

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION
BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING STAFF IN PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GATANGA SUB-COUNTY IN MURANG'A COUNTY,
KENYA**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for consideration of any certification.

Signature..... Date:

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K50/74180/2014

Supervisor's Declaration

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

Signature Date:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my parents and siblings who have remained supportive in my life's journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I sincerely thank God for His constant providence and granting me sound health in the course of this study. My gratitude also goes to my supervisor, Dr. Silas Oriaso for his guidance, patience and encouragement in this pursuit. I am also thankful to Mr. Peter Maina for his constant encouragement, and the long hours he put to correct me and help me make my work sensible. My gratitude also goes to Catherine Njeri Kuria for helping me use SPSS to analyse and interpret statistical data and David Chikati for helping me prepare the proposal for this study. I will also not forget my siblings, parents and friends who have been an encouragement to me, for bearing with me even when I was not available to spend time with them. I also remain indebted to my colleagues at Kirwara Secondary School who made sacrifices to enable me pursue this study. I am also grateful to the Principal of Kirwara Secondary School, Mr. James Gitau for providing me with an enabling environment to pursue this study.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Administration – These are the people who are mandated with the management of public secondary schools consisting of school principals, deputy principals and heads of departments

Administrators –Persons held responsible for the management of operations in organisations, in this case, public secondary school principals, deputy principals and heads of departments

Communication – This is the sharing of meaning between individuals or groups of people to create understanding

Conflict – This is the misunderstanding that arises when individuals or groups of people have incompatible goals or when there occurs a communication breakdown between the individuals or groups.

Management-this entails the coordination of the activities of an organization including planning, controlling, allocating and directing resources to achieve objectives of an organisation. It also is concerned with the making of the policies of an organisation. In a school situation, these functions are played by the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments. In this study, it will also mean administration as defined in this section.

Managers – These are the individuals that are given the responsibility of planning, controlling and directing organizational resources as well as creating policies of an organisation. For public secondary schools, these include principals, deputy principals and heads of departments

Teaching staff –These are staff employed to teach and in this case, teachers employed to teach in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County by the Teachers’ Service Commission.

TSC – Teachers’ Service Commission is a government agency under the ministry of education held responsible for hiring, remunerating, disciplining and firing teachers in public primary and secondary schools as well as some colleges in Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to establish the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administrations and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to investigate the sources of conflict between teaching staff and administrators in public secondary schools, to explore how conflict between teaching staff and administration is communicated, to determine the effect of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and administration and to establish the challenges of using communication to address conflict between teachers and administrations in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. The study used descriptive survey design. The sample for this study was obtained through stratified random sampling. Ten per cent of the target population of the 629 TSC teachers employed in 46 schools in the sub-county was used. This translated to 62 respondents because fractions cannot be used to represent human beings. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to obtain data from teachers and key respondents respectively. The study was piloted in two schools in Thika West, Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya because the schools were not part of the target population. Qualitative data for the study was analysed thematically while quantitative data was analysed using SPSS. The findings were that conflict is experienced between teaching staff and administrations in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County and communication plays a major role in causing, escalating and deescalating conflict. Meetings were found to be the preferred way for teachers and school administrations to communicate and address conflict although when it came to personal conflict with the administrators, private meetings were preferred. It was noted however, that silence was also used as a way to communicate between teachers and their administrators, some of the reasons given being that the persons involved feared being victimized, feared being criticized or felt that their opinion was inconsequential. To solve a conflict, communication played a major role. Personal attitude was found to be a major challenge to using communication to address conflict between teachers and their school administrations. There was however an observation that there is care in how administrators communicate with members of the opposite gender especially in conflict situations. The conclusion of the study was that like in the rest of the society, conflict occurs between teachers and school administrations and that communication plays a major role in triggering, escalating and deescalating the conflict. However, in addressing the conflict, there is need to treat participants with respect if a conflict is to be resolved amicably. There is also need to increase the frequency of interaction between teachers and school administrations, and in the interactions, parties should allow others to express themselves openly. Recommendations on policy include addressing conflict with parties involved without tabling the same before people that had nothing to do with the conflict, employing a variety of means to communicate with staff instead of relying solely on staff meetings. Recommendations for further research include finding out the effectiveness of using staff meetings as a means of communication in schools and the effectiveness of communication and its role in addressing conflict in other educational institutions like universities and primary schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a discussion of the following: background of the study, the statement of the problem, significance of the study, objectives and research questions of the study. In addition, the scope and limitations of the study are discussed in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Defined simply, communication is the exchange of ideas between people or groups of people to create understanding. Human beings are social, and so through communication, they are in a position to share ideas. Communication, according to Mensah (2010) is a process of sharing ideas. It also entails sharing messages and information with other people in a given time and place (Mensah 2010). But for communication to be said to have taken place, there is the exchange of shared meaning which occurs between two or more parties and feedback is obtained. The interaction between individuals or groups is however not linear as it can be interfered with by noise and the disposition of the person(s) involved among other things. Communication is not just giving of information, but it is also giving of information that can be understood and receiving and understanding the message (Mensah, 2010). Communication, he adds, is a means by which thoughts are transmitted from one person to another.

On the other hand, conflict is simply defined as the clash that results when individuals disagree because of incompatible ideas or when individuals or groups of people act against others' expectations. Spaho (2013) says that in an organization, conflict occurs when people engage in activities that are discordant to those of their colleagues in their circle of influence.

He however observes that conflict cannot be avoided as it is a fact of human existence and if people can understand it and its effects on the effectiveness of work; conflict can be made helpful and be used to obtain better results. To manage conflict in an organization, Spaho (2013) recommends that all levels of management have a responsibility for good communication and conflict management in an organisation as many factors prevent employees from direct and open communication, whose consequence is an increased risk of conflict situations. It would be safe to thus say that an unresolved conflict in the workplace can among others, negatively affect employee performance and productivity, make employees suspicious of each other as well as result in poor teamwork. For this reason then, it becomes important for managers to use direct communication on time so as to mitigate conflict or minimize its impacts (Spaho 2013).

From the above discussion, it is clear that individuals and groups of people share meanings through the communication process. They can do so verbally or non-verbally through writing, signs, and symbols, tone, gestures, among others and through it, enhance cooperation. But it is important to note that communication has been a source of conflict where there has been misunderstanding and thus a clash of ideas. This assertion is supported by Krauss and Morsella, (2000), who say that even when sent messages and those received are similar, the meaning derived may significantly be different from the initial message. This is because the listener and the speaker could be using codes that are slightly different and may thus result in misunderstanding (Krauss and Morsella 2000).

In a school setting, there may be a problem in communication between teaching staff and school administrations leading to misunderstanding and thus conflict which may result in issues like the sabotage of school programs and projects by teaching staff. In adverse situations, staff may be transferred and are known to have been transferred and or punished

for conflict with the administrators, which may have arisen from poor communication. Although communication alone may not solve a conflict, Krauss and Morsella (2000) assert that the product of communication is the creation of understanding. And though good communication is not an assurance of the resolution of conflict, poor communication in a great way increases the likelihood that conflict will happen and be intensified (Krauss and Morsella 2000).

Studies and reports abound concerning the causes of students' unrest in educational institutions, some of the reasons being conflict between the learners and teachers. For example, Cheloti et al (2014) say exams, diet and bullying, high handedness of principals, lack of communication between students and principals, poor facilities, substance abuse are among causes of unrest among secondary school students. Autocracy by school administrations which make it difficult for students to express their opinions is also blamed to cause unrest among students in Kenyan schools, according to Oduor (2016) in *The Standard* article: *Mistrust Causing Unrest in Kenyan Schools, New Study Says*.

Reports and studies that focus on teachers however are majorly between teachers and their employers and hardly about their (teachers') relationships with the administration in their schools. And because people working together are bound to collide, conflict simmering between teaching staff and school administrators could possibly spill over to the students thus causing unrest yet it is hardly communicated to the outside world. But if communication between the teaching staff and school administrators is effectively carried out, it has potential to mitigate conflict between them, the administrators, and teachers, and by extension, the students.

1.2 Problem Statement

Communication links individuals, groups, societies and nations but people do not always do well in communication and thus end up with misunderstandings or breakdown in relationships (Wanjama et al 2010). In a school situation, poor communication between teaching staff and the administration can for example lead to conflict, staff sabotaging initiatives by the administration or administrators taking unnecessary disciplinary measures or de-motivation among staff or the administrators

According to Tara and O'Hara (2014), an individual's success at work is greatly determined by one's social awareness skills, his or her emotional intelligence and communication which includes one's ability to motivate and influence others, to empathize and develop relationships, to give honest feedback sensitively, to monitor self-behavior, read interpersonal situations and organizational politics and to handle one's own emotions and those of others. This applies in the context of schools as teaching staff, students and other members of staff interact with each other and with the administration. As such, there is the need for effective communication to achieve their set objectives which are majorly to do with nurturing a responsible citizen through curricular and co-curricular activities. This is because, communication helps pass instructions and get feedback and to create common understanding with staff. This can be achieved through oral communication, internal memos, letters, staff meetings, telephone calls, mass SMSs and emails which are used in a modern school or educational setting.

There may however be a problem in communication between teaching staff and school administrations leading to conflict which may result in issues like the sabotage of school programs and projects by teaching staff and can spill over to students leading to students' indiscipline and poor performance.

In adverse situations, staff may be transferred and or punished for conflict with the administrators, which may have arisen from poor communication. And though good communication cannot promise the resolution of conflict, poor communication in a great way increases the likelihood that conflict will arise and be intensified (Krauss and Morsella 2000).

Reports concerning the causes of students' unrest in educational institutions abound, some of the reasons being conflict between the learners and teachers. Those that focus on teachers however are majorly between teachers and their employers and hardly about their (teachers') relationships with the administration in their schools. But if communication between the teaching staff and school administrators is effectively carried out, it has potential to mitigate conflict in schools.

By this study, the researcher sought to establish the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administration and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County of Murang'a County, Kenya. This was because there seemed to be limited literature focusing on educational institutions and in particular focusing on the situation in Kenya. It was also not possible for the researcher to study the entire education sector in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives

The study was guided by the following research objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administration and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga sub-county in Murang'a County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To investigate the sources of conflict between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga in Murang'a County, Kenya.
2. To explore how conflict between teaching staff and administration is communicated in public secondary schools in Gatanga in Murang'a County, Kenya.
3. To determine the effect of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and management in public secondary schools in Gatanga in Murang'a County, Kenya.
4. To establish the challenges of using communication to address conflict between teachers and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga in Murang'a County, Kenya.

1.3.3 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the sources of conflict between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga?
2. How is conflict between teaching staff and administration communicated in public secondary schools in Gatanga?
3. What is the effect of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga?
4. What are the challenges of using communication to address conflict between teachers and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Communication enhances understanding between people or groups of people when they share their thoughts and ideas. According to Wanjama, et al (2010), communication links individuals, groups, societies and nations. People however do not always do well in communication and thus end up with misunderstandings or broken relationships.

In a school situation, poor communication between teaching staff and the administration can for example lead to conflict, staff sabotaging initiatives by the administration or administrators taking unnecessary disciplinary measures or de-motivation among staff or the administrators. Most conflicts in schools, according to Wanjama et al (2010), are rooted in poor communication and thus the need for individuals to acquire effective communication. This study thus aimed at helping teachers and school administrators to acknowledge the importance of communicating effectively to create understanding and mitigate conflict in their quest to achieve their set goals.

From the findings, the study helped to establish the place of communication in schools and would in turn help school administrators to employ communication strategies that help build good relationships with teachers so as to mitigate conflict and realize their schools' goals as a team. It is also of help to teachers to appreciate the importance of effective communication in achieving organizational goals as the way people communicate impacts on their lives either positively or negatively. In other words, it enlightens them on effective ways of resolving conflict through communication. For example ensuring that accepted channels of communication are used, acknowledging individual's values and clarity of messages, a clear chain of command, among others can help foster effective communication and conflict resolution. It is in addition of benefit to stakeholders in the education sector to embrace effective communication so as to achieve their set objectives with minimal conflict.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

For this study, focus was on public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. This is because the researcher could not manage to conduct the study in all secondary schools the republic of Kenya due to limited time, finances and logistics that would be involved in a study of a national scope.

Gatanga Sub-County is mainly agricultural, stretching from the foot of the Aberdares in the west where tea farming and dairy farming are practiced, to the semi-arid zone in the east, bordering Machakos County, with coffee and horticulture farming being practiced in between (Kiriti 2011). It borders Kinangop, Gatundu North, Thika, Yatta, Masinga, Maragua, Kandara and Kigumo (Kiriti2011).

According to the Teachers' Service Commission *Staffing Status for Gatanga Secondary Schools in Gatanga sub-county* (March 2016), there are 46 secondary schools in the Sub-County. They include both boarding and day schools. The schools fall under various categories, which include one extra-county school, county schools and sub-county schools. Of the 46 schools, eight are boarding. Four of the schools are exclusively for girls, four are for boys and the rest are mixed. The sub-county has 16,451 students, 7798 boys and 8653 girls, and 629 TSC employed teachers; 299 females and 330 males. The students are mainly from the surrounding counties in the former Central Province and teachers drawn from around the republic of Kenya. The sub-county's catchment area is dominantly inhabited by the Kikuyu community although to the east, there is a significant population of the Kamba community and the proximity of the area to Thika town also means there is a significant population of teachers and students from other communities of Kenya.

Among possible limitations of this study is that it may not be possible to generalize its findings to other types of schools like private schools, primary schools or tertiary institutions of learning due to possible difference in their organizational structures.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Literature about the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administration and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya will be reviewed in this chapter. The chapter will also contain a review of literature related to the objectives of the study and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Human Relations Theory and the Cultural Organisational Theory. The human relations theory stemmed from developments in the decade between 1930 and 1940 following the great depression in America. It is in this era that people started paying more attention to social factors that affected employees in their work in organizations after years of applying Fredrick Taylors' scientific management, which viewed people as parts of a machine. According to the theory, departmental level group dynamics need to be informed by healthy leadership (Markert, 2008). The theory focuses on keeping channels of communication in an organisation open and ensuring that communication between administrators and their juniors flows continually, with a premise that information motivates as an informed employee is more involved and therefore more productive (Markert, 2008). The Human Relations Theory operates on the belief that the central problem in all organisations is in developing and maintaining dynamic and harmonious relationships (Okumbe, 2007).

The Cultural Organisational Theory is a product of works by Clifford Geertz and Michael Pacanowsky. According to this theory, culture is like a web and for culture to thrive, shared meaning, understanding and sense of making must be present (Griffin 2012). He adds that culture means using the same language and partaking in the same traditions. According to Griffin (2012) it is Michael Pacanowsky that applied Geertz insights into the context of organisations. Pacanowsky, Griffin (2012) says, believed that organisations create their own webs and the process of making the web is communication. What this then means is that as staff of an organization communicate with each other, they create shared meanings and as such create a culture. The meanings are shared through stories that can be categorized into three: corporate stories, which may entail information which the management wants to share with employees, personal stories, stories about employees shared with each other about themselves and collegial stories, which employees tell about each other (Galvan 2014). The latter stories can either be positive or negative.

The two theories were appropriate for this study because schools are organisations composed of individuals that need to work together as a team to achieve their organizational goals. To achieve a school's set objectives and mitigate conflicts in the school setting, there needs to be open communication between teaching staff and the school administrators.

This study sought to investigate if effective communication occurs between teachers and the administrators to address conflict, which is bound to arise where there is interaction of people. To achieve this, employees, in this case teachers, need to be made to feel important to the achievement of all the goals of an organisation through communication, thus the use of the Human Relations Theory. This is because the theory encourages two-way communication between workers and their seniors which can be used by the management to win cooperation from their juniors (Lardbucket, 2012).

The Cultural Organisational Theory on the other hand allows the researcher to understand who people are, what traditions they have, and why they celebrate the traditions, and to get every side of the story (Galvan 2014). For example, from the stories, a researcher would find out the value that an organization attaches to communication and how conflict with employees is handled through communication. The researcher as well set out to explore how employees, in this case teachers, feel about communication and how conflict is handled in their organization (school), through use of this theory. In basic terms, the theories enabled the researcher to link teachers' values, norms and those of the administrators, to how they handle communication and in particular communication in relation to conflict resolution.

2.2.1 Conflict Transformation

Conflict occurs where there is incompatibility of goals or where there is no sharing of meaning between individuals or groups of people. According to Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) conflict is a social behavior where two parties try to get something they both cannot get. Conflict exists when two people wish to conduct acts which are mutually inconsistent (Nyamboga and Kiplangat, 2008). Although often viewed negatively, being viewed as a cause of poor performance, suspicion and mistrust, among others, conflict is a normal occurrence wherever human beings interact. Adejimola (2009) says that though peace is a desirable condition, conflicts are unavoidable in any society. According to Okumbe (2007), conflicts are however useful in organisations because they are important manifestations of socially valuable differences which are beneficial to all in an organization. This assertion is not just applicable to organisations but also applies to other institutions of the society like family, schools and others.

Conflict can stem from a variety of issues like competition, interdependency, and breakdown in communication. Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) say conflict can result from misinformation between people with respect to their needs, ideas, beliefs, goals or values and that there is no single cause of conflict. Conflict can for example come from poor leadership, unequal access to resources, abuse against human beings, a general feeling of dissatisfaction among members of a population in terms of for example lack of jobs or insecurity.

Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) add that conflict can also come from a single event like an assassination and that there are various types of conflicts including social and economic conflict as well as conflict over resources. In a school situation, a mass transfer of teachers can for instance trigger a conflict between remaining teachers and the school administration. In addition, mistrust and suspicion among teachers and their administrators can arise, where for example teachers don't believe what their principal says if he or she poses as a friend and then later uses information obtained from the 'friends' against them or where an administrator promises to do something for his/her juniors but fails to fulfill his/her promise. In the same set up, there can be conflict over distribution of workload, how resources are made available to teachers or economic ones which may result from for example, delayed payment of remedial lessons.

Before a conflict is resolved, it goes through transformation. At the beginning, differences emerge between parties building up tension. This, according to Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) is the pre-conflict stage, where there is a breakdown of communication. It is followed by the confrontation stage where the warring sides take extreme positions and threats and counter threats are issued though action is not taken at this point.

The peak of a conflict is reached when open hostilities occur and there is no communication between the differing parties. Violence, force and destruction are used at this point. The conflict continues with each party determined to win and intervention by others may help.

As Cappon (2004) says, war and conflict are characterized by a total breakdown of relations between members of the communities that are differing and this is what happens at the polarization stage where each member of the enemy group is considered an enemy. At this point, a conflict may take long to resolve and the original cause of a conflict even be vague. To reach a solution from this stalemate, channels of communication must be opened. This last phase is where the warring parties must agree that they are responsible for the escalation of the conflict Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) and open channels of communication for dispute resolution for example through negotiation are necessary. Through communication, Johnson and Johnson (1997) assert that members of a group can get to some understanding of one another, build trust, coordinate actions, plan strategies to achieve their objectives, agree on how labour will be divided and carry out group activity. In a situation of conflict, there are various responses which include accommodation, withdrawal, force, negotiation, compromise and collaboration.

2.2.2 Organisational Communication

Communication is the exchange of ideas between people or groups of people to create understanding. Because human beings are social, they share their thoughts and ideas through communication. According to Mensah, (2010) communication is a process of sharing ideas, information, and messages with other people in a given place and time. But for communication to be said to have taken place, there is the exchange of shared meaning which occurs between two or more parties and feedback is obtained. The interaction between individuals or groups is however not linear as it can be interfered with by noise.

Noise, according to Lunenburg (2010), is anything that distorts the message sent by the sender to the receiver. This noise could be: different views to the message, interruptions, language barriers, attitudes and emotions of the people involved in a communication process. As such, Mensah (2010) notes that communication does not entail just giving information but that it is the giving of information that can be understood and receiving and understanding the message given. Mensah (2010) terms it as a means by which thoughts are transmitted from one person to another.

Hooker (2008) in addition says that communication is vital in business because business is an activity that entails collaboration, with goods and services made and exchanged through coordination by many people. The coordination requires intense communication and specifications of the services or goods must be mutually understood (Hooker 2008). The implication of this is that for businesses or organisations to work successfully, staff members have to work as a team to achieve their set objectives. Armstrong (2006) asserts this saying that to achieve organisation objectives, good communications are required to achieve coordinated results. And since organisations experience change continuously, there is need to ensure that the effect of the changes on the employees is communicated to them (employees) in terms they understand and accept. Failure to do this can lead to conflict. To achieve feedback and organisational objectives, communication in an organization is usually not one way but open, where messages can be sent from below to the management or from the management to the employees, or among employees.

And because schools are organisations offering services, what affects other organisations would well apply in their operations or functions. This is because every administrative function (whether in a school or other organization) and activity involves some form of direct or indirect communication as school administrators communicate with and through people, whether they are planning and organizing or leading and monitoring (Lunenburg 2010). As in other organisations, communication in a school setting is both verbal and non-verbal.

A person sending a message in a school situation will use a variety of ways to encode the message. They include gestures, facial expressions, posture, and manner of dress, face to face exchanges, mobile phone, social media, internet, letters and internal memos among others. The sender of a message has however no control over how the message is decoded and thus the need to encode a message that can be comprehended as intended by the sender. For this reason, Lunenburg (2010) says choosing a given medium for transferring the message is vital since there are many options one can use and people selectively interpret information, with persons more likely to view information that matches their own conviction more favorably.

2.2.3 Organisational Conflict

Simply defined, conflict is the misunderstanding that may arise between groups of people or individuals, due to clashing goals or communication breakdown. According to Turkalj et al (2008) conflict is the disagreement which happens when interests, values or goals of different people or groups of people are discordant. Although conflict is often viewed negatively as a cause of poor work performance and de-motivation among employees, conflict, according to Verma (1998), is as unavoidable. When members of a team interact in the process of carrying out their tasks and responsibilities, the likelihood for conflict is always there (Verma, 1998). Turkalj et al (2008) say conflict does not have to be negative as it can trigger positive changes in an organization.

According to Adejimola (2009) though peace is a desirable condition, conflicts are unavoidable in any society. This holds true to public secondary schools which form part of the society. Conflict can be brought about by a variety of reasons like limited resources, dependence on others, misunderstanding between parties, and difference in thought or ideas among others. According to Verma (1998) breakdown in communication is the most usual and evident source of conflict.

Conflict in organizations, Spaho (2013) says, stems from either personal factors or organizational factors. The personal causes of conflict, Spaho (2013) observes, come from personal characters and include bad estimation of a person, errors in communication and mistrust among people in an organization as well as people's personalities. Mistrust, lack of effective listening skills, respect and differences in perception can also result to serious communication problems Verma (1998) observes. Spaho (2013) adds that conflict stemming from an organization may come from dependence in work activities, differentiation of organisational units and discordance in operating goals and sharing limited resources. Verma (1998) categorizes conflict in three categories; goal oriented conflicts administrative conflicts and interpersonal conflicts. The goal oriented conflicts have to do with performance specifications, priorities and objectives of an organization. The administrative ones relate to the management structure of an organization, reporting relationships, functions and decisions while interpersonal conflicts result from differences in work ethics, styles, egos and personalities of team members (Verma,1998).

In her study: *Head Teachers' Conflict Management Styles and their Effect on Discipline in Secondary Schools in Central Division, Machakos District, Kenya*, Kisinga (2012) observed a variety of conflicts in the schools. Among the causes of conflict observed were conflicts related to money. In addition, most students cited poor communication, frustration and

rumours as the major causes of conflict while head teachers and teachers cited interpersonal conflict as the most common type of conflict. Findings by Nyasio (2015) in her study: *Factors Influencing Conflict among the Teaching Staff in Public Secondary Schools in Starehe Division, Nairobi County, Kenya*, indicate that in schools, conflicting needs had the highest contribution to conflict in schools, followed by conflicting roles and pressures, unpredictable policies on teacher motivation and communication.

If a conflict goes unresolved or is ignored, it has potential to escalate further leading to frustration and further complications. In a school setting for example, if a conflict between a teacher or teachers and the school administration is ignored, it can fester and spill over to students, resulting to student unrest or conflict involving other stakeholders of a school. Onsomu (2014) in his study: *Influence of Teachers' Transfer on Student academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nyamira County, Kenya*, observed that most teachers in Nyamira County experienced more conflict between them and the school managements leading to transfers. The transfer of teachers and their delayed replacement, Onsomu (2014) found out, sometimes prompted students to complain to the management when they (students) found it hard to cope with the replacements.

To tackle a conflict, Adejimola (2009) identifies communication as an important means of resolving conflict when it comes to non-violent methods of managing and resolving conflict. He observes that communication is also crucial in dialogue, mediation, negotiation, adjudication and arbitration of conflict. Because conflict is inevitable in the society or any setting where people or groups of people interact, Adejimola (2009) says that communication is crucial in promoting, preventing and resolving conflict situations.

According to Armstrong (2006) any differences in opinion between management and employees are as a result of misunderstandings stemming from communication and the solution to industrial conflict is to improve communication, in particular, two-way communication and so the need for good communication system becomes even greater when differences and conflict exist.

In her study: *Factors Influencing Conflict among the Teaching Staff in Public Secondary Schools in Starehe Division, Nairobi County, Kenya*, Nyasio (2015) says, the organization, the school in this case, must have clear policies that are communicated to all stakeholders on material availability and sharing, teacher motivation and the practice of professionalism in the workplace. Applying this would thus help mitigate conflict.

2.2.4 Communication and Conflict

As defined earlier, communication is the sharing of ideas and thoughts between individuals or groups of people. Participants of a process of communication encode a message which is decoded by the recipient(s) of the message who then encode their feedback to the original senders of the message. But in the process of sharing thoughts, noise occurs which affects the meaning received or sent. As such, communication is not linear. Conflict on the other hand occurs when goals between individuals or groups are not shared or meanings between participants of a group are not shared.

According to the Republic of Rwanda Public Service Commission's *Causes and Impacts of Conflict at Work Place* (2014), communication problems from leaders cause conflicts. The problems stem from unclear messages, and uncommunicative tendencies (Republic of Rwanda Public Service Commission 2014). Breakdown in communication is the most usual and most evident source of conflict (Verma, 1998).

When conflict occurs between people, it is recognized and expressed through communication, which as explained earlier, helps individuals or groups of people share meanings and ideas (Hellriegel and Slocum, 2009). How a conflict is communicated may escalate or help deescalate it. According to Conrad (2014) there are managers whose verbal instructions sound like utterances from tyrants, whose messages though understandable, are not well received or accepted by employees. Employees, according to Conrad (2014) like to be treated with dignity and respect and if a manager sets the tone and content of communications to be respectful to employees, it helps to nurture a more productive and supportive workforce. This thus emphasizes the need to communicate respect and the same is returned to the communicator.

The employees' feelings about work, according to Armstrong (2006) to a great extent depend on the effectiveness of communications from their manager or team leaders within a company, adding that any differences in opinion between management and employees are as a result of misunderstandings stemming from communication. Adejimola (2009) identifies communication as an important means of resolving conflict when it comes to non-violent methods of managing and resolving conflict. He notes that communication is also crucial in dialogue, mediation, negotiation, adjudication and arbitration of conflict. And since conflict is unavoidable in any setting where people or groups of people interact, Adejimola (2009) observes that communication is crucial in promoting, preventing and resolving conflict situations.

Most conflicts in schools, according to Wanjama et al (2010), are all rooted in poor communication and thus the need for individuals to acquire effective communication. In his study, Onsomu (2014) observed that a lot needs to be done on schools' management approaches especially regarding the staff-management conflicts as they were inordinately high in Nyamira and could lead to teacher frustrations and their (teachers') desire to leave schools, which may in turn lead to conflicts between students and administrations of their schools.

It is for such reasons that Lunenburg (2010) emphasizes the need for school administrators to be able to work with stakeholders of a school who include teachers and to grow a shared sense of what the school is striving to achieve. Because school administrators are in a position to develop a shared mission, vision, values, and goals, the school will become more effective. As such, establishing and maintaining a good relationship between school managers and other stakeholders of a school requires effectiveness in communication Lunenburg (2010) as it is through communication that members of a group interact and effective communication is a requirement for every part of group functioning (Johnson and Johnson, 1997).

2.2.4.1 Sources of Conflict

According to Verma (1998), communication breakdown is the most usual and observable source of conflict and where there is interaction of groups of people, conflict is bound to arise as people do not always view things from the same perspective. Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) attribute conflict to a variety of causes including structural causes; unequal opportunities, inequitable access to resources and poor governance, proximate causes; insecurity, human right abuses and trigger like; single acts like drought, assassination among others.

However, most conflicts in schools, according to Wanjama et al (2010), are all rooted in poor communication and thus the need for individuals to acquire effective communication. Conflict occurs because people working in a group come from different backgrounds in terms of values, norms, expectations and skills. Conflict in organizations, Spaho (2013) says, stems from either personal factors or organizational factors. The personal causes of conflict, Spaho (2013) observes, come from personal characters and include bad estimation of a person, errors in communication and lack of trust among people in an organization as well as personal characteristics.

A lack of trust, respect, effective listening skills, and differences in opinion can lead to serious communication problems Verma (1998) observes. According to the Republic of Rwanda Public Service Commission's *Causes and Impacts of Conflict at Work Place* (2014), communication problems from leaders cause conflicts. The problems, the commission says, stem from unclear messages, and uncommunicative tendencies reflected by fear to convene meetings by government officers. Spaho (2013) adds that conflict stemming from an organization may come from dependence in work activities, differentiation of organisational units and clashing of operating goals and sharing limited resources. Conflict can also stem from inaccurate or incomplete assumptions, and assumptions made by people. Though authors mentioned here focus on commercial organisations, and other public organisations, their observations are relevant for educational organisations and in particular public secondary schools because they too have organizational structure and are operated by people who in their interaction may collide.

In Kenyan school situation, conflict in schools has been attributed to various reasons. Nyasio (2015) in her study: *Factors Influencing Conflict among the Teaching Staff in Public Secondary Schools in Starehe Division, Nairobi County, Kenya*, found that major factors of conflict included conflicting needs, conflicting roles, unpredictable policies, conflicting perceptions, goals and values. Conflict exists in schools and was affected by a variety of factors that emanate from organization, individuals and external stakeholders (Nyasio, 2015).

It is for this reason that Verma (1998) emphasizes the need for managers and their teams to develop effective communication skills to resolve conflict. This, in addition to creating an environment that encourages open communication in order to deal with conflict and profit from team members' acceptance of and commitment to organizational goals. This is because despite the inevitability of conflict, it need not have destructive consequences (Verma, 1998). But negative conflict can indeed result to poor employee productivity and motivation.

2.2.4.2 Communication of Conflict

There are various definitions of conflict that have been put forward by scholars. And in simple terms, it is about the misunderstanding that may arise between groups of people or individuals, due to incompatible goals or communication breakdown. According to Turkalj et al (2008) conflict is the disagreement which occurs when goals, interests or values of various individuals or groups are incompatible. Although conflict is often viewed negatively as a cause of poor work performance and de-motivation among employees, the authors say it does not have to be negative as it can trigger positive changes in an organization.

Adejimola (2009) says that though peace is a desirable condition, conflicts are inevitable in any society. This holds true to public secondary schools which form part of the society. When conflict occurs between people, it is recognized and expressed through communication, which as explained earlier, helps individuals or groups of people share meanings and ideas

(Hellriegel and Slocum, 2009). How a conflict is communicated may escalate or help deescalate it. According to Conrad (2014) there are managers whose verbal instructions seem like something coming from tyrants, whose messages though understandable, are not well received or accepted by employees. Conrad (2014) says employees like to be treated with respect and dignity and if a manager sets the tone and content of communications to be respectful to employees, it helps to create a more supportive and productive workforce and thus emphasizes the need to communicate respect and the same is returned to the communicator.

In a school situation for example, an administrator may be angry with a teacher for being late attending classes. The said teacher may avoid contact with the administrator and thus escalate the conflict. If the administrator, say the deputy principal is a poor communicator, he may decide to bring up the matter in a staff meeting and shame the offending teacher by scolding him or her in the presence of the others which may result in the conflict becoming more complex as the teacher may retaliate with remarks that only serve to worsen the situation, something that may not have happened if the administrator communicated the conflict with the offending person respectfully. According to Hellriegel and Slocum (2009) if for instance a manager interrupts and talks to staff in a critical tone, the staff may switch their minds off: begin texting, ignoring the manager because members of staff feel disrespected. Johnson and Johnson (1997) assert that when a person feels threatened or anticipates threat, there is loss of efficiency and effectiveness in communication. Some of the ways we communicate bring barriers by preventing discussion or causing others to feel inferior, angry, hostile, dependent, compliant or passive (Lunenburg, 2010).

Conflict can also be triggered, escalated or resolved depending on the procedure used to communicate the same to the employees. For example, Peak (2010) says a message that is sent through a formal letter from the CEO of an organization will carry more weight than the same message sent through a secretary's memo. He observes that the choice of the medium one chooses to communicate is important in matters to do with conflict. Johnson and Johnson (1997) also note that the credibility of the sender of a message also matters if communication is to be deemed effective. For example, a teacher or administrator communicating his dissatisfaction through social media platform like a Whatsapp group may not be taken seriously like one would if he/she wrote a formal letter addressing the same. A conflict may also be heightened if parties involved, say a member of staff learns about a disciplinary action against them through office grapevine.

In relation to this, Conrad (2014) says that when employees know that the manager is giving information that is valid, is not withholding information and is available to listen, there is no need for employees to seek information elsewhere because grapevine can carry untruths and be malicious (Peak 2010). Rosethorn and Frem (2010) observe that communication channels like intranet sites and newsletters inform and help build to awareness of important news and information but do not necessarily drive behaviour outcomes. Rosethorn and Frem (2010) thus call for a combination of channels with emphasis on closer communication activities like frequent one-to-one meetings with administrators or talk back sessions that encourage discussion because they build understanding.

According to Hellriegel and Slocum(2009) interpersonal conflicts can be made less threatening if people are handled in a way that preserves the dignity of the other and conflict issues discussed in a manner that reduces intimidation to the participants.

And so instead of disparaging a member of staff who may be differing with one in opinion, Hellriegel and Slocum (2009) recommend that one acknowledges the other's point of view without making the person feel silly. The threat of conflict is reduced if participants try to support each other's self-image instead of trying to damage it just to win an argument (Hellriegel and Slocum, 2009). Drawing from this, one can infer that in the event of conflict between the teaching staff of a school and administrators, there is need to use channels of communication that are credible to both parties to communicate the same. Rosethorn and Frem (2010) say that the choice of content should come after establishing commitment to communication as something of strategic importance and creating the right organizational setting that acknowledges communication and preferably one where the level of trust and respect means that communication is credible.

2.2.4.3 Effect of using Communication to Address Conflict

Conflict is what results when individuals or groups of people differ in opinion or pursue incompatible goals or do not share meanings. Although normal to desire peace (absence of confrontations with others) conflict is unavoidable. Adejimola (2009) identifies communication as an important means of resolving conflict when it comes to non-violent methods of managing and resolving conflict. He observes that communication is also crucial in dialogue, mediation, negotiation, adjudication and arbitration of conflict because conflict is inevitable in the society or any setting where people or groups of people interact, like a school setting.

Adejimola (2009) says that communication is crucial in promoting, preventing and resolving conflict situations. According to Hener (2010) communication plays multiple roles in any conflict.

To begin with, it helps individuals and groups to understand themselves and others, and what to expect from them as well as how to influence them and make one's position known. This in turn would help to develop and maintain a consistent relationship to eventually achieve a common effort and collaboration.

Communication can for example promote conflict if in the process of communicating, individuals' or group's meanings are lost to their recipient. Krauss and Morssella (2000) say a speaker and listener may be employing codes that differ slightly and this may lead to misunderstanding. They for example say that one's choice of words or expressions often reflects the speaker's implicit attitude towards his subject. In a school situation for example, a male head of department telling female members of the department they have to be accompanied by a male teacher to take students out because women cannot handle boys alone may reveal his attitude towards the female sex. And though it may be the school policy to have at least one teacher of the students' sex accompanying them on their days out, the way the message is conveyed may escalate conflict with the affected gender feeling belittled by their head of department. This, especially if a conflict had erupted on learning that one of the affected members of staff had been omitted from attending a trip with students so as to create space for the favoured gender, without prior communication about the same. Krause and Morsella (2000) say that when ideologies and values are not shared, antagonism may arise.

And because conflict can affect employees' performance and productivity negatively if it goes unresolved, it is thus important for school administrators to effectively use communication to deescalate conflict with and among their staff. Nyasio (2015) observed that school administrators should involve stakeholders, in this case teachers, in conflict management, in addition to the fact that transparency and effective communication are important and thus considered a must in implementation of policy in public secondary

schools. Resolving conflict however requires expertise in active listening and assertive communication. This entails listening to the other person, using appropriate body language, words and expressions as well as making oneself clear without making threats against the other party. Further, the findings of the Republic of Rwanda Public Service Commission (2014) recommend the strengthening of communication channels with employees by increasing meetings in order to collectively manage conflict in work places.

2.2.4.4 Challenges of using Communication to Address Conflict

As defined earlier, communication is the sharing of ideas or shared meanings between individuals or groups of people. However, in the sharing of meanings, there are challenges that may interfere with effective communication yet to conduct business in an efficient manner; Spaho (2013) says communication is necessary. He says business involves external communication (communication with actors outside an organization) and internal communication (organizational communication directed at employees).

But since this study focused on communication between school administrations and teaching staff, attention was on internal communication in public secondary schools, which though not commercial, are organizations where Spaho's observations may apply. According to Krauss and Morsella (2000), communication entails the transfer of information by means of a code that maps a set of signals onto a set of meanings.

For every meaning, Krauss and Morsella (2000) say there is only one signal. What this then means is if for example one asks for a cup from the recipient of his/her message, the recipient hands the speaker a cup (a hand held utensil used for taking drinks from) and no other item. But Krauss and Morsella (2000) note that it is not always that the received message is similar to the transmitted message. This, Krauss and Morsella (2000), credit to the fact that all channels of communication contribute some degree of noise to the message.

However, noise is not the only thing that may affect communication negatively. Even when transmitted and received messages are similar, the retrieved proposition may differ significantly from the original. Speaker and listener may be using codes that differ slightly and this may lead to misunderstanding, Krauss and Morsella (2000). This then could pose a problem in a bid to resolve a conflict and there is a difference in the codes the parties involved employ.

There may also be challenges to communication which may be due to the physical or emotional distance of the administrators from their juniors. Peak (2010) says communication is often difficult and infrequent when superiors are isolated and seldom seen or spoken to. This thus calls for open communication so as to foster free sharing of thoughts and ideas if conflict is to be prevented or resolved between teaching staff and administrators in public secondary schools.

2.3 Summary

For any organization to achieve its objectives successfully, effective communication plays a major role. To conduct business in an efficient manner; Spaho (2013) says communication is necessary. However, in the process of conducting their business, organizations, which schools are, conflicts arise, which may hinder the achievement of the set goals. Most of the conflicts, according to Verma (1998) are a product of communication breakdown. Conflict can also arise from how it is communicated. From the discussion in this chapter, it is clear that communication can trigger a conflict, fan it and also resolve it thus making effective communication crucial in any organization or setting where people interact to achieve set objectives as a team.

But in spite of the emphasis of the centrality of communication in organizations, much seems to have been done about the role of communication in business organizations but little on educational organizations, and much less, communication between public school administrations and teaching staff, and the role it plays in resolving conflict in such institutions between the two groups. This study thus sought to bridge this gap by finding out the effectiveness of communication for conflict resolution between administration and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga sub-county, Murang'a, Kenya.

2.4 Study Gaps

From the discussion in the preceding sections, it is clear that a variety of factors trigger conflict but majorly, conflict seems to be a product of failed or ineffective communication in organisations. According to Verma (1998), breakdown in communication is the most usual source of conflict. A lack of trust, respect, effective listening skills, and differences in perception can lead to serious problems in communication (Spaho, 2013).

Spaho (2013) says that conflict stems from either personal factors or organizational factors. Hellriegel and Slocum (2009) say that conflict is recognized through communication and that interpersonal conflicts can be made less intimidating if individuals are handled in a way that preserves their image. Communication, Adejimola (2009) says, is an important non-violent means of resolving conflict and is important in promoting, preventing and resolving conflict situations. In sharing ideas with others however, Krauss and Morsella (2000), observe that it is not always that the received messages are similar as the retrieved proposition may differ significantly from the original.

Of note however, is the fact that the authors cited in this work focus largely on commercial organisations. However, their observations are relevant to educational organisations and in particular, public secondary schools because they too have organizational structure and are

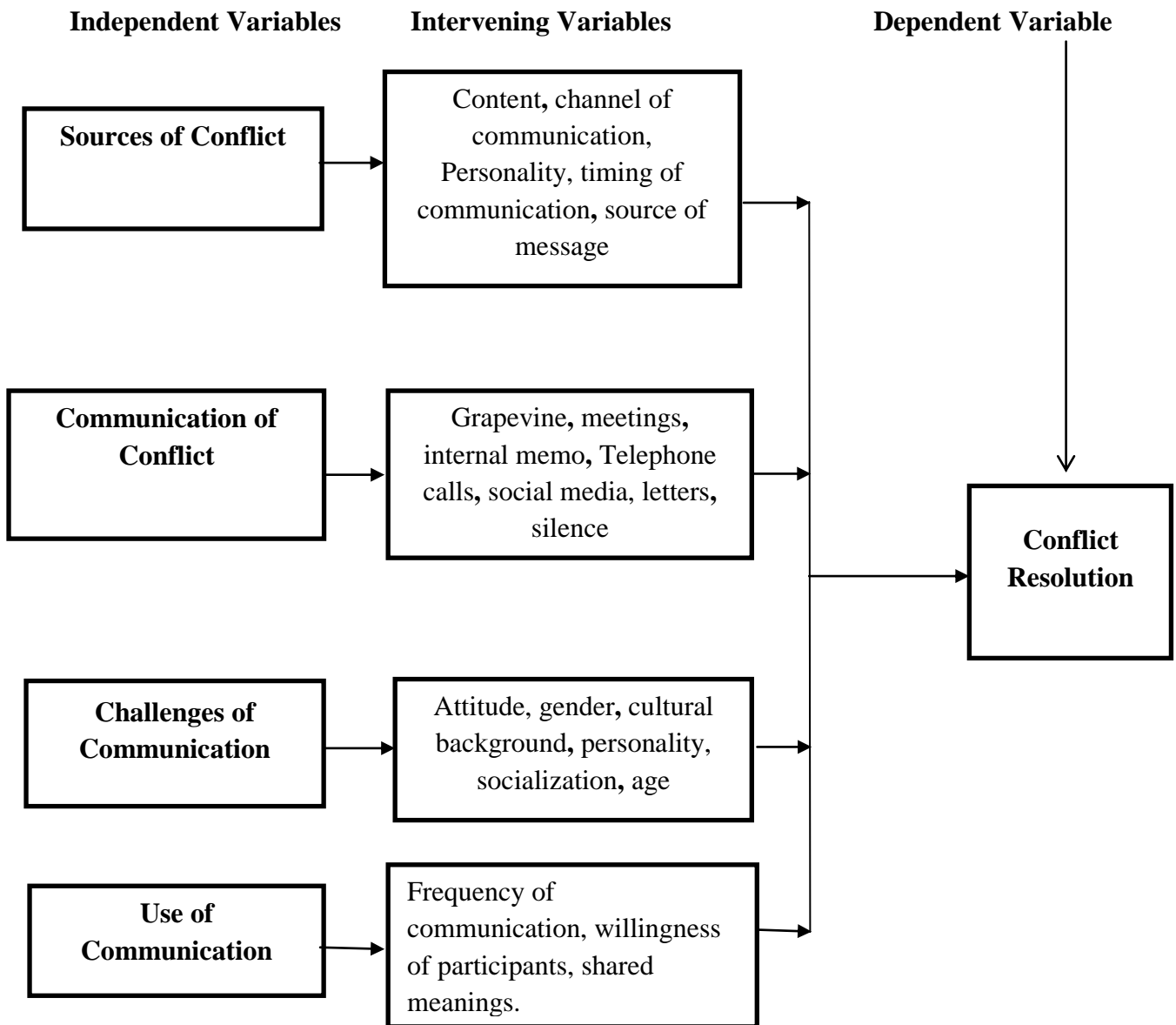
operated by people who in their interaction, may collide. Of note also is that there is emphasis on communication but that people sometimes opt to be silent does not seem to be given attention, yet by choosing to be silent, individuals still do send messages to those they interact with. It is also possible that silence could trigger, fan or help resolve a conflict.

It is also not clear if participants in a communication process are always open or honest when they send messages to others or give feedback or they monitor themselves when exchanging meanings with others. It is also not clear if indeed only communication can help resolve conflict or there are other ways to deescalate conflict without communication applying.

This study aimed at filling these gaps by finding out the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administration and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. This is because although effective communication in organisations has been written about, there seemed to be limited literature focusing on educational institutions in Kenya, whether colleges, or secondary and primary schools. The researcher also intended to bridge the gaps identified in this section.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Fig. 2.5.1 A conceptual framework showing the relationship between sources of conflict, communication of conflict, challenges of communication and use of communication in conflict resolution



Source: (Researcher 2016)

2.5.2 Explanation of the Conceptual Framework

How a conflict is communicated will determine if the conflict is resolved or escalated. For example, if there is a misunderstanding between a teacher and a head of department or another school administrator and instead of addressing the misunderstanding with the concerned teacher the administrator sarcastically raises it in a meeting, the conflict may instead be heightened rather than resolved. If however the administrator raises the matter with the concerned in private, the conflict then can be resolved amicably without any party feeling humiliated or undignified.

Where a conflict stemmed from may determine how it will be resolved. If for example it was as a result of failure to adequately inform one party of developments that concern them in school, then an understanding can be reached to adequately involve teachers or administrators in all matters that concern them so as to mitigate negative conflict. Challenges that dog communication may either help address a conflict or fan it. One of the challenges for example, concerns differences in meaning derived from a shared message. If an administrator for example commends a member of staff during a meeting, tells the rest to follow the concerned teacher's example after his/her class has done particularly well, the other members of staff may not share meaning with the administrator. Instead, they may feel that they are being scolded for not doing equally well and possibly sabotage the administrator's quest to have the school do well by expressing veiled protests like: 'Let teacher A handle that, he/she is the expert', thus starting a conflict. If for example an administrator is not easily accessible to the staff to address their issues, issues may bottle up and explode into a more complex conflict.

Whether a conflict is resolved or escalated can also be determined by using communication. To address a conflict, parties involved have to understand themselves and share meanings with others to get themselves understood. As such, communication has to take place if a conflict is to be resolved, especially without violence.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, procedures used in this study are discussed. The chapter focuses on research design, locale, sample and sampling procedures, data collection techniques, research instruments, administration of research instruments and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Since the interest of this study was the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between teaching staff in public secondary schools and school administrations in Gatanga sub-county in Murang'a, Kenya, focus for sampling was on teachers and administrators of such institutions. But because it was not possible to do a census, the researcher did a survey and sampled 10 percent of the 629 TSC teachers in public secondary schools in Gatanga. Mugenda (2003) says that 10 percent of the accessible population is enough for a descriptive study.

This study adopted a descriptive survey design because the design enabled the researcher to capture information from the targeted respondents confidentially. The design is appropriate as it enables the researcher to generate statistical information on aspects of education that interest policy makers on communication of conflict, sources of conflict, use of communication to address conflict and challenges of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and administrations in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County.

3.2 Study Location

This study was conducted in Gatanga Sub-County. The Sub-County is in Murang'a County Kenya, in what was formerly Central Province. The Sub-County is mainly agricultural, stretching from the foot of the Aberdares in the west where tea farming and dairy farming are practiced, to the semi-arid zone in the east, bordering Machakos County, with coffee and horticulture farming being practiced in between, (Kiriti 2011). It borders Kinangop, Gatundu North, Thika, Yatta, Masinga, Maragua, Kandara and Kigumo (Kiriti 2011).

Focus for this study was on public secondary schools in the Sub-County. This is because it was not possible to conduct the study in all secondary schools in the Republic of Kenya. According to the Teachers' Service Commission, *Staffing Status for Gatanga Secondary Schools in Gatanga sub-county* (March 2016), there are 46 secondary schools in the Sub-County. They include both boarding and day schools. The schools fall under various categories, which include one extra-county school, county schools and sub-county schools. Of the 46 schools, eight are boarding. Four of the schools are exclusively for girls; four for boys and the rest are mixed. The sub-county has 16,451 students, 7798 boys and 8653 girls, and 629 TSC employed teachers; 299 females and 330 males (Teachers' Service Commission 2016).

The students are mainly from the surrounding counties in the former Central Province and teachers drawn from around the Republic of Kenya. The sub-county's catchment area is dominantly inhabited by the Kikuyu community although to the east, there is a significant population of the Kamba community and the proximity of the area to Thika town also means there is a significant population of teachers and students from other communities of Kenya.

Although this study could be carried elsewhere in the republic of Kenya, the Sub-County was ideal for this study because the researcher is familiar with the region and it is also easily accessible to the researcher. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no other similar study has been done in this area.

3.3 Target Population

This study targeted teachers employed by TSC teaching in Gatanga Sub-county of Murang'a County. This is because even though there are other categories of teachers in the schools; peer teachers and teachers employed by Boards of Management, teachers employed by TSC are the most stable in terms of availability as their population is not likely to fluctuate unpredictably as the other two categories. According to the Teachers' Service Commission *Staffing Status for Gatanga Secondary Schools in Gatanga sub-county* (March 2016) the commission has 629 teachers in the 46 public secondary schools, eight of which (schools), are boarding. Four of schools are exclusively for girls, four for boys and the rest mixed. Of the 629 teachers 299 are females and 330 are males (Teachers' Service Commission March 2016). All the public secondary school teachers, principals, deputy principals and Heads of Departments in Gatanga Sub-County were thus the target population for this study.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sample Size

Sixty two teachers employed by TSC, were sampled for this study. The sample included Heads of Departments, deputy principals and principals. The sample represented 10 per cent of the 629 of teachers employed by TSC in Gatanga Sub- County.

Mugenda (2003) says that 10 percent of the accessible population is enough for a descriptive study, which this study was. And though 10 percent of 629 would be 62.9, 62 teachers were selected as human beings can only be represented by whole numbers.

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques

Because the interest of this study was the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County of Murang'a County, Kenya, focus for sampling was on teachers and administrators of such institutions in the locality. But since it was not possible to do a census, the researcher did a survey and sampled 10 per cent of the 629 teachers employed by TSC in Gatanga Sub-county. For fair representation, the sample comprised of representation from; exclusively girls' and boys' schools, mixed schools, boarding schools and day schools and schools headed by male and female teachers, as well as the categories of schools on the basis of rank: extra county schools, county and sub-county schools. This is because the communication and conflict issues in the different categories of schools may not be similar. To achieve this, the researcher used purposive sampling as it enabled the researcher to select sample using set criteria, (Orodho, 2012). Additionally, stratified random sampling was used to enable the researcher to obtain samples from the target population.

By use of stratified random sampling, the researcher was able to obtain samples from the different levels of management that exist in schools' organizational structure: the principal, deputy principal, Heads of Departments and ordinary teachers. Stratified random sampling helps the researcher to segregate a homogenous group for study (Mbwesa, 2006). The stratified random sampling was followed by random selection of subjects from each stratum, to give each member of the population equal opportunity to participate in the study.

3.5 Research Instruments

To collect data, the researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules. The questionnaire bore both open ended and closed questions that were based on the research objectives. Questionnaires were used to obtain data from all individuals in the sample. This is because questionnaires are ideal for collecting large amounts of data and the number of teachers targeted was large compared to the number of school administrators. Interview schedules were additionally used to obtain data from principals as the schedules enable the researcher to obtain in-depth data. They also gave the researcher the opportunity to restructure questions according to the situation specific to each administrator. The number of the targeted sample of the school administrators was also small thus making interview schedules ideal for the study.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

For this study, both closed and open ended questions were used. This is because the researcher would be able to obtain answers for questions with specific responses and at the same time give respondents freedom to express their views about particular phenomenon. The questionnaires for this study helped the researcher obtain data on the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between teachers and the administration in their schools. The questionnaire used for this study is attached to this project as Appendix I.

3.5.2 Interview Schedule

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) an interview schedule is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing a respondent. Because interviews are time consuming, they were only ideal to obtain data from the sampled school principals for this study.

They helped the researcher get in-depth data which may not have been possible to obtain by use of other methods. They also minimized the possibility of non-response to questions. The Interview Schedule used in this study is attached to the project as Appendix II.

3.6 Pre-testing

Piloting entails conducting a minor study prior the main study. It helps ensure that the questions set are clear, provoke answers and do not bear researcher bias (Orodho 2009). In basic terms, piloting helps to establish if indeed the instruments of a study will work as expected thus helping test the validity and reliability of the instruments. Instruments for this study were be piloted in two public secondary schools Thika West Sub-County because the schools were not included in the sampled schools.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which a test or instrument measures what it is intended to measure, Mbwesa (2006). To verify the validity of the instruments used in this study, the instruments were piloted. This helped in identifying items that had deficiencies like ambiguity and limited space to write answers on. It enabled the researcher to then modify the instruments before using them in the main study.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument bears the same results or consistent results. According to Mbwesa (2006), it can also be considered as the degree to which instruments used for data collection are free from errors and thus produce consistent results. To establish the reliability of instruments used for this study, the researcher used test re-test method which involves administering the same measure to the same group of respondents twice after a given period. For this study, a period of two weeks was used.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Because the study is both quantitative and qualitative, the researcher used interview schedules to obtain additional data from the school administrators as they were not many and questionnaires for all teachers in the sample because they helped the researcher to obtain much data from a big group in a short time. According to Orodho (2009), questionnaires also give the researcher the advantage of giving the respondents anonymity, and giving uniform questions to all respondents. The researcher, with help from assistants administered the research instruments. This applied at both the pre-testing stage and the main study.

3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation Techniques

According to Mbwesa (2006), data analysis is the variety of activities and processes that a researcher applies to a database so as to draw conclusions as well as make decisions regarding data collected from the field. It involves summarizing, categorizing and organizing raw data. For this study, the researcher went through the questionnaires and the interview schedules to establish that the items had been responded to. The data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data was presented in themes and quantitative data presented using descriptive statistics by use of SPSS.

3.9 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

3.9.1 Logistical Considerations

Logistical considerations, according to Orodho (2009), concern all processes, activities or actions that a researcher must address or carry out before and during research to ensure successful completion of a research project. The researcher began by preparing a work plan to show the time frame for implementing the activities to be carried out by the researcher throughout the research process. A budget was also prepared to guide the researcher so as to successfully complete the study.

3.9.2 Ethical Considerations

To begin this study, the researcher prepared a concept note which was accepted and the researcher was allowed to write the proposal. Having successfully defended the proposal for this study, the researcher obtained a Field Work Certificate from the director of the University of Nairobi School of Journalism and Mass Communication for authority to proceed to the field to collect data. The Field Work Certificate is attached to this project as Appendix III. The researcher also prepared a questionnaire and Interview Schedule to obtain data from the targeted respondents. But before administering the questionnaires and interviews to the respondents, the researcher asked for consent from principals of the sampled schools and the consent of each respondent. The researcher also explained the purpose of the study to the respondents. In addition, the researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents involved in the study.

After preparing the project report of the study, the researcher successfully defended the findings. The study was also subjected to anti plagiarism test and was found to be within the accepted threshold, at 14 percent. A Plagiarism Report confirming the same was obtained and is attached to this project as Appendix IV. Additionally, the researcher obtained the Declaration of Originality Form to confirm that this is the researcher's original work. The form is attached to this project as Appendix V. After making the recommended corrections to the project, the researcher also obtained the Certificate of Corrections, signed by the supervisor, the Associate Director and Director of the University of Nairobi School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The certificate is attached as Appendix VI.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, findings of the study are presented. Data is analysed, presented and interpreted. The data presented is in line with the objectives of the study and data related to the demographics of the respondents is analysed and interpreted.

4.1 Response Rate

Sixty two questionnaires were administered. However, in addition to administering the questionnaires, four interviews were conducted among key informants who had also filled the questionnaires. The interviews were necessary as they provided in depth data from school principals. All the questionnaires were filled and the interviews successfully conducted. This translated to a 100 percent response rate.

The high response rate was because the respondents were guaranteed of anonymity. The researcher was also familiar with most of the respondents and was also helped to collect data by assistants who respondents were familiar with. In addition, the respondents were given adequate time to respond to the questionnaires.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

The study sought to establish the gender, age, academic qualifications, length of service as a teacher and the length of service teaching in the current school of the respondents. The study also established the type of school in which the respondents taught in in terms of the gender of the learners, whether it was a day or boarding school and the category of the school in terms of; Sub-County, County and extra county. The respondents also indicated whether they held any administrative post.

4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the gender of the respondents. This was important as it gave the researcher insight into the relationship between one's gender and the way they communicate or handle conflict with others in their work place. The distribution of the respondents on the basis of gender was as follows.

Table.4.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
Female	25	40.3
Male	37	59.7
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that there were more male respondents (n=37, 59.7 percent) than there were female respondents (n=25, 40.3 percent). This shows gender disparity which can be explained by the Teachers' Service Commission *Staffing Status for Gatanga Secondary schools* (March 2016) which says that there were 629 TSC employed teachers, with 299

being female and 330 males which shows gender disparity among the staff employed by TSC in the sub-county.

4.2.2 Age of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the distribution of respondents by their age. This was important as it would enable the researcher to gain insight in the relationship of one's age with how communication is used in conflict resolution in schools. The table below shows the data of the age of the respondents.

Table. 4.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age bracket	No. of residents	Percentage
26-30	11	17.7
31-35	8	12.9
36-40	9	14.5
41-45	15	24.2
46-50	14	22.6
51-55	4	6.5
Over 55	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The above table shows that there were more respondents aged between 41 and 50 with the age bracket 41-45 and 46-50 having (n=15, 24.2 percent) and (n=14, 22.6 percent) respondents respectively. Respondents aged below 30 years followed at (n=11, 17.7 percent). That the age groups 31-35 and 36-40 (n=8, 12.9 percent) and (n=9, 14.5 percent) respectively, were fewer could be explained by the freeze in direct employment of civil servants by the Government of Kenya in the late 1990s.

According to Manda (2001) the government's blank guarantee of employment to graduates from tertiary institutions was discontinued due to its unsustainability as a result of a declining economy, the freezing of recruitment and the introduction of civil service retrenchment under the influence of the donor community. This means that majority of the teaching workforce is middle aged and that the continued recruitment of teachers every year in recent years has opened opportunities for the younger generation aged below 30 years to join the profession, thus their high number among the respondents. The age bracket 31-40 cohort could have ventured into other professions while the freeze of direct employment of civil servants by the government prevailed.

4.2.3 Academic Qualification of Respondents

The study sought to establish the distribution of respondents according to their academic qualifications. This was important as it would give the researcher insight into whether academic qualifications play part into the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between teachers and administrations in public secondary schools. Data of the academic qualifications of the respondents is shown in the table below.

Table 4.3 Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualification

Level of education	No. of respondents	Percentage
Master in education	5	8.1
Bachelors in education	49	79.0
Diploma in education	7	11.3
Others	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that the majority of the respondents possessed bachelor's degrees as their highest academic qualification (n=49, 79 percent). It was also found out that in addition to holding education based academic qualifications; there was at least one respondent with a post graduate academic qualification in another field other than education.

4.2.4 Length of Service in the Teaching Profession

The study also sought to find out the duration the respondents had worked as teachers. This was important as it would help the researcher gain insight into whether there is a relationship between one's experience as a teacher and the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table. 4.4 Distribution of Respondents by Experience in the Teaching Profession

Experience in Years	No. of respondents	Percentage
0-5	16	25.8
6-10	5	8.1
11-15	10	16.1
16-20	10	16.1
Over 20	21	33.9
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

From the table above, respondents who had worked as teachers for over 20 years (n=21, 33.9 percent) were found to be in the majority and those with experience of between 6 and 10 years to be the minority (n=5, 8.1 percent). Newly employed respondents were also a significant number (n=16, at 25.8 percent). That majority of the respondents had been teachers for over 20 years (n=21, 33.9) could be explained by the finding that majority of the teaching workforce in the sample were middle aged, above 40 years, explained by the fact there was a halt in direct recruitment of civil servants in the 1990s.

For the duration the hiring of teachers was reduced, those who may have trained to become teachers may have sought employment in other areas unrelated to teaching thus their reduced numbers. But with the consistent recruitment of teachers by the government every year in the recent past, the numbers of those joining the profession may have increased thus the number of those with five years or less in experience (n=16, 25.8 percent) being higher than those who had been teachers for between 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16-20 years, at (n=5, 8.1 percent), (n=10, 16.1 percent) and (n=10, 16.1 percent) respectively.

4.2.5 Length of Service in Current Workstation

In addition to finding out the length of service in the teaching profession, the study also sought to find out the duration that the respondents had worked in their current station. This was important as it helped the researcher to find out if the length of one's service in a given work station was important in the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between teachers and administrations in public secondary schools in Gatanga. The results were as shown in the table below.

Table. 4.5 Distribution of Respondents by Experience Teaching in their Current Station

Experience in years	No. of respondents	Percentage
0-5	27	43.5
6-10	15	24.2
11-15	10	16.1
16-20	7	11.3
Over 20	3	4.8
Total 0	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents 0-5 years (n=27, 43.5 percent) had worked in their current station for five years or less. This could possibly be because of transfers to and from workstations by respondents. It also could mean that the respondents had been newly employed and had not transferred from their station possibly because newly employed teachers are not allowed to transfer from their first posting until they have served for at least five years.

4.2.6 Post Held by Respondents

The study also sought to establish the positions held by the respondents in their school. This was important as it helped the researcher to relate the position a teacher held in their school with the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution in their school. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table. 4.6 Distribution of Respondents by Post held in their School

Position held	No. of respondents	Percentage
Ordinary teacher	29	46.8
Head of department	24	38.7
Other	9	14.5
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above indicates that teachers without administrative duties formed the majority (n=29, 46.8 percent). There were 24 respondents that were departmental heads at (n=24, 38.7 percent) and others, who included deputy principals and principals, were (n=9, 14.5 percent). This variation could be explained by the fact that there are less administrative offices to be occupied by the entire teaching staff.

That there were even less deputy principals and principals means that the higher up in the organizational hierarchy an administrative post, the lesser the number of people that occupy the offices. It also reflects on the situation on the ground that each school had one principal and one deputy principal and a larger number of teaching staff.

4.2.7 Gender of School

The study sought to establish the distribution of the respondents on the basis of the gender of the students in schools they worked in. This was important as it would give the researcher insight into issues of communication and conflict resolution in the different schools classified in terms of the students' gender. The distribution of the respondents was as shown in the table below.

Table.4.7 Distribution of Respondents by Gender of School

School	Target Population	Response	Percentage
Boys	24	24	38.70
Girls	26	26	41.93
Mixed	12	12	19.35
Total	62	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

From the table above, that majority of the respondents were from girls' schools (n=.26, 41.9 percent) followed by those teaching in boys' school (n=24, 38.7 percent) and mixed schools with (n=12, 19.35 percent) respectively. This could be explained by the fact that the girls' schools in the sample had more streams translating to more teachers available for sampling while mixed schools, all of which were day schools had only one stream each, thus fewer teachers available for sampling.

4.2.8 Type of School

The study sought to find out whether respondents worked in day or boarding schools. This was important as it helped give the researcher understanding as to whether a school being day or boarding is important in the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.8 Distribution of Respondents by Type of School (Day or Boarding)

School	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Day	12	19.4
Boarding	50	80.6
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that there were more respondents from boarding schools (n=50, 80.6 percent) than from day schools (n=12, 19.4 percent). The researcher found out that the boarding schools in the sub county had a higher population of teachers per school than the population of teachers in individual day schools. This is because the boarding schools had more streams, translating to a higher number of teachers and thus providing a larger number of individuals accessible for sampling.

4.2.9 Category of School

The study additionally sought to establish the category of schools the respondents worked in based on the categorization in terms of Sub County, County or Extra County, which determines where the schools draw their learners from. This was significant as it gave the researcher insight as to whether the category of a school was important in the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution. The findings were as shown in the table below.

Table 4.9 Category of School

School	No. of respondents	Percentage
County	24	38.7
Extra County	11	17.7
Sub County	27	43.5
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that there were more respondents from the sub county schools (n=27, 43.5 percent) than there were from the other two categories: County (n=24, 38.7 percent), Extra County (n=11, 17.7 percent). This can be attributed to the fact that there are more sub county schools in Gatanga sub-county than there are County and Extra County schools according to the Teachers' Service Commission, *Staffing Status for Gatanga Schools in Gatanga Sub-County* (March 2016). This means that sub-county schools provided more individuals available for sampling.

4.3 Sources of Conflict

Conflict is the misunderstanding that arises between individuals or groups of individuals as a result of incompatible goals or breakdown in communication. Although often viewed negatively, conflict is a normal occurrence whenever there is interaction of individuals or groups of individuals. According to Adejimola (2009) and Verma (1998), conflict is inevitable in any society

4.3.1 Presence of Conflict in Schools

This study sought to find out if conflict was experienced in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub County and what contributed to it. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.10 Presence of Conflict between Teachers and School Administrators

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	83.9
No	8	12.9
No Response	2	3.2
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

According to the table above, majority of the respondents (n=52, 83.9 percent) confirmed that indeed, conflict was experienced in their institutions, between teachers and their administrators. This confirms Adejimola's (2009) and Verma's (1998) assertion that conflict is a normal occurrence in the society.

4.3.2 Experience of Conflict between Self and Administrator

The study went on to establish if respondents had experienced conflict with their administrators. This was important as it helped the researcher also find if teachers experienced conflict with their administrators. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.11 Experience of Conflict between Self and School Administrators

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	54.8
No	27	45.2
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that 34 respondents, 54.8 percent, had experienced conflict with their administrators. This confirms the earlier assertion that whenever there is an interaction between individuals or groups of people, conflict is likely to occur, and it is normal.

4.3.3 Causes of Conflict

Conflict in an institution is brought about by a variety of reasons among which include competition, resources, difference in thoughts, misunderstanding between people among others. However, Verma (1998) says breakdown in communication is the most common and evident source of conflict. To verify this, the study sought to establish causes of conflict in schools. The findings on causes of conflict in schools were as shown in the table below.

Table 4.12 Causes of Conflict in Schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Competition	4	6.5
Communication	32	51.6
Person conveying message	5	8.1
Resources	2	3.2
More than one response	9	14.5
No response	10	16
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

From the findings in the table above, 32 respondents (n=32, 51.6 percent) said the conflict witnessed or experienced in their school with the administration was as a result of problems in communication thus supporting assertions by Verma (2009), Wanjama et al (2010) and Spaho (2013). It is however worth noting that communication, though a major contributor to conflict was not the only cause as the table above shows.

4.3.4 Communication Plays a Major Role in Conflict

The study also sought to establish if communication plays a major role in conflict. This was important as it gave the researcher insight into the role played by communication in conflict situations. The findings on whether communication played a major role in conflict in the respondents' schools are as shown in the table below.

Table 4.13 Whether Communication Plays a Major Role in Conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	22	35.5
Agree	37	59.7
Disagree	2	3.2
Strongly disagree	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents (n=59, 95.2. percent) agreed that communication played a major role in conflict. Although the interviewees agreed that communication played a major role in conflict, they added that the other major cause of conflict between them and their juniors was neglect of duty with at least one of the four interviewees saying distribution of workload among teachers and timetabling also caused conflict. This affirms Nyamboga and Kiplangat's (2008) assertion that there is no single cause of conflict. In addition, all the interviewees said communication played a big role in triggering, sustaining and resolving conflict in their schools.

The interviewees explained that open communication helped parties exchange their thoughts, make themselves understood and reach mutual understanding as well as get feedback. They said they made their best efforts to maintain open communication with their juniors. Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) say conflict can result because of misinformation between people with regard to their needs, ideas, beliefs, goals and values but to address a conflict, there is need for communication channels between differing groups to be open.

4.3.5 How a Teacher in Conflict with Administration is dealt with

The study also sought to establish how those in conflict with school administrators were dealt with. In response, majority of the respondents, (n=42 , 67.7 percent) said a conflict with the administration was sorted out using various means of communication like letters to show cause why action should not be taken against a particular teacher, private meetings with the administrator concerned and staff meetings. Meetings, private or open, provide a forum where parties involved in a conflict could negotiate to reach an agreement.

But as Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) say, coercion can also be used, to force individuals or groups to a particular conclusion. This could then explain why some of the respondents said the member or members of staff in conflict with the school administration was/were sent warning letters or forced to go on transfer. Others had emissaries, for example heads of their department or other senior teachers sent to them to address the matter. That emissaries are sometimes sent in an attempt to address conflict with members of staff relates to one of the approaches Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2008) identify, used to resolve conflict, arbitration or using a third party which is used to resolve the issue in dispute, but with the consent of the parties involved.

At least three respondents said silence was used, where the parties involved in a conflict kept quiet and left a conflict unresolved. However, seven of the respondents said a member of staff in conflict with the school administration was sent on transfer, with at least one respondent saying an aggrieved member of staff sought to be transferred. This response about transfer deferred with what the interviewed administrators said as none said they had asked for the transfer of a member of staff or forced one to be transferred because of a conflict with them.

In addition, three of the interviewees said they did not write warnings to their teaching staff as doing so would mar the concerned teachers' records. Instead, they said they sought private meetings with the concerned teachers to iron out the matter. The interviewees however agreed that conflict in their institutions did lead to poor performance of duties, wastage of time, mistrust and suspicion and it spilled students leading to poor student performance.

4.3.6 Effect of Conflict

The study also sought to find out what the effect of conflict in the respondents' institutions was. Although Turkalj et al (2008) and Okumbe (2007) say conflict does not have to be negative and can trigger positive changes in an organization; it seems the respondents in this study viewed conflict negatively as only one respondent mentioned positive effects of conflict in their institution. Instead, majority, 29 respondents viewed conflict with their administrators or juniors as a cause of demoralization among teachers, with 27 respondents adding that it leads to poor performance.

Respondents also explained that conflict in their institutions led to mistrust among the teachers, with some mentioning that in addition to affecting their (teachers') performance in their work, conflict contributed to poor students' academic performance and discipline as a demotivated teacher did not deliver in his/he duty. Some also said it caused disunity among teachers and lowered their self-esteem. This thus called for the need to handle individuals with whom one is in conflict with respect as employees like to be treated with respect and dignity (Conrad 2014). If the manager, in this case school administrator, sets the tone and content of communication to do this, treat their juniors with respect and dignity, it helps to develop a more productive and supportive workforce (Conrad 2014).

4.4 Communication of Conflict

One of the objectives of this study was to determine how conflict between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub County is communicated. According to Adejisola (2009), conflicts are inevitable in any society even though peace is a desirable condition. From the findings of this study, this assertion was confirmed to be true. And although the findings were that communication is not the only cause of conflict, Hellriegel and Slocum (2009) say conflict between people is recognized and expressed through communication as communication helps individuals or groups of people to share meanings and ideas. It is for such reasons that Okumbe (2007) says educational managers should be able to provide an enabling environment which assures teachers that their ideas and contributions are important for the overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Apart from expressing conflict through communication, communication can also trigger, escalate or deescalate a conflict.

4.4.1 How Conflict with a Member of Staff is Communicated

The study sought to find out how conflict with a member (s) of staff is communicated by the school administration. This was important as it gave the researcher insight in how conflict is communicated to members of staff by administrators in schools. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.14 How Conflict is Communicated to Staff by the School Administration

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Grapevine	9	14.5
Internal memo	6	9.7
Staff meeting	9	14.5
Private meeting	24	38.7
More than one response	12	19.4
Others	2	3.2
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents, (n=24, 38.7 percent) said that conflict with a member of staff is communicated to them through private meetings with the administrators concerned. On the other hand, (n=9, 14.5 percent) and a similar number said conflict is communicated to the concerned members of staff through staff meetings and grapevine while (n=12, 19.4 percent) said more than one channel was used.

4.4.2 How Members of Staff Learn of a Conflict between a Teacher or Teachers and Administration

The study also sought to establish how teachers learnt of a conflict or conflict between a teacher or teachers and school administrations. This gave the researcher insight into how this relates to the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Gatanga. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.15 How Members of Staff learn of a Conflict between Reaching Staff and School Administration

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Grapevine	34	54.8
Internal Memo	3	4.8
Private meeting	9	14.5
Staff meeting	8	12.9
More than one response	2	3.2
Other	5	8.1
Non response	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents learn of a conflict between a colleague or colleagues through grapevine (n=34, 54.8 percent). What this means is that conflict is communicated privately with the parties concerned and it is possibly why the others learn about it in office grapevine if such happens to leak.

This is supported by the findings in the table 1.14 where majority of the respondents said the administration communicated conflict to concerned staff through private meetings,(n=24, 38.7 percent). The administrators interviewed for this study also agreed that they held private meetings with members of staff they were in conflict with to preserve their dignity but when the matter concerned the entire staff, they raised the matters in staff meetings. At least one of the interviewees and questionnaire respondent said they raised the matter as a ‘by the way’ or AOB in staff meetings. That grapevine was identified as a method through which respondents learnt about others’ conflicts in their institution validates Okumbe’s (2007) assertion that grapevine forms part of the informal communication used in organisations. It helps structure

and reduce anxiety, helps people make sense of disjointed or limited information and to obtain ‘inside information’ (Okumbe, 2007).

4.4.3 Whether Teachers are Given Voice to Air Concerns

The study also sought to find out whether teachers were given voice to air their concerns and which channels they used to do so. This was important as it helped the researcher establish whether teachers are given opportunity to express their concerns to school administrators. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.16 Whether Teachers are Given Voice to Air their Concerns to the School Administrations

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	12	19.4
Yes	48	77.4
No response	2	3.2
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of respondents said that teachers were given voice to air their concerns (n=48, 77.4 percent) while (n=12, 19.4 percent) said they were not. This was supported by the interviewees who however said that though given an opportunity to express themselves, some teachers always kept quiet and had to be probed to speak up. Some of the teachers, at least one administrator said, were private and kept their opinions to themselves. That some teachers opt to keep quiet even when they have issues of concern could be a response conflict known as withdrawal. Two respondents, 3.2 percent, however did not express whether teachers were given voice to express their concerns to the school

administrations. That teachers are given opportunity to express their concerns to the school administration was a view that the interviewees agreed with.

4.4.4 Channels used by Teachers to Air Concerns

The study also sought to establish the channels teachers used to voice their concerns to their school administrations. This was significant as it would reveal the channel preferred by teachers to communicate issues to their school administrators. The table below shows the channels the respondents said teachers use to voice their concerns to their administrations.

Table 4.17 Channels used by Teachers to Voice their Concerns to the School

Administrations

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Staff meetings		29	46.8
Private meetings		3	4.8
Grapevine		2	3.2
Combination of channels		8	12.9
Other		8	12.9
Total		62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

From the table above, staff meetings (n=29, 46.8 percent) were found to be the preferred channel used by teachers to air their concerns to the school administrators. This would mean that teachers avoid private meetings (n=3, 4.8 percent) with their administrators, preferring to air their views when meetings were held. This could also mean that the matters raised were not sensitive enough to warrant a private meeting with the concerned administrator. Two respondents, 3.2 percent said teachers communicated their concerns through grapevine, that

they would raise the matter as a rumour in the presence of someone close to a concerned administrator for the concern to be relayed to the administrator.

However, the key informants said it was not always that teachers expressed their concerns, some choosing keep quiet unless they were prodded to speak. That some teachers opt to keep quiet could be explained by the fact that as a way to cope, some people withdraw and use silence as a defense mechanism or avoidance, a response to conflict that Nyamboga and Kiplangat (2007) say entails low assertiveness and low cooperation.

4.4.5 Whether Teachers Communicate their Dissatisfaction with the School

Administrators

The study sought to establish if teachers communicate their dissatisfaction with the school administrations. This was important as it helped the researcher establish whether being granted voice to air their concerns translated to teachers being able to communicate their dissatisfaction with their administrators. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.18 Whether Teachers Communicate their Dissatisfaction with School Managements

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	17	27.4
Yes	44	71.0
No response	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that the number of respondents who said they were given opportunity to express themselves reduced by 6.4 percent, from (n=48, 77.4 percent) to (n=44, 71.0

percent) as shown in the table above, this was in comparison with the response on whether teachers were given voice to air their concerns to their school administrations.

Respondents who said teachers did not communicate their dissatisfaction with the school administrations expressed fear of being victimized as a reason for keeping quiet while others felt speaking out would not help as some members of staff were always ignored regardless of what they had to say. On the other hand, three of the interviewees said though given opportunity to speak up, some members of staff choose to keep quiet either because they had suspicions about their administrators or they were just private while others like to dominate discussions. Only one interviewee said their juniors were always open with them. The interviewees also said they themselves used silence as way to communicate either consciously or unconsciously. At least one of interviewees said they kept silent if what they want to say may be offending, may be misunderstood or would invite unnecessary criticism. Another said when they kept silent towards an erring member of staff, the concerned member of staff would feel guilty and own up to their mistake and seek reconciliation with the administrator or do self-correction. This makes it clear that it is not always that individuals communicate verbally or by say writing as communication is both direct and indirect as Lunenburg (2010) says.

4.4.6 Whether Administration Informs Erring Staff of Action Taken Against Them

The study also sought to investigate if school administrations inform errant teachers of action taken against them. This was important as it provided the researcher with insight about whether teachers that are in conflict with school administrations are informed of action taken against them or they are caught unawares. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.19 Whether School Administrations Inform Errant Staff of Action Taken Against Them

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	54.8
No	24	38.7
Other	1	1.6
No response	3	4.8
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

Majority of the respondents (n=34, 54.8 percent) said school administrations inform errant teaching staff of action taken against them. However, 24 or 38.7 percent of the respondents said they were not informed. This could mean that there is a considerable number of teachers who are caught unawares when school administrators take action against them, possibly escalating a conflict between them and school administrations. It is also possible that they learn of action taken against them through colleagues or grapevine. This could affect one's self-image or cause mistrust among both the affected teachers and those that become aware of the happenings, yet Conrad (2014) says employees like to be treated with respect and dignity as it helps to develop a more productive and supportive workforce thus the need to communicate respect.

Hellriegel and Slocum (2009) also say that interpersonal conflicts can be made threatening if individuals are handled in a way that preserves the self-image of the other and conflict issues discussed in a manner that minimizes threat to the participants.

4.5 Use of Communication to Address Conflict

4.5.1 Frequency of Channels used by School Administrations with Staff

The study sought to find out what the effect of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga is. Towards this end, the study sought to establish how school administrations used a variety of channels to communicate with their staff and the frequency of use of each channel. The table below shows the various channels used in schools and the frequency of their usage.

Table 4.20 Use of Various Channels of Communication by School Administrations with Staff

Response	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No response		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Meetings	32	51.6	25	40.3	5	8.1	-	-	-	-	62	100.0
Internal Memo	18	29.0	30	48.4	10	16.1	2	3.2	2	3.2	62	100.0
SMS	24	38.7	29	46.8	6	9.7	3	4.8	-	-	62	100.0
Phone calls	4	6.5	40	64.5	16	25.8	-	-	2	3.2	62	100.0
Email	-	-	-	-	12	19.4	46	74.2	4	6.5	62	100.0
Social media	10	16.1	14	22.6	11	17.7	26	41.9	1	1.6	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

From the table above, the study established that majority of respondents said school administrators use staff meetings to communicate with their teaching staff, with (n= 32, 51.6 percent) of the respondents saying the administrators use meetings often and (n=25, 40.3 percent) saying their administrators sometimes use meetings to communicate issues with their staff. No respondent said that administrators never hold meetings. What this means then is that meetings were a preferred way of communicating issues with teachers by administrators. Meetings were followed by use of SMS, with (n=24, 38.7 percent) saying their school management uses SMS to communicate with staff. Majority of the respondents (n=46, 74.2 percent) however said emails are never used to communicate with them.

Respondents who said their administrators used phone calls to communicate with them were also few (n=4, 6.5 percent) but (n= 40, 64.5 percent) said their administration sometimes uses phone calls to communicate with them. Majority of the respondents (n=26, 41.9 percent) also said the administrators never use social media for communication purposes, but the percentage was lower than that of those who said they never use emails, at (n=46, 74.2percent).

4.5.2 Contribution to Conflict of Channel used to Communicate with Teachers

The study sought to establish if the channel of communication used to communicate with teachers contributed to conflict. This was important as it helped the researcher determine whether channel used to communicate contributes to conflict between teachers and school administrators. The finding was as shown in the table below.

**Table 4.21 Whether Channel of Communication used to Communicate in a School
Contributes to Conflict**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	51.6
No	29	46.8
No response	1	16
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents (n=32, 51.6 percent) thought that the channel of communication used to communicate in their school contributed to conflict while (n=29, 46.8 percent) did not think so.

4.5.3 Frequency of Communication and Conflict

The study sought to establish if the frequency of communication between teachers and school administrators contributed to conflict. This was significant as it helped the researcher relate conflict to how often teachers and school administrators communicated. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.22 Whether the Frequency of Communication with Administration Contributes to Conflict with Teaching Staff

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	37.1
No	39	62.9
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

Although majority of the respondents had said the channel of communication used did contribute to conflict, majority (n=39, 62.9 percent) said the frequency of communication of teachers with the administration did not contribute to conflict, meaning how messages were delivered was what mattered to the respondents and not how often administrators communicated with their teaching staff. Respondents who said that the frequency of communication contributed to conflict said limited opportunities to interact with school administrators made resolving issues with the concerned parties take long and delayed exchange of important information thus leading to further misunderstanding and conflict.

4.5.4 Use of Various Channels to Address Conflict

The study also sought to find out if conflict is ever addressed in the respondents' school using the channels shown in the table below. This was important to the researcher as it helped reveal which channel of communication is most preferred in schools to address conflict.

Table 4.23 Whether Conflict is Addressed using Meetings, Internal Memo, Phone Calls, SMS, Email and Social Media

Response	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No response		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Staff Meetings	17	27.4	30	48.4	12	19.4	3	4.8	-	-	62	100.0
Internal Memo	1	1.6	23	37.1	17	27.4	17	27.4	4	6.5	62	100.0
Phone calls	-	-	17	27.4	23	37.1	20	32.3	2	3.2	62	100.0
SMS	-	-	18	29.0	14	22.6	27	43.5	3	4.8	62	100.0
Email	-	-	-	-	6	9.7	50	80.6	6	9.7	62	100.0
Social Media	-	-	5	8.1	8	12.9	43	69.4	6	9.7	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The above table shows that only a small percentage of respondents said staff meetings were often used to address conflict (n=17, 27.4 percent) compared to (n=30, 48.4 percent) who said meetings were sometimes used to address it. Except for one other person who said internal memos were often used to communicate conflict in their institutions, there did not appear to be a preferred channel used to address conflict between teachers and their administrators because the other channels were either never used by the majority or used some times. This could mean that to address conflict, private meetings were used, away from uninvolved members of staff. Using private meetings with warring individuals would mean the participants were intent on preserving the dignity of those involved as Conrad (2014) recommends.

4.6 Challenges of using Communication to Address Conflict

The study sought to find out challenges experienced when communication is used to address conflict between teachers and school administrations.

4.6.1 Personal Attitude and Communication of Conflict

The study sought to establish if a person's attitude affects the way conflict is communicated to teachers in their institution. This was important as it gave the researcher insight into whether one's attitude interferes with how conflict is communicated. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.24 Whether Personal Attitude Affects the Way Conflict is Communicated to Teachers

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	51	82.3
No	9	14.5
No response	2	3.2
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents, (n=51, 82.3 percent) said the attitude of a person affects the way a conflict is communicated to teachers in the respondents' schools. Spaho (2010) says conflict in organisations stems from either personal factors or organizational factors, observing that personal causes of conflict come from personal character among others. This means that a person's disposition can affect how they

communicate with others and thus how they address conflict. This relates to the Human Relations Theory which entails social factors that affect employees as they work in organisations.

4.6.2 Communication Culture of School

The study sought to establish if the communication culture of a school affects how conflict is communicated to teachers in schools. This was important for it helped the researcher gain insight into whether the communication culture of a school affects how conflict is communicated to teachers. The findings are as shown in the table below.

Table 4.25 Whether Communication Culture of a School Affects how Conflict between Teachers and School Administration is Addressed

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	16.1
Agree	34	54.8
Disagree	14	22.6
Strongly disagree	1	1.6
No response	3	4.8
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of the respondents (n=44, 70.9 percent) agreed that their institution’s communication culture affected the way conflict was addressed. But even though the majority (n=44, 70.9 percent) agreed that a school’s communication culture affected the way conflict was addressed in their workplace, only 21 or 33.8 percent of the respondents

explained how communication culture affected the way conflict between teachers and school administrations was addressed. Various explanations were given as to how the culture affects how a conflict is addressed.

To begin with, some respondents felt that in their schools, there was a culture of ignoring some members of the teaching staff and so anything the concerned members said was considered inconsequential and thus the persons are ignored. It was also noted that in schools where meetings were a preferred way to communicate, conflict also tended to be addressed through meetings and where there was a tradition of infrequent interaction with the administration, conflicts tended to be left unattended thus sometimes making a bad situation worse. Some of the respondents also felt that members of staff learn of a matter concerning them through gossip, with others learning about matters before the core persons.

In addition, some respondents felt that much as there were meetings with the administration, issues were reported to members of staff by administrators as a matter of information and they were not given opportunity to discuss the matters or express their opinion about the same. Some also felt that there was poor communication between teachers and administrators, with some claiming exaggeration of matters and lack of objectivity as well as relying on gossip thus making a conflict more complex or failing to resolve it altogether.

4.6.3 Gender and Communication in Resolving Conflict

The study also sought to establish if the gender of their administrator affected the way he or she communicates with a teacher(s) in addressing conflict. This was significant as it provided insight into whether being male or female is a challenge in communicating in situations of conflict. The finding was as shown in the table below.

Table 4.26 Whether the Gender of Administrator Affects how they Communicate with Teachers to Address Conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	37.1
No	39	62.9
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above indicates that majority of the respondents, (n=39, 62.9 percent) felt that the gender of the administrator does not affect how the administrators communicate in addressing conflict with teachers in their schools. This could be explained by the possibility that the administrators consider their juniors as mature professionals. However, many of those who said the gender of the administrator affected the way they (administrators) communicated when addressing conflict felt there is more care employed in addressing conflict with members of staff of the opposite gender. Some women felt men respect them more than women do. An interviewee also felt that women tended to provide more intimate information than do their male counterparts, adding that when relating with their female bosses, there seems to be a blurred social boundary with women while men are more formal when relating with their female bosses.

4.6.4 Age and Communication in Addressing Conflict

The study sought to establish whether age affects how school administrators communicate with teachers in addressing conflict. This was important in giving understanding into whether age is significant in communication in conflict situations. The following table shows the distribution of respondents on whether age affects how administrators communicate with teachers in addressing conflict.

Table 4.27 Whether the Age of an Administrator Affects how they Communicate with Teachers in Addressing Conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	43.5
No	35	56.5
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table above shows that majority of respondents (n=35, 56.5 percent) felt that the age of an administrator does not affect how they communicate with their teachers in addressing conflict. However, a considerable percentage, (n=27, 43.5 percent) thought that age does affect the way an administrator communicates with a teacher to address conflict. Of this latter group, a variety of explanations was offered. Older teachers explained that older administrators were more objective and careful when addressing conflict with the teaching staff and that younger administrators were rush in making decisions that affected their juniors and were less sober when dealing with issues.

Older staff also felt that young members of staff were inexperienced in dealing with conflict and had a tendency to withhold details from their older colleagues. On the other hand, younger members of staff felt they were looked down upon by their older counterparts. This difference in opinion between the older teachers and the younger ones could stem from the fact that people’s world view is largely influenced by their background in terms of culture. Culture, according to the Cultural Organisational Theory, is like a web and for the web to exist, there must be shared meaning, understanding and sense of making, which means using the same language and partaking of the same traditions (Griffin 2012).

The finding would mean that the teachers could be coming from a cultural background where elders are always deemed wiser and the older people would thus view a boss, younger than them as unwise and irrational while younger administrators may feel belittled by their older juniors on account of being young and inexperienced.

However that majority of the respondents felt that age did not matter in how administrators handled conflict would be explained by the belief that there is need to pay attention to social factors that affect employees as the Human Relations theory entails, which could be the school of thought employed by the administrators who do not mind about the age of their juniors when communicating with them in conflict situations at the workplace, thus their (administrators) treating them as competent professionals, regardless of their age.

4.6.5 Administrators' Communication Competence

The study also sought to establish how respondents rated their administrators' communication competence in addressing conflict. This was significant in that it gave the researcher insight into what the respondents thought about the communication competence of their administrators. The finding was as follows.

Table 4.28 Rating of Administrators' Communication Competence in Addressing Conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	5	8.1
Average	44	71.0
Below average	6	9.7
Poor	3	4.8
No response	4	6.5
Total	62	100.0

Source: (Field data 2016)

The table shows that majority of the respondents, (n=44, 71 percent) felt their administrators were average when it came to communicating with their teachers in addressing conflict. The four who did not respond were the four interviewees who did not rate themselves although they felt there was need to improve how communication was carried out in their institutions.

4.6.6 Areas to Improve Communication in Schools

The study sought to establish what the respondents felt should be done to improve communication in their schools. Towards this end, the interviewees felt there was need to increase the frequency and speed of communication between administrators and their juniors. One interviewee also felt that there was need to provide monetary incentives to staff like heads of departments as without a distinction in pay between the heads of departments and their juniors and confirmation in the position by TSC, most of them are not keen on how they handle conflict or communicate with their juniors. Questionnaire respondents felt there is need for more open interactions between them and school administrators. They also expressed desire to have frequent meetings where they would air their views without intimidation or victimization.

The respondents also said there was need to be given opportunity to give feedback on issues communicated to them, especially when communication is made through SMS. They explained that less meetings and lack of opportunities to give feedback triggered or escalated conflict yet if provided, they would help to arrest issues before they descend to destructive conflict. Others said they would like to see teachers treated with respect whenever communication is made to them especially when it comes to conflict. They also said there was need to send clear messages to prevent conflict stemming from unclear messages. They also expressed wish to have administrators being objective and taking time to listen to their staff and not use grapevine as a source of information to make decisions against teachers.

This need for open, clear and two-way and frequent communication between employees and managers is what the Human Relations theory emphasizes on with Markert (2008) saying that information is a motivator as an informed employee is a more involved and more productive employee.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter a summary of the study, discussion, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study are presented.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administration and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County in Murang'a County, Kenya. The study was guided by four objectives as follows: to investigate sources of conflict between teaching staff and administration, how conflict between teaching staff and administration is communicated, the effect of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and administration and the challenges of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County in Murang'a County, Kenya.

To achieve the objectives, the study adopted the descriptive survey design. This enabled the researcher to obtain data from the respondents confidentially. Because the researcher could not reach the entire population of 629 teachers, a sample of 62 respondents was used for generalization of the findings of the study to the entire population. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to obtain data from teachers.

However, the interview schedules were only used to obtain additional data from key informants as they were few and required more time to conduct. Validity and reliability of the instruments was obtained through piloting. The data obtained for the study was analysed descriptively using SPSS and thematically.

The first objective was to investigate the sources of conflict between teaching staff and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub County, in Murang'a County, Kenya. Under this objective, the study sought to find out first if conflict was experienced in the schools. The finding was that majority of the respondents said conflict between teachers and their administrators usually occurred in their schools. Majority of the respondents also said they had experienced conflict with the school administrators. Asked about what caused conflict in their schools, majority of the respondents listed communication as one of the major contributors of conflict even though other reasons contributing to conflict were given. The other causes of conflict given included competition, resources, the person conveying a message, negligence of duty, distribution of workload and the time table.

On the effect of conflict between teachers and school administrators, respondents felt conflict leads to poor performance of duty due to demoralization. They also said conflict led to wastage of time, loss of self-esteem, reduced teamwork and if unchecked, it resulted to poor student performance and indiscipline. Apparently, only respondent viewed conflict positively.

About how members of staff were treated when conflict arose between them and school administrations, majority of the respondents said dialogue between them and the administrators was used to sort out issues. This means communication also played a role in pursuit of reconciliation. Other respondents said warning letters were sent to members of staff that were in conflict with the administration and in the worst case scenario; teachers were transferred or asked for transfer.

This latter assertion was however disputed by the administrators who were interviewed as they said they did not keep records of staff they had differed with as doing so would mar the teachers' reputation with their employer, yet they (the administrators) viewed them as colleagues who needed to be treated humanely.

The second objective was to explore how conflict between teaching staff and administration is communicated in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County in Murang'a County, Kenya. Respondents were asked how conflict between teachers and their administrators was communicated and majority said the concerned parties held private meetings to sort matters out. However, other members of staff learnt of the conflict through grapevine which means though attempts are made to keep an individual's conflict private, matters still leak to other staff who were not involved in a conflict. Some respondents however expressed concern that sometimes, matters to do with them that the administration had not communicated reached them through grapevine meaning grapevine is seen as a major source of information in a school situation.

On whether teachers were given opportunity to express themselves, majority of the respondents said they expressed themselves in meetings. Some also said they sent their heads of departments to the senior administrators if they had issues they needed attended to. Others said they generated gossip with the hope that those considered close to the administrators would take the cue and pass the message on to the intended persons. However, there are those who said they keep quiet. They said they used silence when they felt their opinions would be ignored or that they would be victimized.

One interviewee said they used silence to induce self-correction and when they felt that they would be misunderstood or unnecessarily criticized. Some members of staff were also noted to be naturally private, preferring to keep quiet unless they were prodded to express themselves. Others resorted to going slow on their duties to prompt administrators to address their concerns.

The third objective was to determine the effect of using communication to address conflict between teaching staff and management in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. The study sought to find out how school administrations communicate with their teaching staff and the finding was that meetings are the most preferred means of communication. The administrations occasionally use Internal Memos, SMS, and phone calls but almost never use emails. Social media was however seen to be gaining usage. Majority of respondents felt the channels of communication used contribute to conflict but the frequency of communication does not. However, asked for recommendations to improve communication in their institutions, respondents expressed wish to have the frequency of communication increased as it helps to address conflicts without delay and mitigates occurrence of the same as members of staff have opportunity to discuss things and parties have opportunity to clarify things. Respondents said meetings are the most popular in addressing conflicts and emails are never used for the same.

The last objective was to establish the challenges of using communication to address conflict between teachers and administration in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. The respondents were asked if the personal attitude, age and gender of their administrator affect the way they communicate in conflict situations.

Majority of the respondents said the gender of the administrator and his/her age does not affect the way they communicate with them in addressing conflict but that their personal attitude does. However, there was a feeling by some that men are more respectful than women and that one needs to be careful when dealing with a person of the opposite sex, especially women as they are considered sensitive. Younger respondents also felt they are looked down upon by older members of staff or administrators while older respondents felt young members of staff were inexperienced and lacked wisdom in handling conflict while older members of staff or administrators are more patient. Majority of the respondents rated their administrators as average communicators and felt they needed to improve. These sentiments were shared by the administrators who were interviewed who felt there was need for improvement in communication by both administrators and teaching staff so as to enhance understanding and teamwork in their workstations. The respondents also expressed the need for open communication in schools as communication is important in that it can cause conflict, fan it and it is through it that parties in conflict can find solutions to be able to work as a team with mutual understanding.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher had not anticipated interruption of the school term and thus the unavailability of the targeted population. This limitation however cropped up when there was an outbreak of students' unrest in Gatanga Sub-County resulting to temporary closure of schools. To deal with this, the researcher used assistants from the targeted schools, who helped her get access to the sampled teachers. It was also possible to get the targeted respondents as they come from the area near the schools.

5.2 Conclusions

From the study, the following conclusions were reached: Conflict between teachers and school administrations are normal as in any other community in the society and communication plays a major role in triggering conflict, escalating it and deescalating it but in an attempt to address conflict, there are challenges that dog the process of communication like personal attitude and channel used to communicate. It is also important to treat people one is in conflict with, with respect if a conflict is to be amicably resolved as people like to be treated with respect. There is also need to increase the frequency of interaction between school administrators and their staff to build staff morale. The interactions should allow parties to openly express themselves. It was also clear that it is not always that people speak their minds out and the silence does have meaning. When dealing with others especially in situations of conflict, it is important to be objective and to listen to the parties involved with an open mind. There is also need to send clear messages to reduce misunderstandings.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations on Policy

The following are recommendations for policy. First, there is need to address conflict with the parties involved in a conflict before tabling the same before people that were not involved in the conflict. There is also need to offer training to teachers and administrators on effective communication so as to mitigate conflict in schools and enhance teamwork and performance of duties in schools. Additionally, it is important to employ a variety of means of communication instead of solely relying on meetings and whatever means of communication is used to communicate between teachers and their administrators, the same should encourage feedback to communication made. Lastly, there is need to treat teachers with respect when communicating with them or handling a conflict concerning them.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further research are as follows. To begin with, there is need to find out the effectiveness of meetings as a means of communication in schools as they seem the most preferred in public secondary schools. Secondly, a study of the effectiveness of communication and its role in addressing conflict in other educational institutions including universities and primary schools, both public and private would be appropriate.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear respondents,

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administration and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub-County in Murang'a County, Kenya. The information you give will be treated confidentially and will be used for the purpose of this study only. Please do not indicate your name or the name of your school.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Please indicate your gender Female [] Male []
2. Indicate your age 26-30 years [] 31 – 35 years [] 36-40 years [] 41-45 []
46-50 years [] 51-55 years [] over 55 years []
3. Indicate your highest academic qualification M.Ed. [] B.Ed. [] Diploma []
Other []
4. Indicate your experience as a teacher in your teaching career 0-5 years [] 6 – 10 years
[] 11-15 years [] 16-20 years [] over 20 years []
5. Indicate your experience as a teacher in this school 0-5 years [] 6-10 years [] 11-15
years [] 16-20 years [] over 20 years []
6. Indicate if you hold any administrative post in your institution

Head of Department [] Ordinary Teacher [] Other []

7. Please indicate if your school is a mixed school or single sex school.

Boys [] Girls [] Mixed []

8. Please indicate if your school is day or boarding. Day [] Boarding []

9. Indicate the category of your school Sub-County [] County [] Extra County []

National []

Section B

Sources of Conflict

1. Are there conflicts between teachers and the administration in your school?

Yes [] No []

2. Have you ever experienced conflict with your school administration?

Yes [] No []

3. What are the causes of conflict in your school? Please indicate:

Competition [] Resources [] Communication [] The person conveying a message []

4. Communication plays a major role in conflict in your school.

Strongly Disagree [] Disagree [] Agree [] Strongly Agree []

5. How is a teacher/teachers in conflict with administration dealt with? Explain.

6. What is the effect of conflict between teacher(s) and the management in your school?

Communication of Conflict

1. How is conflict with a member or members of staff communicated by the administration?

Grapevine [] Internal memo [] Staff meeting [] Private meeting []

Others [] Specify.....

2. How do members of staff learn of a conflict between a member or members of staff and the administration? Grapevine [] Internal Memo [] Staff meeting [] Private meeting []

Other [] Specify.....

3(a) Are teachers given a voice to air their concerns in your school? Yes [] No []

(b) If yes, which channels do they use?

(c) If no, how do they express their concerns to the school management?.....
.....

4(a) Do teachers communicate their dissatisfaction with the school administration?

Yes [] No []

(b) If yes, how do the teachers inform the administration of their dissatisfaction with the administration? Explain.....

.....

If no, why do you choose to keep quiet? Explain.....

.....

5. Does the administration inform erring staff of action taken against them?

Yes [] No []

Use of Communication to Address Conflict

1. How often does your administration communicate with members of staff?

Meetings: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Internal Memo: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

SMS: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Phone Calls Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Email: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Social Media Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Other [] Specify

2. Does the channel of communication used contribute to conflict? Yes [] No []

3(a) Does the frequency of communication with the administration contribute to conflict?

Yes [] No []

(b) If yes, explain.....

.....

4. Is conflict ever addressed in any of the channels of communication used in your school?

Meeting: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Internal Memo: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Phone Calls Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

SMS: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Email: Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Social Media Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

Other [] Specify

Challenges of using communication to address conflict

1. Do personal attitudes affect the way a conflict is communicated to teachers in your school?

Yes [] No []

2(a) Does your school communication culture affect how conflict between teachers and administration is addressed? Disagree [] Agree [] Strongly Agree []

(b) If you agree, please explain.....

3(a) Does the gender of the administrator affect how he/she communicates with a teacher/ teachers in addressing conflict in your school? Yes [] No []

(b) If yes, explain.....

.....
.....

4(a) Does the age of the administrator affect how he/she communicates with a teacher/teachers in addressing conflict in your school? Yes [] No []

(b) If yes, explain.....

.....
.....

5. How do you rate your school administrators' communication competence in addressing conflict? Excellent [] Average [] below average [] Poor []

6. What do you think should be done to improve communication between teachers and administration to address conflict in your school?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix II

Principal's Interview schedule

1. What channels of communication do you use to communicate with teachers in your school?
2. Do you experience conflict with teachers in your school?
3. What kind of conflict do you experience with teachers in your school?
4. What is the effect of conflict between teachers and administration in your school?
5. How do you deal address conflict with your teachers?
6. In what way does communication play a role in the conflicts you experience with teachers in your school?
7. Do teachers in your school always communicate their concerns with you?
8. What meaning do you draw from teachers' silence?
9. Other than the official channels of communication used in your school, how else do teachers communicate with you?
10. Do you use silence as a means of communication with your teachers?
11. How do you use communication in addressing conflict with teachers in your school?
12. Does your age determine how you communicate with teachers in your school in addressing conflict?
13. Does your sex affect the way you communicate with teachers in your school?
14. How does your cultural background affect your communication with teachers in your school in addressing conflict?
15. What do you think should be done to improve communication between teachers and administration to address conflict in your school?

Appendix III

Certificate of Fieldwork



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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
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Kenya

REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on _____ in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: K50/74180/2014

Name: KAMIANDE MARY WAIRIMU

Title: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION

IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GATANGA SUB-COUNTY IN KIURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA

Dr. S. Onas
SUPERVISOR

[Signature]
SIGNATURE

17/07/2016
DATE

Dr Sam Siringi
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

[Signature]
SIGNATURE

18/07/2016
DATE

Dr. Nbeti-Nbeti
DIRECTOR

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Appendix IV

Plagiarism Report

11/17/2016 Turnitin Originality Report

Turnitin Originality Report

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GATANGA SUB-COUNTY IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA by Mary Z Kamande Wairimu

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Appendix V
Declaration of Originality Form

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Declaration of Originality Form

This form must be completed and signed for all works submitted to the University for examination.

Name of Student MARY WAIRIMU KAMAHOE

Registration Number KSO/74180/2014

College HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Faculty/School/Institute SOJMC

Department SOJMC

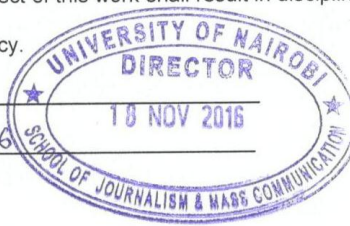
Course Name MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Title of the work THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY DECLARATION SCHOOL IN GATANGA SUB-COUNTY IN NURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA.

1. I understand what Plagiarism is and I am aware of the University's policy in this regard
2. I declare that this PROJECT (Thesis, project, essay, assignment, paper, report, etc) is my original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for examination, award of a degree or publication. Where other people's work, or my own work has been used, this has properly been acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the University of Nairobi's requirements.
3. I have not sought or used the services of any professional agencies to produce this work
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Appendix VI
Certificate of Correction



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Nairobi, GPO
Kenya

REF: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners meeting held on _____ in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can now be prepared for binding.

Reg. No: K50/74180/2014

Name: KAMARDE MARY WAIRIMU

Title: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CATANCA SUB-COUNTY IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA.

DR S. ORIASO
SUPERVISOR

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SIGNATURE

18/11/2016
DATE

Dr Samuel Siringi
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

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21/11/2016
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Dr. Ndetei Ndetei
DIRECTOR

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