

TYPES OF CONFLICTS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN URIRI AND NYATIKE SUB-COUNTIES, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the types of conflicts in the selected secondary schools in Uriri and Nyatike Sub-Counties, Kenya. The target population of the study included 1960 teachers, 87 principals and 87 senior teachers in 87 secondary schools in Uriri and Nyatike Sub Counties. The study relied on self-administered questionnaires and focus group discussions. Adopting a descriptive survey design, data was collected from a sample of 319 teachers, 29 principals and 29 senior teachers. The primary data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires to allow for collection of structured for ease of coding and analysis. Focus group discussions was also organized for senior teachers within the schools to shed more insights on the various types of conflicts that are experienced in secondary schools. The findings reveal that conflicts characterized by incompatible solutions for resource distribution, differences in opinions, and work-related disagreements are common among teachers in schools. While both teachers and principals acknowledged experiencing conflicts related to resource allocation and work-related disagreements, teachers expressed greater concern for conflicts arising from differences in opinions and emotional harm. Conversely, principals identified conflicts related to differences in desired outcomes and the need to punish opponents as the most common. The study provides valuable insights to teachers and principals on the various types of conflicts in schools to help stakeholders to effectively manage the conflicts and create a conducive learning environment that prioritizes collaboration, respect, and the holistic development of students and educators.

Keywords: School conflicts, Teachers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a social phenomenon that occurs between two or more individuals, organizations, groups or nations (Rubin, 1994) and is widely accepted as an inseparable aspect of the human and social life. According to Wall & Callester (1995), conflict emerges when the parties realize that their interests are in conflict are blocked or negatively affected by others. Conflict also results from disagreements and inconsistencies during interpersonal interactions between people (Rahim, 1983). Conflicts have become a common aspect of human interactions in the contemporary world. It is an inevitable friction in an organization. Relationship and conflicts are inevitable realities of life; they are a set of dynamic phenomena present and indispensable in human societies (Onyinyechi, & Wichendu, 2018). The school is one of the social environments where conflict manifests every single day among teachers, students, principals and non-teaching staff. In their study, Ossail & Nwalando (2011) observed a surge in student

and staff interactions in school today and thus conflict can arise from the school administrative section, students, sometimes between schools and the local communities.

The school environment is socially diverse and therefore conflicts can arise in the course of the interpersonal interactions and relationships. Therefore, conflict can occur in situations where differences arise in culture, personality, values, beliefs, attitudes, needs, preferences, goals, interests and power interplay (Onyinyechi, & Wichendu, 2018). Lack of understanding on the type of conflicts and developing the necessary skills by school principals and teachers to overcome conflict can be detrimental to performance as it wastes significant time that would otherwise be spent on teaching. Conflicts can deepen and become more complicated if they are not resolved, leaving the affected parties aggravated and with negative feelings (Argon, 2014). This is detrimental to performance of students and school personnel thus reducing the quality of education and learning in schools. According to Richards, (2012), conflicts can be good for organizations if they encourage open mindedness and discourage group thinking. It is important for principals to understand the various types of conflicts to learn how to effectively manage them and for the conflicts to become catalysts rather than hindrances to organizational development and improvement. This research paper therefore examines the various types of conflicts in selected secondary schools in Uriri and Nyatike Sub-counties in the Republic of Kenta with a view to providing insights for school principals to manage the conflicts to promote a positive and conducive learning environment and foster performance.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section deals with types of conflicts that might arise in schools. Conflicts are generally categorized in terms of how they manifest and their impact on the parties affected. Broadly, conflicts exist in two categories; functional and dysfunctional conflicts.

Functional Conflict

The functional view of organizational conflict sees conflict as a productive force that stimulates members to increase their knowledge, skills and their contribution to the organization and productivity. Modern approach considers that the key to organizational success lies not in structure, clarity or orderliness but in creativity, responsiveness and adaptability, (White, 2012). Therefore, conflicts are necessary in organizations so that diverging views can be put on the table to help invent new ways of doing things. It is from conflicts that people are provided with feedback about how things are going on. Personality conflicts may also inform leaders about what is not working in an organization, this may lead to improvement, (Bacal et al., 2012) assert that, a flexible vision of organization recognizes that each conflict situation provides opportunity to improve. Therefore, conflicts should not be eliminated or suppressed so that people and organizations are not destroyed but enhanced. In his study, Richards (2012) argues that conflicts are good for organizations if they encourage open mindedness and discourage group thinking. Therefore, it is important for principals to learn how to manage conflicts well so that conflicts become catalysts rather than hindrances to organizational development and improvement. For a conflict to be functional, it has to raise questions. A conflict that raises questions for those on both sides of any issue becomes functional as the

questions can lead to new ideas and breakthroughs in thinking that are benefit individuals, departments and organizations. Without conflicts, nothing changes and there is no need to challenge the status quo. Reconsideration that emanates from conflict can lead to breakthrough in thinking.

Functional conflicts encourage new perspectives. Many people enjoy conflict to a certain degree because stimulates new thinking and provides opportunity for considering different points of view. This can give room for new possibilities and ideas. Organizations can grow to new levels as a result of the healthy conflicts. As a result, this can help people learn to listen thus building relationships. Functional relationships also give room for the development of new relationships between individuals, departments and even competitors. This is achieved through mutual understanding and respect. Therefore, it is important for parties to listen to each other objectively in any conflict to gain valuable insight, as this is essential for growth. Functional conflicts teach employees how to manage conflicts effectively in an organization creates a climate of innovation which encourages creative thinking and minds are open to new and previously unexplored possibilities. New ways of approaching challenges and meeting demands of a competitive business world may result in improvements that benefit the organization as well as the employees (Saduman 2010). Stagnation is beaten by functional conflicts- avoiding conflict is likened to avoiding change which can lead to the demise of even a successful organization. If employees are encouraged to approach conflicts positively and productively, it is possible to beat stagnation which opens doors to competitors and challenges. Conflicts may lead to the ability to continue to provide new and innovative solutions to meet people's needs (Ahmed & Ahmed 2015).

Dysfunctional Conflict

Dysfunctional view of organizational conflict emerges from the notion that organizations achieve goals by creating structures that perfectly define job responsibilities, authorities and other job functions. It is argued that every individual knows where to fit, what they must do and how to relate to others. This organizational structure values orderliness, stability and repression of any conflict that may arise. This only fits organizations that work in routine ways where innovation and change are virtually eliminated. Dynamic organizations work within very disorderly contexts with constant change and a need for constant adaptation. Trying to "structure away" conflict and disagreement in a dynamic organization means suppressing any positive outcome that may come from disagreements such as improved decision making and innovation (Bacal et al., 2012).

If conflict is not managed effectively, the workers tend to exhibit both low job satisfaction and reduced productivity. The overall structure of the group or organization tends to be very negative, (Richards, 2012). It is appropriate to classify conflicts on the basis of their sources for proper understanding of their nature and implications. Conflicts in schools may occur as a result of individuals interacting with one another. Understanding social systems theory can assist leadership in minimizing conflicts. The leader must give consideration to the whole school, individuals in the school and the interaction that occurs between and among individuals

and groups. The primary role of school principals must be the growth of the school and the people affiliated with the school, (White, 2012). According to Richards, (2012), conflicts occur in schools because individuals observe inequality in the treatment of school personnel, relative to the reward system and for the distribution of scarce resources. If the behavior of the principal places concerns of equity in the school, conflicts are likely to occur, thus creating a barrier to effectiveness. It is extremely difficult to minimize conflict and have high level of quality in the school when people feel they are treated unfairly.

Conflict management is the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way. In a school situation, conflict management requires effective communication, problem solving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the overall goals. A school as any other organization is a social unity, systematically structured and managed to meet needs or pursue collective goals on a continuing basis. A school has a management structure that determines relationships between functions and positions, and subdivides and delegates roles and responsibilities and authority to carry out tasks. Schools are open systems that are affected by the environment beyond their boundaries, (Bacal et al., 2012). Conflict may be classified on the basis of their sources or on the basis of their organizational levels (individual or group) at which they may originate. Classification of conflict may also be done on the basis of the antecedent conditions that lead to conflict. Conflicts may originate from a number of sources such as tasks, goals and values. The following are types of conflicts; affective conflict, substantive conflict, conflict of interest, conflict of values, goal conflict, retributive conflict, misattributed conflict and displaced conflict, (Kim, 2012). When there is conflict of interest or inconsistency between two parties and their preferences for the allocation of scarce resources, each party sharing the same understanding of the situation prefers a different and incompatible solution to a problem involving distribution of scarce resources. For instance, the head of games department may demand the school teams play friendly matches with other schools to expose the teams and strengthen them, the principal on the other hand may prefer hiring external coaches to train the teams. The principal and the head of department in this case, have incompatible solutions for the same problem.

Conflict of values occurs when two social entities differ in their ideologies on certain issues (Ahmad & Marinah, 2013). This is also called ideological conflict. Goal conflict occurs when a preferred outcome or end state of two social entities is inconsistent. In rare cases it may involve divergent preferences over all of the decision outcome consisting a "zero sum game" (Powel & Maoz 2014) for example, teachers may prefer to have students enrolled for regional joint examination tests, while the principal may prefer to have internal examinations in order to cut down financial expenditure. Nonrealistic conflicts are a result of a party's need for releasing tension and expressing hostility, ignorance or error, whereas a realistic conflict is associated with mostly rational or goal-oriented disagreement, non-realistic conflict is an end in itself, having very little to do with group or organizational goals. (Badubi 2017). Institutional conflict is characterized by situations in which actors follow explicit rules and display predictable behavior, their relationships have continuity as in the case of staff line conflict or labors management negotiations. (Ahmad & Marina, 2013)

Retributive conflict is characterized by the situations whereby, the conflicting entities feel the need for a down/ out conflict to punish the component, (Laron, 2014). Miss-attributive conflict is to release incorrect assignment of causes (behaviors, parties and issues) to conflict (Peterson & Hervey, 2006). For example, an employee may wrongly attribute their supervisors a cut in the employee’s department budget, which may have been done by higher level managers over the protest of the supervisor. Displaced conflict occurs when the conflicting parties direct their frustrations or hostilities to social entities not involved the conflict or argue over secondary, not major issues (Jenab et al.,2013).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to identify the views of teachers and principals on the types of conflicts in schools. The study was conducted in Uriri and Nyatike Sub Counties, which are in Migori County in the Republic of Kenya. The study group included 319 teachers and 29 principles who received and responded to the questions representing a response rate of 81.4% and 29%.

Semi-structured questionnaires were prepared for data collection to allow for the collection of structured data. The empirical literature on the various types of conflicts was reviewed when developing the questions. The piloting phase included experts from the field of educational sciences and the sample questionnaires were administered to three teachers and principals after which their feedback and views were integrated to eliminate ambiguity and ensure objectiveness. The finalized questionnaires were administered to the respondents including both teachers and principals to share insights on the various types of conflicts that exist in schools. The first questionnaire targeted teachers and examined various types of conflict including conflicts involving differences in viewpoints, conflict from differences in desired outcomes, work-related disagreements, the desire or feeling to punish opponents and conflicts that involve directing frustration to other people. The second questionnaire targeted principals from the selected schools and included conflicts involving work related disagreements, hostility towards others, desire for punishment, different opinions, incompatible decisions on scarce resources and differences in desired outcomes. The results are presented below.

3.0 STUDY RESULTS

Teachers’ Perspectives on Types of Conflicts

The research examined the views of secondary school teachers in Nyatike and Uirri sub-counties on the various types of conflicts in schools. Respondents were asked to provide their feedback on their experience with the conflicts by indicating NR= Never, RA= Rarely, ST= Sometimes, OF= Often and AL= Always. The findings are presented in table 4.1 below.

N=319

Teachers’ Response on Types of Conflict

	Types of Conflicts	NR	RA	ST	OF	AL
1	Incompatible solutions for problems involving distribution of scarce resources	36	85	126	44	28
2	Differences in opinion and view points	8	66	166	67	12
3	Differences in opinion concerning the desired results	24	116	127	47	5
4	Need to hurt others emotionally	48	123	108	28	12
5	Work-related disagreements between the teachers themselves	23	84	153	51	8
6	Conflicting entities feel the need to punish opponent	76	138	82	16	7
7	Conflicting parties direct their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict	75	97	119	26	2
8	Work-related disagreements between teachers and the administration	30	88	141	48	12

Table 4.1 indicates that 36 (11.3 percent) teachers never experienced conflicts due to incompatible solution for problems involving distribution of scarce resources while 85 (26.6 percent) teachers rarely experienced, 126 (39.5 percent) sometimes experienced, 44 (13.8 percent) often experienced, and 28 (8.8 percent) teachers always experienced conflict as a result of incompatible solution for problems involving distribution of scarce resources. This suggests that a greater percentage of teachers experienced some level of conflict compared to those who never experienced conflict due to incompatible solution involving distribution of scarce resources. However, amongst the 283, (88.7 percent) teachers who affirmed some level of conflict in the schools, 126, (39.5 percent) teachers representing the majority indicated that sometimes conflict of incompatible solutions for problems involving distribution of scarce resources occurred.

Conflict Involving Differences in Opinion and View Point

From findings in table 4.1 above, 8, (2.5 percent) teachers affirmed never experiencing conflict between parties while 66, (20.7 percent) teachers rarely experienced, 166, (52.0 percent) teachers sometimes experienced, 67, (21.0 percent) teachers often experienced, and 12, (3.8 percent) teachers always experienced conflict of differences of views on certain issues between two parties. This means 311, (97.5 percent) teachers experienced such conflict of differences of views on certain issues and only 8, (2.5 percent) teachers confirmed that conflict never occurred in the schools based on differences of views on issues. Therefore, this implies that

conflict of differences in views on issues was common in the schools with 166, (52.0 percent) teachers supporting that it sometimes occurred.

Conflict Involving Differences in Opinion on the Desired Outcomes

Based on this dimension of conflict, 24, (7.5 percent) teachers indicated that they never experienced inconsistency on preferred outcome or end state while 116, (36.4 percent) teachers rarely experienced, 127, (39.8 percent) sometimes experienced, 47, (14.7 percent) often experienced, and 5, (1.6 percent) teachers always experienced inconsistency on preferred outcome or end state. Consequently, 295, (92.5 percent) teachers were in support that inconsistency on preferred outcome or end state occurred while 24, (7.5 percent) teachers indicated it never occurred in the schools. The findings demonstrated that there were inconsistencies in teacher perceptions on preferred outcome or end state as sometimes a common conflict in the schools.

Conflict Leading to Emotional Harm to Others.

From the results in table 4.1, 48 (15.0 percent) teachers indicated that they never experienced the need hurt others emotionally, while 123, (38.6 percent) teachers rarely experienced, 108, (33.9 percent) sometimes experienced, 28, (8.8 percent) often experienced, and 12, (3.8 percent) teachers always experienced need to hurt others emotionally. As a result, 271, (85.0 percent) teachers in total affirmed some level of need to release tension while the other 48, (15.0 percent) teachers never felt the need to release tension. Therefore, suggesting that the need to release tension was a rarely common conflict amongst the teachers.

Conflicts Involving Work-related Differences

Table 4.1 shows that 23, (7.3 percent) teachers never experienced work-related disagreements between the teachers themselves, 84, (26.3 percent) teachers rarely experienced, 153, (50.0 percent) teachers sometimes experienced, 51, (16.0 percent) teachers often experienced, and 8, (2.5 percent) teachers always experienced work-related disagreements between the teachers themselves. This means 311, (97.5 percent) teachers experienced work-related disagreements while 8, (2.5 percent) teachers confirmed that work-related disagreements never occurred in the schools. Therefore, indicating that work-related disagreement was sometimes common in the schools.

Conflicts where Parties See the Need to Punish Others

Some conflicts manifest through the desire of parties to punish others. On this dimension, Table 4.1 shows that 76, (23.8 percent) teachers never felt the need to punish conflicting opponent while 138 (43.3 percent) teachers rarely experienced the need, 82, (25.7 percent) teachers sometimes experienced, 16, (5.0 percent) often experienced, and 7, (2.2 percent) teachers always felt the need to punish opponent. This indicated that 243, (76.2 percent) teachers experienced the need to punish their conflicting opponent while 76, (23.8 percent) teachers

never felt the need to punish opponent. This implied that the need for conflicting entities to punish opponent was a rare experience in the schools.

Conflicts Where Parties Direct Frustrations or Hostilities to Others Not In Conflict

Results in Table 4.7 showed that 75, (23.5 percent) teachers never experienced conflicts as a result of conflicting parties directing their frustration or hostilities at those not in conflict while 97, (30.4 percent) teachers rarely experienced, 119, (37.3 percent) teachers sometimes experienced, 26, (8.2 percent) teachers often experienced, and 2, (0.6 percent) teachers always expressed their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict. This means 244, (66.5 percent) teachers expressed their frustrations and hostilities at those not in conflict, while 8, (2.5 percent) teachers confirmed they never experienced such conflict in the schools. It further implied that conflicting parties sometimes directed their frustration or hostilities at teachers’ not in conflict.

Conflict Involving Work-related Disagreements

Lastly, 30, (9.4 percent) teachers never experienced work-related disagreements with the administration while 88, (27.6 percent) teachers rarely experienced such conflicts, 141, (44.2 percent) teachers sometimes experienced, 48, (15 percent) teachers often experienced, and 12, (3.8 percent) teachers always experienced work-related disagreement with the administration. This suggests 389, (90.6 percent) teachers had experience in work-related disagreements with the administration while 30, (9.4 percent) teachers confirmed that work-related disagreements with the administration never occurred in the schools. It was therefore concluded that work-related disagreement with the administration was sometimes a common experience.

Section 2: Principals’ Perspectives on Types of Conflicts

This section examines the views and opinions of principles in selected secondary schools in Uriri and Nyatike sub-counties of Migori County within the republic of Kenya. Respondents were asked to provide their feedback on their experience with the conflicts by indicating NR= Never, RA= Rarely, ST= Sometimes, OF= Often and AL= Always. The findings are presented in table 4.1 below.

n=29

The findings are presented in table 4.2 blow;

Table 4. 1: Principals’ Response on Types of Conflict

(Principals, n=29)

Principals’ Response on Types of Conflict					
Types of Conflicts	NR	RA	ST	OF	AL

1	Incompatible solutions for problems involving distribution of scarce resources	5	13	5	0	6
2	Differences in opinion and view points	13	11	5	0	0
3	Differences in opinion concerning the desired results.	0	10	15	4	0
4	Need to hurt others emotionally.	3	15	11	0	0
5	Work-related disagreements between the teachers themselves	3	8	14	4	0
6	Conflicting entities feel the need to punish opponent	2	12	9	4	2
7	Conflicting parties direct their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict	5	15	5	4	0
8	Work-related disagreements between teachers and the administration	0	12	17	0	0

KEY

NR= Never RA= Rarely ST= Sometimes OF= Often AL= Always

From Table 4.2, 5 (17.2 percent) principals never experienced incompatible solution for problems involving distribution of scarce resources while 13, (44.8 percent) principals rarely experienced, 5, (17.2 percent) sometimes experienced, and 6, (20.8 percent) principals always experienced incompatible solution for problems involving distribution of scarce resources. This meant incompatible solution for problems involving distribution of scarce resources rarely occurred in the schools at a frequency of 13, (44.8 percent) principals.

Conflict Involving Differences in Opinion

On the other hand, the element of conflict of two differences in opinion and view point revealed that 13, (44.8 percent) principals affirmed never experiencing conflict between parties while 11, (38.0 percent) principals rarely experienced and 5, (17.2 percent) principals sometimes experienced conflict of differences of views on certain issues between two parties. This means 16, (55.2 percent) principals experienced differences of views on certain issues while the other 13, (44.8 percent) principals indicated they never had differences of views on issues. Therefore, conflict of differences in views over certain issues was rarely common in the schools.

Conflicts Involving Differences in Desired Outcomes

Nevertheless, differences in opinion concerning the desired results, none of the 0, (0.0 percent) principals indicated that they never experienced inconsistency on preferred outcome or end state while 10, (34.5 percent) principals rarely experienced, 15, (51.7 percent) sometimes experienced, and 4, (13.8 percent) principals often experienced inconsistency on preferred outcome or end state. Consequently, the 29, (100 percent) principals were in support that inconsistency on preferred outcome or end state was sometimes a common conflict in the schools.

Conflicts with a Need to Release Tension

Moreover, 3, (10.3 percent) principals never experienced the need to release tension while 15, (51.7 percent) principals rarely experienced and 11, (38.0 percent) principals sometimes experienced need to release tension. As a consequence, 26, (89.7 percent) principals in total affirmed the need to hurt others emotionally while the remaining 3, (10.3 percent) principals never felt the need to hurt others emotionally. Therefore, suggesting that the need to release tension was a rare conflict among the teachers.

Conflicts Involving Work-related Disagreements

Furthermore, Table 4.2 shows that 3, (10.3 percent) principals never experienced work-related disagreements between the teachers themselves, 8, (267.6 percent) principals rarely experienced, 14, (48.3 percent) principals sometimes experienced, and 4, (13.8 percent) principals often experienced work-related disagreements between the teachers themselves. This means 26, (89.7 percent) principals experienced work-related disagreements while 3, (10.3 percent) Principals confirmed that work-related disagreements never occurred in the schools. Therefore, indicating that work-related disagreement was sometimes common in the schools.

Conflicts where Parties Desire to Punish Opponents

In addition, on the element of conflicting entities feeling the need to punish opponent, Table 4.2 shows that 2, (6.9 percent) principals never felt the need to punish conflicting opponent while 12, (41.4 percent) principals rarely experienced the need, 9, (31.0 percent) principals sometimes experienced, 4, (13.8 percent) often experienced, and 2, (6.9 percent) principals always felt the need to punish opponent. This indicated that 27, (93.1 percent) principals felt the need to punish their conflicting opponent while 2, (6.9 percent) principals never felt the need to punish opponent. This signified that the need for conflicting entities to punish opponent was a rare experience in the schools.

Conflicts where Parties Direct their Frustrations to Others

On the element of conflicting parties directing their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict, it revealed that 5, (17.2 percent) principals never experienced conflicts of conflicting parties directing their frustration or hostilities at those not in conflict while 15, (51.7 percent) principals rarely experienced, 5, (17.2 percent) principals sometimes experienced, and 4, (13.8

percent) principals often experienced expressed their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict. This suggested that 24, (82.8 percent) principals expressed their frustrations and hostilities at those not in conflicts, while 5, (17.2 percent) principals never experienced such conflict in the schools. It further suggests that conflicting parties rarely directed their frustration or hostilities at teachers' not in conflict.

Conflicts Involving Work-related Disagreements with Teachers

Finally, Table 4.2 indicates that the 29, (100 percent) principals experienced work-related disagreements with the teachers with 12, (41.4 percent) principals rarely experiencing such conflicts and seventeen (17), (58.6 percent) principals sometimes experiencing administrative work-related disagreements. It can therefore be concluded that work-related disagreement related to the administration was sometimes a common experience. The study further sought to determine the statistically significant difference between the teachers and principals' responses on the types of conflicts.

T-test for Difference in Responses between Teachers and Principals

To test the significant difference between the teachers' and principals' responses, the findings were transformed into continuous scale and a two-sample independent t-test computed using statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) version 24. The findings are summarized in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Independent Samples t-test on Types of Conflict between Teachers' and Principals'

Independent Samples t-test on Types of Conflict between Teachers' and Principals'			
Types of Conflicts	R	MR	t-test
Incompatible solutions for problems	T	2.82	t(346)= .765, p=.450
involving distribution of scarce resources	P	2.62	
Two differences in opinion and view point	T	3.03	t(346)= 8.273, p=.000
	P	1.72	
Differences in opinion concerning the desired results	T	2.66	t(346)= -.955, p=.346
	P	2.79	
Need to hurt others emotionally	T	2.48	t(346)= 1.516, p=.137
	P	2.28	
Work-related disagreements between the teachers themselves	T	2.80	t(346)= .865, p=.388
	P	2.66	

Conflicting entities feel the need to punish opponent	T	2.18	t(346)= -2.966, p=.003
	P	2.72	
Conflicting parties direct their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict	T	2.32	t(346)= .240, p=.810
	P	2.28	
Work-related disagreements between teachers and the administration	T	2.76	t(346)= 1.638, p=.108
	P	2.59	

Interpretation of Mean Rating:

1.00-1.44= Never 1.45-2.44= Rarely 2.45-3.44=Sometimes 3.45-4.44=Often
4.45-5.00=Always

From the findings in table 4.3 above, difference between the mean ratings of teachers (M=2.82) and principals (M=2.62) is not statistically significant, $t(346) = .765, p = .450, p > 0.05$. Therefore, this indicates that teachers and principals in selected secondary schools affirmed that incompatible solution for problems involving distribution of scarce resources was sometimes a common type of conflict in the schools. This could imply that sometimes the teachers and principals preferred different interests and perspectives on resource allocation or decision making in the schools. It further implies that the allocation of money, time, space, facilities and equipment posed varied challenges in the schools.

On the element of differences of views on certain issues, the independent t-test result on the difference between the teachers' mean rating of 3.03 and the principals' mean rating of 1.72 was statistically significant, $t(346) = 8.273, p = .000, (p < \alpha = .05)$. This therefore confirms that teacher' highly rated differences in views of conflicting parties on certain issues than principals. The significant difference may be attributed to the differences in the ideas and opinions of teachers in relation to the principals on issues relating to procedures, policies, managing expectations at work, and judgment and interpretation of fact. Such conflict should aim at finding the best possible solution rather than to win the argument and is much related to the decision-making ability of the social entities involved.

In terms of conflict from inconsistency in preferred outcomes, the study findings revealed a difference between the mean rating of teachers at 2.66 and mean rating of principals at 2.79 and the difference was not statistically significant, $t(346) = -.955, p = .346$, since the p-value was greater than the chosen significance level of 0.05. Based on the findings, teachers and principals experienced inconsistency on the preferred outcome or end state. This could be because the teachers or principals are not objective on their deliberations and resolutions on planned school activities and programs.

The independent two sample t-test result between the teachers' mean rating at 2.48 and principals' mean rating at 2.28 on the need to release tension showed that the observed

difference was not statistically significantly different, $t(346) = 1.516, p = .137$, since the p-value is greater than the chosen, $\alpha = 0.05$, significance level. This suggests that teachers and principals experienced conflicts that gave rise to a lot of tension in them, thus becoming completely disturbed. The built-up tension may continue until a decision is taken and conflict is resolved. Ahmad & Marina, (2013) referred to this type of conflict as nonrealistic conflict and explained that it occurs as a result of a party's need for expressing hostility or ignorance.

Table 4.3 shows that the difference between the mean ratings of teachers at 2.80 and principals at 2.66 on work related disagreements between teachers or principals showed no statistically significant difference, $t(346) = .865, p = .388$, since the p-value is greater than the chosen, $\alpha = .05$, level of significance. Thus, implying that the teachers were in agreement with the principals that work-related disagreement between teachers or principals was sometimes resulting to conflict in the schools. Such disagreements could have been caused by strains in relationships or a situation at workplace. According to Richards, (2012), it is often sparked by personality clashes and cultural differences, varying work philosophies and ethics, conflicting needs and expectations, power struggles and change in work load or roles among others. He further states that conflicts can be good in organizations if they encourage open mindedness and discourage group thinking.

The observed difference between the teacher's mean rating at 2.18 and the principals' mean rating at 2.72 on conflicting entities need to punish their opponents was statistically significantly different, $t(346) = -2.966, p = .003 (p < 0.05)$. The result indicate that principals observed more frequent, the need for conflicting entities to punish their opponents compared to the teachers. The significant difference could be attributed to the need for guidance and counseling by teachers in their interpersonal challenges with other teachers from the principals than amongst the teachers themselves. Such conflict is characterized by a situation where the conflicting entities or factions feel the need for a drawn-out conflict to punish the opponent. Equally, according to Richards, (2012), such conflicts occur in schools because individuals observe inequality in the treatment of school personnel when it comes to reward system or distribution of scarce resources.

Conversely, Table 4.3 shows that the observed difference between the mean ratings of teachers at 2.32 and principals at 2.28 on conflicting parties directing their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict was not statistically significantly different, $t(346) = .240, p = .810, (p > 0.05)$. Therefore, the results reveal that teachers and principals affirm that conflicting parties in the schools rarely directed their frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflicts. This type of conflict occurs when the conflicting parties direct either their frustrations or hostilities to social entities that are not involved in conflict or argue over secondary issues or because of displaced aggression.

Finally, Table 4.3 shows that the difference between the mean ratings of teachers at 2.76 and principals at 2.59 on work related disagreements between teachers and administration was not statistically significantly different, $t(346) = 1.638, p = .108 (p > 0.05)$. This suggests that both teachers and principals agree that work-related disagreement between teachers and the

administration sometimes common in the schools. This concurs with Maler, (2014), who notes that both individuals and groups have undeniable needs for identity, dignity, security and equity in participation and making decisions that affect them; this may cause disagreements even between principals and teachers.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the analysis of the collected data, the findings reveal that teachers indicated that conflict resulting from incompatible solutions in distribution of scarce resources, differences in opinion on pertinent issues, differences in opinions on their desired outcomes, need to hurt others emotionally, and work-related disagreements among teachers, and administration were common in the schools. However, the need to punish opponents, and need to direct frustrations or hostilities at other people not in conflict were rarely common. On the other hand, the principals indicated that incompatible solution for problems involving distribution of scarce resources, differences in opinion concerning the desired results, the need to punish opponent, and work-related disagreements among teachers, and administration were the most common conflicts in schools. However, differences of views on certain issues, need to release tension, and the need to direct frustrations or hostilities at those not in conflict were rare types. These findings confirm that the teachers and principals experienced different types of conflicts based on the nature of conflict, departmental needs and resource allocation criterion, psychological state of the conflicting parties, and the dynamics of interaction in the school environment.

The findings are consistent with some of the findings by Mostert, (2015) who noted that workplace conflicts can be caused by a variety of issues, such as: different work methods where employees have the same goal but different approaches to achieve the goal, different goals that are inconsistent with each other, differences in personalities where people annoy each other because of who they are or how they act, biases that people have against different groups of people, issues, actions, or comments that cause stress, different viewpoints or perspectives about various issues that may relate to people's upbringing, gender, age, or other such characteristics, different levels of inter-personal skills and verbal and/or written communication capabilities, competition for financial or other resources; and unique subcultures that establish "us vs. them" situations. However, apart from this study determining the types of conflict in schools, it also establishes the frequency of occurrence of these common types of conflicts in the secondary schools; a gap not filled by (Mostert, 2015) in his study of workplace conflict.

Furthermore, Neck & Manz, (2017) confirming this, determined that there are two essential types of conflict in organizations: task conflict and relationship conflict. Task conflict concentrates on how to resolve problems caused by differences in viewpoints, ideas and opinions, and result in creativity and improved decision making while relationship conflicts involve disagreements about values, personal or family norms, or about personal taste and is known to lower the productivity and motivation amongst team members. The study finding concur with the findings of this present study, except that (Vokic & Sanja, 2009), in their study broadly classified the types of conflict into two conflict types. Similarly, Pokalova, (2015)

explains that task conflict also known as cognitive conflict is related with issues that emerge because of disagreement among team members that focus on the attainment of common objectives and common organizational goals. The second type of conflict also described as interpersonal conflict is related to issues that emerge as a result of personality clashes or emotional interaction among team members in the organization Thomas, (1992). These findings on types of conflict corroborate the findings of this study, but their study did not disaggregate the findings in terms of teachers and principals.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the types of conflicts in selected secondary schools in Uriri and Nyatike Sub-counties of Migori County, Kenya. The study included 87 across the two sub-counties by targeting teachers and principals in these schools who responded to the questionnaires. Through a descriptive survey design, data was collected from educators in Uriri and Nyatike Sub Counties, Migori County, Kenya, shedding light on various types of conflicts and their prevalence. The findings indicate that conflicts arising from incompatible solutions for resource distribution, differences in opinions, and work-related disagreements are common occurrences in these educational settings. The study observed differences between teachers and principals especially in their perceptions of certain conflicts, which highlighted the complex nature of interpersonal dynamics in schools. While both teachers and principals acknowledged experiencing conflicts related to resource distribution and work-related disagreements, teachers expressed a greater concern for conflicts arising from differences in opinions and the need to hurt others emotionally. Principals, on the other hand, identified conflicts related to differences in desired outcomes and the need to punish opponents as the most common forms of conflict. These findings demonstrate that conflicts within the school environments are highly complex and multifaceted and are influenced by various factors such as resource allocation, interpersonal relationships, and organizational dynamics.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools should implement regular training programs on conflict resolution for both teachers and principals. These programs are essential to equip teachers with the necessary skills to manage conflicts constructively thus fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual understanding. Secondly, schools should actively engage teachers and principals in collaborative decision-making processes, especially related to resource allocation and policy development. The collaboration is important to mitigate conflicts arising from differing viewpoints and priorities. Finally, schools should provide leadership training for principals to enhance their conflict management skills and their ability to foster a conducive school environment for resolving conflicts and promoting collaboration among staff members.

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