: Frequency of occurrence of Conflict among the teaching staff

Remarks	Number	Percentage
Very high	0	0
High	4	8
Moderate	17	34
Low	29	58
Total	50	100

4.3 Respondent's Opinion on the Mode of Conflict between Teaching Staff and the School Administration

The respondents were requested to provide the frequency of occurrence of conflict between teaching staff and the administration. The results from table 4.3 showed that majority of 28 (56%) were of low rating, 19 (38%) stood for moderate rate, 2 (4%) were of high extent and 1 (2%) of the respondents were of very high extent opinion   The observation here is that the public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub County there existing a low frequent occurrence of conflict between the teaching staff and administration. [19] confirmed that conflict may arise and be high when there were insufficient available resources in groups or organizations.

Table 4.3: Frequency of occurrence of Conflict between teaching staff and the administration

Remarks/level	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	1	2
High	2	4
Moderate	19	38
Low	28	56
Total	50	100

4.4 Respondents' Opinion on the Rate of Conflict between Teaching Staff and the Teachers Union

The respondents were asked to indicate frequency of occurrence of conflict between teaching staff and the teachers union. The results obtained showed that majority of 23 (46%) was of low opinion, 22 (44%) stood for moderate rate, 4 (8%) were of high extent, 1 (2%) of the respondents were of very high extent, rate and The study established that the teaching staff experiences a low frequency of conflict with the teachers union which is mandated to oversee the welfare of the teachers. The information indicated that the teachers union has been supportive in matters relating to minimizing conflict. [19] asserted that conflict was a normal and natural part of our workplace and Personal lives that cannot be avoided but only needed to be managed effectively.

Table 4.4: Frequency of occurrence of Conflict between teaching staff and the teachers union

Remarks	Number	Percentage
Very high	1	2
High	4	8
Moderate	22	44
Low	23	46

Total	50	100

4.5 Respondent's Opinion on the Rate at Which Conflict Exist between Teaching Staff and the Teachers' Employer

The respondents were asked to present their opinion on the frequency of occurrence of conflict between teaching staff and the teachers' employers union. The results in Table 4.5 show that 20 (40%) had the opinion that the level of conflict were moderate while 3 (6%) believed the level was high extent. 17 (34%) were of low, 10 (20%) of the respondents were of very high The information indicated that the teachers employer which is the teachers service commission have not been involved in a high level of conflict with the teaching staff in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub county due to the structures put in place.

Table 4.5: Frequency of occurrence of Conflict between teaching staff and the teachers' employer (TSC)

Remarks level	Number	Percentage
Very high	10	20
High	3	6
Moderate	20	40
Low	17	34
Total	50	100

4.6 Factors Which Influence Conflicts

The objectives sought to address the factors which cause conflicts in Secondary Schools in Mukaa Sub County. The specific objectives included the following: to identify the organizational factors that cause conflict among the teaching staff in public secondary schools in Makueni County; to identify the relational factors that cause conflict among the teaching staff in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub County and to identify the external factors that cause conflict among the teaching staff in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub County. Each of the three objectives had four questions analyzed using the Likert Scale.

4.6.1 Response on Organizational Factors Which Influence Conflict

The objective was to identify the organizational factors that cause conflict among the teaching staff in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub County. The study analyzed the contribution of the different organizational factors like working materials and space is always available when required, tasks here are professionally done without unnecessary power wielding school policies on conflict management, resolution and teacher motivation exist. School policies are communicated and implemented fairly to all staff members without favoritisms. To address this, the participants were asked to respond to items in the questionnaire on the major organizational factors of conflict in secondary schools.

Table 4.6: Organizational factors which influence conflict

Remarks	Availability of working materials and space		Professionalism in tasks without power wielding		School policies on conflict and teacher motivation existence		Communication and implementation of school policies without favourism	
	Frequency	No.	Frequency	No.	Frequency	No.	Frequency	No.
Strongly agree	4	8	10	20	6	12	10	20
Agree	16	32	27	54	24	48	22	44
Neutral	12	24	8	16	14	28	7	14
Disagree	17	34	5	10	6	12	9	18
Stronglydisagree	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	4
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

The respondents were asked to indicate the rating on the organizational factors. Table 4.9 on respondents response on the organizational factors; availability of working materials and space, professionalism in tasks without power wielding, School policies on conflict and teacher motivation existence and Communication and implementation of school policies accordingly. Ranked by percentages, the majority 27(54%) agreed that professionalism in tasks in schools without power wielding was the main factor of conflict followed by schools policies on conflict and existence of teacher motivation 24(48%) and finally communication and implementation of school policies without favourism at 22 (44%). However, the differences between the three factors were not significant as based on the percentages. A few disagreed with the fact that working materials and space is always available when required, tasks here are professionally done without unnecessary power wielding, school policies on conflict management, resolution and teacher motivation exist (34%, 18%,12% and 10%) respectively were the major contributors to conflict incidences in secondary schools. A few number of the respondents strongly disagreed whether professionalism and policies within the organization contribute to conflict in Secondary schools. This was an indication that conflict was rife in schools and the teachers and the administration was aware of its existence.

4.6.2 Relational Factors of Conflict

The objective was to identify the relational factors that cause conflict among the teaching staff in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The statements were to analyze the contribution of the different relational sub factors in the determination of the relational conflict among the teaching staff. The sub-factors analyzed included; differences in experience and expertise, inter-dependency, education level and personal clashes. The results are presented as shown in table 4.7

The respondents were asked the influence of relational factors. The results are reflected on table 4.7 showed that majority of the respondents indicated that the three relational factors which included difference in experience and expertise do not affect working relationship, there is high inter-dependency among the teachers, difference in education levels have no effect on working relationships among teachers and personal clashes are not common in these schools were the major sources of relational conflict among the staff in the Mukaa sub county secondary schools. Ranked by percentages the high inter-dependency among the teachers is represented by 21 (42%), followed by 19 (38%) indicated that difference in experience and expertise do not affect working relations and finally personal clashes at 17 (34%). Those disagreeing indicated that personal clashes were at 14 (28%) of the respondents. None of the respondents strongly disagreed that there is high inter-dependency among the teachers did contribute to conflict in Secondary schools. Similar to this assertion was the observation by [36] that in interpersonal conflict, the values of different individuals or groups openly clashed.

Table 4.7: Relational Factors Which Influence Conflict

	Difference in experience and expertise do not affect working relationship		There is high inter-dependency among the teachers		Difference in education levels have no effect on working relationships among teachers		Personal clashes are not common in this school	
Remarks	Frequency	No.	Frequency	No.	Frequency	No.	Frequency	No.
Strongly agree	11	22	10	20	10	20	10	20
Agree	19	38	26	42	14	28	17	34
Neutral	3	6	11	22	8	16	7	14
Disagree	12	24	9	18	10	20	14	28
Strongly disagree	5	10	0	0	8	16	2	4
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

4.6.3 External Factors Influencing Conflicts

The respondents were asked to give information on extent to which external factors influence on conflict in the schools. The results as reflected in table 4.8 indicated that 18 (36%) stood for a moderate extent, 15 (30%) were of a great extent 9 (18%) stood for a very great extent, 8 (16%) stood for a low extent and none for a very low extent. The findings showed that external factors have highly influenced conflict in Mukaa sub county secondary public schools. The external forces have great influence since the level of conflict is at rife in the school. There exist external facilitating factors which are major cause of conflicts in the learning institutions. In regard to types of conflicts in schools, the results concurs with the findings of [35] who argued that interpersonal conflicts resulting from personality variables such as dislikes, distrust, or prejudice usually hinder group performance such as academic performance of a school.

Table 4.8: Extent to which external factors influence conflict in the school

Remarks	Number	Percentage
A very great extent	9	18
A great extent	15	30
A Moderate extent	18	36
A low extent	8	16
A very low extent	0	0
Total	50	100

Conclusion And Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The findings of the study could be generalized as those affecting public secondary schools across the country. The background analysis was done on incidences of conflict and frequency of occurrence of conflict in the schools. The report indicated high conflict incidences among the teaching staff, low level between the administration and the teaching staff and few incidences between the teaching staff and the union, the teachers' employer and the parents.

Conflicts in public secondary schools were high among the teaching staff and between the teaching staff and the administration as is indicated by the study, but moderate between the teaching staff and the union, teachers' employer. The factors covered organizational, relational and external factors for easy analysis. Among

the organizational factors the researcher analyzed as a working materials and space, professionalism in tasks, school policies on conflict and teacher motivation existence, communication and implementation of school policies. Among the relational factors, the researcher analyzed experience and expertise on working relationship, inter-dependency among the teachers, education levels have on working relationships among teachers and personal clashes are not common in these schools. The external factors analyzed included, the role of the teachers' employer and the role of the unions.

The organizational factors were analyzed and the results indicate that professionalism in tasks without power wielding had the highest contribution to conflict in schools followed by school policies and teacher motivation, unpredictable policies and finally working materials and space. This indicated that the organization need to have clear policies that are communicated to all stakeholders on material availability and sharing, teacher motivation and the practice of professionalism in the work place.

The relational factors analyzed included conflicting styles, conflicting perceptions and conflicting roles and values. The report indicated that interdependency among the teachers had the highest contribution to conflict in schools followed by difference in experience and expertise, personal clashes and difference in educational level. The external factors indicated that the majority were not sure of the roles played by the unions and the parents but agreed that the employer has a role to play in their conflict issues.

The overall analysis report indicated that conflict exist in schools and was affected by a variety of factors that emanate from the organization, the individuals and the external stakeholders especially the parents, the union and the teachers' employer (TSC). This was supported further by the analysis of the correlation between the organizational and relational factors which indicated a high positive correlation between the organizational and the relational factors. Among the different conflict correlations, the one between unpredictable policies on teacher communication and motivation on one hand and conflicting goals and values on the other was the highest. This is because the teacher motivation packages and communication in general affect personalities and understanding in the organization.

The major factors of conflict included: conflicting needs, conflicting roles and pressures, unpredictable policies conflicting styles, conflicting perceptions and conflicting goals and values. Factors influencing conflict varied from one school to another but the most experienced factors of conflict were the conflicting needs under organizational conflict factors category and conflicting perceptions under relational conflict category. Conflict factors were not looked at from all components because the factors relate to each other such that one leads to many others within the system.

5.2 Recommendations for the Study
The recommendations are drawn based on the study findings as follows:
i.   The school administration need to establish the root cause by interviewing principals and teachers on the factors influencing conflicts in public secondary schools and ensure that these factors of conflict are well understood and dealt with on time;
ii. There is need to focus on developing personality trait of the management in public secondary schools as these minimizes conflicts through consultation with the experienced teachers.

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