

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION TO CONFLICT
RESOLUTION AMONG SOMALI WOMEN GROUPS IN ISIOLO COUNTY**

A RESEARCH PROJECT

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION**

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DECLARATION

This research proposal is my original work and has not been presented in part or any other form for the award of degree in any other university.

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This research project has been submitted with my approval as university supervisor

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SIGNATURE

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband Dr. Ken Orengo and our children Najma and Hanifa,

I am stronger because I have you. Thank you for being my rock.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest gratitude to ALLAH for giving me the strength to achieve this.

My gratitude to Dr. Elias Mokuu for his guidance and unconditional support throughout this research, his patience and mostly for understanding my schedule.

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To my dearest family for understanding and supporting me through it all and mostly for believing in me.

Thank you.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Chama - self-help group

Oitira- clan name for garre tribe

ABSTRACT

Somali woman lives in a patriarchal society, this has seen the Somali woman dominated and this has posed a problem for the woman, especially in instances of conflict and conflict resolution. The culture and religion inhibits interpersonal communication and limits the Somali woman interaction and consequently an avenue for the woman self-expression is reduced. Self-help groups in Isiolo are made up of different women with different social background, socialization and levels of education, this has introduced ground for conflict brought about by the interactions from differences in values, beliefs and attitudes and this has in turn hindered group goal achievement. This study seeks to investigate the role of effective interpersonal communication in conflict resolution among Somali women group in Isiolo County.

This study is important because the information from this study will complement the literature on the contribution of interpersonal communication to conflict resolution. It will also add to the scanty literature on group conflicts. No study is easily available on Somali women, and there is very scanty information on communication between groups on arid and semi-arid women.

The researcher used the functional group communication theory to explain the communication within the group citing cohesion and unity of the as dependent on effective communication. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in data collection, Convenience sampling was used as the sampling method due to the suitability to the study. The findings and conclusions of the study was that: interpersonal communication contributes to conflict escalation, that the group communication would fail if women do not all agree on the common group goal, that group cohesion is dependent on effective communication and that communication simplifies work and relationships allowing for easy group success.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Interpersonal communication is a basic component of the human experience. It is the “means through which relationships are initiated, negotiated, maintained and ended” (Knapp and Daly 484). These relationships affect our well-being by providing avenues to meet a myriad of human needs including friendship, love, contribution to others, and community. Research in the field “consistently reveals communication as one of the most important factors in determining the satisfaction of marriages . . . and close relationships” (Knapp and Daly 484). “People who are skilled in interpersonal communication are more likely to achieve career success” and that “even modest improvements in our interpersonal communication are related to physical and psychological well-being” (Lane, 2010).

As NhấtHanh says, when brought into communities, well-developed communication skills and the robust interpersonal relations they enable allow those communities to make “society better” (The Art of Communicating 129). At this juncture in history, when global challenges including climate change, resource depletion, and economic inequality present unprecedented threats to the sustainability of our society, change must be created by collective action through mobilized communities. Unfortunately, many of the strategies offered in public and policy discussions to address these issues focus primarily, or exclusively, on technological ingenuity while neglecting the crucial role of the community. NhấtHanh critiques the quest for technological paths to create sustainable communities: “When we speak about creating a sustainable environment or a more just society, we usually speak of physical action or technological advances as the means to achieve these goals. But we forget about the element of a connected community. Without that, we can’t do anything at all” (The Art of Communicating 130). Viewed through the lens of interpersonal communication, this study

seeks to explore: 1) what interpersonal communication skills are necessary for “conflict resolution”? and 2) How can they best be developed? This study seeks to offer answers to these questions in the form of a communication model called Nonviolent Communication.

Conflict is a serious disagreement or argument (Oxford, 2002), including problems and disagreements that are the result of differing wishes or needs (Bickmore, 2002). Conflict is generally understood to be an inevitable part of the human experience that can be both a negative and positive force (Bickmore, 2002). It is important to take note; often, when dealing with conflict, citizens will ignore conflict's potential to create social and individual change and therefore, to be a positive force.

While conflict occurs both for men and women, the perception and the handling of the same conflict is different for men and women, men and women interact differently in the same sex groups Matt and Broke (1982) , according to Shimanoff and Jenkins (2003) women have an equalitarian ideology and are not competitive, they desire cooperative, empathetic supportive calm leaders unlike men who prefer demanding, aggressive, rational , decision oriented leaders Graves and Powel (1982)that’s why society has placed them to be in charge of households and instinctively they are peacemakers. However the culture does not really allow the woman to fight her own battles, express herself or speak up for herself.

The lack of the platform for self-expression for the woman, the lack of communication due to hindrances brought about by culture, where women can only address an issue through the husband and she cannot speak directly for herself, is a facilitating factor for recurring and unresolved conflict. For the Somali woman, dialogue is done on her behalf and the context of communication is often that of closing an issue and not a root-cause analysis with a view of getting a durable solution. This in turn makes conflict resolution a non-ending vicious cycle

which results from matters that are not fully resolved, no closure and items that are dealt with in the context of bias and prejudice.

Conflict happen in groups for many reasons. Kelsey and Plumb (2004) identify these sources of conflict; Miscommunication and misinformation; real or perceived differences in needs, priorities, values, beliefs, attitudes and culture; structural conditions. Effective communication in a group builds a sense of trust, cooperation, and productivity (Karia, 2007). Collaboration might be achieved through communication and this could lead to a durable conflict resolution. Communication and interaction therefore becomes the mitigating factor and the go between to ensure smooth transition and interaction.

1.1.1 Isiolo County

Isiolo County is one of the counties in the former eastern province of the Republic of Kenya. According to the 2009 Kenya Population and Household Census the County has a population of approximated to 143,294. It is a cosmopolitan County having the Somali, the Borana, the Meru, the Turkana and the Samburu as major tribes. The area falls within the ASAL parts of Kenya therefore pastoralism is the major economic activity.

The Somali tribe is one of the major tribes living in Isiolo. They are Cushitic, mainly of Islam faith and polygamy is a popular practice. The Somali people are mostly illiterate with little or no formal education. According to the Kenya Economic report (2013)ASAL areas tend to have relatively higher levels of unemployment meaning that majority live below poverty line due to lack of source of income.

Polygamy coupled with poverty has forced women in Isiolo County to engage in economic activities in an attempt to boost household incomes. In many cases this begins by joining a self-help group in order to combine ideas and efforts in making a living. Self-help groups are

often formed as a way of facilitating income pooling based on the idea that the groups play a mutual assistance role. Self-help groups operate in the informal sector with their organization roughly resembles that of a production cooperative. The degree of formalization of these groups, as well as their stability and the scope of their activities, vary a lot (Marcel and Eliana 2011).

In these groups however people are of different socialization, personality and backgrounds meeting, interacting and beginning to work towards achieving a common goal. Full functionality of a group is dependent on the interdependence of group members. They are required to be interdependent, forced to interact and communicate and make decisions together. This poses a real challenge and introduces a source of conflict.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Somali is a patriarchal society; a patriarchal society means that male hold the primary power on important roles in the society. They dominate over roles such as political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property and in the domain of family matters. The Somali culture is enhanced by the Islamic religion that emphasizes on the patriarchy and the male leadership. This poses the problem for the woman. This is because it introduces a restriction to her as an individual, she is limited to what the man decides and boundaries set by the male figure in her life. Even when women experience conflict within themselves, or in a group setup the same has to be eventually resolved by men. This male dominance has in turn robbed the woman of a chance to interact, experience and manage her situation and probably come up with better conflict resolution methods to ensure the recurrence of conflict is reduced. The Islamic religion upholds a 'no contact' culture, which inhibits interpersonal communication and in turn limits interactions since face to communication

between man and woman is prohibited. This limits avenues for a woman to express herself with a view of possible durable conflict resolution.

Self-help groups' among Somali women in Isiolo are made up of women from different tribes, backgrounds, socialization and levels of education. This makes communication less effective and yield grounds for conflicts arising from differences in values, beliefs and attitudes. With conflicts among members, these groups face challenges in achieving their goals of economic empowerment. This study therefore will investigate the role of effective communication in the process of conflict resolution among members of these Somali self-help groups in Isiolo County.

1.3 Justification

This study is important because the information from this study will complement the literature on the contribution of interpersonal communication to conflict resolution. It will also add to the scanty literature on group conflicts. No study is easily available on Somali women, and there is very scanty information on communication between groups on arid and semi-arid women.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

The main objective for the study is to find out the contribution of interpersonal communication to conflict resolution among Somali women in Isiolo County.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- To find whether personality traits affect interpersonal communication during conflict handling among Somali women in Isiolo County.

- To find out the extent to which common language contributes to conflict escalation in a group, among Somali women.
- To find out conflict resolution mechanisms among the Somali women and how these influences interpersonal and group communication.
- To find out the best interpersonal communication strategy in conflict resolution among Somali women in isiolo county.

1.5 Research questions

1. To what extent does personality trait affects interpersonal communication during conflict handling in a group among Somali women?
2. To what extent does common language contribute to conflict escalation in a group among Somali women?
3. Do the conflict resolution mechanisms affect interpersonal communication among Somali women?

1.6 Theory Applied.

The theory used in the study is the functional perspective theory; this is a small group communications theory as advanced by Hirokawa and Gourana. The theory posits that several conditions must be present for a group to be efficient and effective; this theory will help the study explain better these interrelations with the Somali women in the group.

1.7 Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in data collection; convenience sampling was the choice of sampling method for the researcher due to the suitability to the group, questionnaires aided in data collection. While the researcher intended to do a focus group

discussion and observation, the same was not possible due to difficulty of assembling the respondents and the time restraint on the researcher.

1.8 significance of the study

The findings and recommendations will enable women groups in Isiolo resolve conflicts and effectively meet their objectives of economic empowerment. This will be useful tool in promoting peaceful co-existence and lasting reconciliation in the very volatile region.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introductions

In this chapter the researcher focuses on literature review of the study, researcher puts forth arguments in the following order: conflict, conflict and communication, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and its relation to conflict management, group communication, types of communication, personality types and conflict management, functions of communication, group conflict, causes of conflict, process of conflict development, approaches to conflict resolution, theoretical framework.

2.1 Conflict

Conflict theory is very important for any manager. It is rooted primarily in the fields of business, sociology, and psychology, but not in communication or education. It is complicated to define conflict as it is difficult to come to a consensus concerning the definition of this term (Borisoff& Victor, 1998). The easiest way to understand the term “conflict” is to divide theories of conflict in functional, situational, and interactive. The followers of functional approach think that a conflict serves a social function and those who view a conflict as situational, suggest that conflict as an expression under certain situations. The third theory views conflict as interactive. Functionalists usually ask the question: “Why is there conflict? What purpose does it serve?”, while situationalists ask: “When do we have conflict? Under what circumstances does it occur?” Interactionists’ questions are: “How is there conflict? What methods and mechanisms are used to express it?”

Georg Simmel (1955) defines conflict as “designed to resolve divergent dualisms; it is a way of achieving some kind of unity, even if it will be through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties”. According to Simmel, conflict served as a social purpose and reconciliation came even with the total destruction of one party. Conflict socializes members

into a group and reduces the tension between group members. Furthermore, Simmel determines three possible ways to end a conflict. Firstly, conflict may end with a victory of one party over another; secondly, the conflict can be resolved through compromise and thirdly, through conciliation. However, not all conflicts may be ended as discussed. For instance, those conflicts that are characterized by high level of emotions involved cannot be resolved by compromising. Simmel made a huge contribution in the study of conflict resolution as he clearly determined a positive social function for conflict.

Bercovitch defined conflict as “situation which generates incompatible goals or values among different parties”. For Bercovitch, conflict depends on the situation. Conflict arises because of different conditions such as the influence of a person and external factors. If speaking about the interactive view, Folger defined conflict as “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals.” This approach introduces two important concepts: Interdependence and Perception. Interdependence is connected to such situations where one party’s future actions depend on another party’s actions. Another concept was mentioned by Tillett in 1991: “Conflict does not only come about when values or needs are actually, objectively incompatible, or when conflict is manifested in action; it exists when one of the parties perceives it to exist”. Folger also sees conflict as coming from interdependent people (Tidwell, 1998).

2.2 Conflict and communication

Conflict is closely connected to communication. Hocker and Wilmot (1985) state that “communication is the central element in all interpersonal conflict”. According to them researchers, communication and conflict are related in three ways: 1. Communication behavior often creates conflict. 2. Communication behavior reflects conflict. 3.

Communication is the vehicle for the productive or destructive management of conflict (Fleetwood, 1987).

Communication-based barriers may be the result of differences in speaking styles, writing styles, and nonverbal communication styles. Bad communication is based on misperceptions and misunderstandings among people and as a result it can lead to long-standing conflict. Some of the barriers of productive communication can be the cross-gender and cross-cultural differences. In this case people have differences in the ways of expressing themselves and how they are likely to interpret the communication with others (Victor, 2012).

2.3 Conflict resolution

Conflict is an inseparable part of healthy relationships. It is impossible for two people to agree on everything at all times. Thus, it is important to learn how to deal with conflict rather than avoiding it. When conflict is not managed, it can be harmful for a relationship. But if it is handled in a respectful and positive way, conflict can be an opportunity for growth and development in a community. Conflict is a situation where one or both parties perceive a threat. Conflicts continue to spoil a community when they are ignored and it follows people until they face and resolve them. People respond to conflicts based on their perceptions of the situation, and often they don't have the objective review of the facts. Perceptions depend on a person's life experience, culture, values, and beliefs. Conflicts lead to strong emotions. According to John Meyer (1990) if a person is not comfortable with his emotions, he can't manage himself in a stressful situation; he will not be able to resolve conflict successfully.

Managing disagreements in the right way can build trust in relationships and provide an opportunity for growth. On the other hand, conflict may be seen as a threat even when it is not. Because of early life experience a person may view conflict in relationships as demoralizing, humiliating, dangerous, and something to fear. In this case a person can feel a

loss control and powerless. When a person in a conflict situation is threatened, it is necessary to deal with the problem at hand in a healthy way.

Successful conflict resolution depends on the ability to regulate stress and emotions. During conflict strong emotions appear which can hurt feelings. When conflict is handled in an unhealthy way, it can be the cause of irreparable rifts, resentments, and break-ups. When a person deals with a conflict in a healthy way, it increases the understanding among people, builds trust, and strengthens relationships. If a person doesn't control his or her feelings or is so stressed that he or she cannot understand the real needs, it will be hard to communicate with others. An example can be a couple which often argues about minor differences rather than realizing that there might be a deeper problem between them.

2.4 Emotional Intelligence as one of the most important skills to manage conflict

The concept of “emotional intelligence” was discovered by two psychologists, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, in 1990. They defined emotional intelligence as “the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action”. Goleman (1995) in his book “Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ” states that emotional intelligence should be referred as “the abilities to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and in others” (Mersino, 2007). People who have a high degree of emotional intelligence know themselves very well and are also able to sense the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence can reduce stress by moderating conflict, promoting understanding and relationships between people in a community (Serrat, 2009).

2.5 Connection of Emotional Intelligence and Conflict management

In 1990 the scientist Pinkey carried out a research about the relationship between the emotional dimension of conflict resolution and intellectual behavior. He found out that the degree of negative emotionality that is connected with relationship and task conflict influences the group performance, if two conflicting sides have relationship satisfaction they will follow more integrating and compromising behavior than people who are preoccupied, dismissive and fearful. This shows that emotional intelligence has a connection with the choice of conflict management style. Emotion-related behavior and emotional intelligence skills directly affect the choice of conflict management strategy. It is important to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management strategy in order to choose an appropriate conflict management strategy. If there is an aggressive behavior of one of the conflicting parties or both of them, then the choice of conflict management strategies could be made according to this situation. For example, competing or avoiding style can be chosen. Communication is one of the effective instruments of conflict management; aggression can destroy the communication and can lead to misunderstanding. If the misunderstanding increases, the effect of such management styles as collaboration, compromise, obliging, and accommodation will become ineffective. If parties have good relations and communication without aggression they usually choose a collaborating or compromising style which leads to better outcomes. The collaborating and compromising are more goal-oriented behaviors. Interpersonal relationships directly relate to emotional intelligence as people whose behavior is aggressive and who can't control their emotions have bad relationships with their partners and in the conflict situation they have to follow conflict management style that can lead to bad outcomes. In this connection, emotional intelligence has an influence on the choice of conflict management strategy (Discrimination in the workplace, 2012).

2.6 Group Communication

Group communication refers to interpersonal communication between three to fifteen individuals living together or around each other, sharing the same context that is either relational or social, having certain elements that embed them together like a shared purpose and the members being interdependent (Henman, et. al., 2003).

According to Ellis and Fisher (1994) small groups have the following characteristics, the

Size of the group is a minimum of three and it could have more than 15-20 people depending on the goals of the same group. However Rodman and Adler (2006) agree that a group could have up to thirty members. *Structure of the group* is determined by the task force, resources, external and internal factors. Group size also influences the structure of the group. *Interdependence*, groups share a goal, meaning they share a common purpose and action of one group member affect the others and all members must work together to achieve their common goal. Groups have a *shared identity* which is usually formed around the shared goal or group accomplishments. The identity could be exhibited through group's name, slogan, the way they greet each other and this identity serves as a morale booster for the group.

According to Barge et al (2008) communication is a process; they explain that the process of communication is characterized by six elements namely:

a) *Communication is constructing a common ground of understanding*; in a communication process we tend to ask the questions who say what to whom where and how. In this process of communication we try to establish the source of message, the message itself, the medium through which the message was delivered, who the message was intended for and the effect of the message to the receiver. In trying to construct a common ground we intend to share meaning and this is common goal of communication. This is explained better in the

transactional model of communication which views communication as simultaneous and interactive whereby there is a constant struggle of people trying to enable others to understand what is within their consciousness. The transaction is very different for different people because every incidence of communication is a unique construction of meaning, constructed on the spot and the process produces unique sets of meaning. In trying to construct a meaning the process of constructing a culture is begun and this is motivated by people who come together in order to accomplish something like a shared goal.

b) *Barge et. Al.(2008) continues, Developing a common language*, there cannot be a common language without common meaning. Common meaning is achieved through symbols and signs that communicating parties would understand its arbitrary meaning. Language in itself has several elements- connotative meaning which are the emotions and associations connected to a word; denotative meaning of a language refers to its literal meaning. Language also has its rules as per a culture, like the Somali culture- sex talk is not allowed between men and women who are not married. More often than not language used is more non-verbal. People therefore tend to read more of the non-verbal cues like: posture, face and eyes expressions, tone of the voice in a conversation, clothing, and the distance maintained through a conversation, time and timing of the communication, territoriality, environment etc. However non-verbal communication is often ambiguous, it is culture specific but it accentuates the verbal communication and therefore regulating it.

c) *High capacity for disclosure of self that reveals the range of one's self identity and enables others to understand you in their range of perceptions.* As explained in the transactional model, we construct meanings and try to impact the same to people we communicate with. We try to reveal our interior knowledge, feelings and motivations in a way that others can

easily grasp. However, according to sociologist George Herbert Mead, we understand ourselves through a process of interior dialogue with our own experiences of ourselves and the awareness of life's dynamism and our responses to it Mead further explained this as a looking glass, viewing it as a perception and imagination of one self, appearance to another person, another person's judgment of that appearance and a resulting positive evaluation of one's own enjoyment of one's physical experiences.

d) Barge et al (2008) continues : *The capacity for listening*: communication involves more than one person constructing a meaning and possibly leading to cooperative action. Listening involves three aspects, i) receiving which entails being attentive to the speaker's both verbal and non-verbal message by giving priority to the important point. ii) Constructive meaning which entails constructing meaning from the message given and judging the relationship c) responding , an indication of whether the message has been understood and if there is need for more clarification. This is a very important of effective communication, more so in a group setup with more than one person. Listening would also be effective if all group members were allowed opportunities to express themselves and be listened to.

e) *The capacity for loving*: this element of communication does not mean emotional attraction but rather the ability to enter dynamism of the personality of the other. In a communication sense this entails the empathy of the listener with the speaker and adds motivation of all the parties towards each other which is degree of communication which takes communication process to another level-creating a situation of welfare of all. The common good. The absence of capacity of love breeds conflict brought about by the tendency by the communicating people blocking the goals of the other and the defensive reaction those involved results into closing ones' interior. This results into a spiral of conflict.

f. Capacity for dialogue. Kenneth and et. al (2003) summarizes the basic characteristic of dialogue as follow: the immediacy of presence, dialogue is spontaneous unplanned unscripted and unrehearsed. It is emergent and unanticipated it is therefore improvised and independent of the will of the participants. It recognizes the strength of otherness; people are open to the unpredictability and open up to other even when they do not know each other. Dialogue is useful tool in conflict resolution as it allows for self-expression and in a group it hinders conflict escalation by allowing for instant tackling of issues as they arise.

2.7 Types of communication

According to Rodman and Adler (2006) *intrapersonal* communication is a type of communication that means “communicating with oneself” It is a one way communication that each of us communicates internally by listening to the little voice that lives in your mind

The interpersonal communication: this refers to face to face communication with relatively few persons, like a family, friends, a business conversation. In this type of communication, meaning is filtered through the discussion of the group. According to Rodman and Adler (2006) not all interpersonal communication are between two people, sometimes it can be within a small group.

Group communication: refers to the simultaneous interaction of a small group of between twenty to thirty people using the methods of conscious raising , group discussion and decision making, Small groups are a common fixture of everyday life like within a family, ‘chama’, workplace etc and much of the group communication involves listening to others and then discussing and interpreting the message. Communication within the group could be formal or informal. To Rodman and Adler (2006) in small group communication every person can participate actively with the other members.

Organizational communication: this refers to intercommunication within an organization and between people working within an organization's different department, from managers to other operatives. Organizations are usually big and news, circular, changes etc are done through communication through appropriate medium to reach the workers.

2.8 Personality types and conflict

According to Condliffe (2002) we often move into conflict for reasons that are not the result of a deliberate confrontation, negotiation, competition or fight, but simply because the personalities and resultant styles of the participants are different. Condliffe explains the personality using the Myer-Briggs Personality indicator. According to the indicator, there are extroverted and introverted personalities. Extroverted individuals prefer to derive energy from the outer world while introverted individuals prefer to derive energy from the inner world. Some prefer to rely on their senses while others prefer to rely on their perception of relationships, meanings, concepts and possibilities beyond what is immediately apparent. Some people like to rely on analysis, logic and objectivity. Others rely upon more subjective, personal and social values. Further Condliffe (2002) has come up with four summarized categories as follows: *Lone Rangers* who are considered goal oriented and persistent. They like to keep to deadlines but have a tendency to over-commit themselves. They generally have great confidence in their abilities Self-directed , Enjoys developing projects/new ideas ,Finds doing it easier than explaining , Handles pressure well , Can over-concentrate on one project , Can over-commit , Often assumes others understand , Often highly intuitive. *Troubleshooters* are considered self-directed and persistent also. They prioritize their technical knowledge, finding the problems or issues to be fixed Self-directed , Persistent ,Enjoys finding mistakes/issues, Enjoys details , Everything is a search for quality ,Finds discrepancies and inconsistencies , Like to be technically proficient , Sometimes can be seen

as harsh or tactless , Can be indirect (to avoid conflict) , Likes to write things down , Assumes others will pick up errors like them , Can go in the ‘wrong direction’ because of the need to find the problem. *Teachers* like technical detail but focus on developing policies, procedures and systems that keep the whole group focused Group directed ,Enjoys detail, Enjoys problem solving/measuring/quantifying/trial runs , Team worker , Systems and procedures maintenance are important to help others , Reluctant to alienate others , Concerned with problems but so as to make the other system work more smoothly , Can be conservative and risk averse , Can concentrate too much on generating data and not doing. *Group workers* like to work through the group as with teachers Group directed , Enjoys working with others/talking , Enjoys ‘adventures’ ,Reluctant to alienate others , Generally concentrate on particular projects and goals not systems , Credits and trusts the team ,Assumes the best in others , Have difficulty disciplining/replacing others ,Often intuitive ,Can over-compensate in management. They are generally optimistic and gregarious and tend to be time sensitive and goal oriented.

From the above Teachers and group worker make for a good personality types to form groups, they have the right tolerance to keep up with the different personalities that often form a self-help group.

2.9 Functions of communication

According to Adler and Rodman (2006), communication satisfies more than one need and they explain other functions as follows : *physical needs*, they explained this in terms of terminally ill patients who respond better to medication and have prolonged lives from having a better interpersonal relations through better communications with their caregivers. People who lack strong relationships have two

to three times the risk of early death, regardless of whether they smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, or exercise regularly. Terminal cancer strikes socially isolated people more often than those who have close personal relationships. Divorced, separated, and widowed people are five to ten times more likely to need hospitalization for mental problems than their married counterparts. Pregnant women under stress and without supportive relationships have three times more complications than pregnant women who suffer from the same stress but have strong social support. Socially isolated people are four times more susceptible to the common cold than those who have active social network. Adler and Rodman (2006) further explain the needs as follows: *Identity needs*, Communication does more than enable us to survive. It the only way we learn who we are. Deprived of communication with others, we would have no sense of identity. We gain an idea of who we are from the ways others define us. *Social needs*, communication provide a vital link with others. Researchers and theorists have identified a range of social needs we satisfy by communicating: pleasure (e.g., “because it’s fun,” “to have a good time”); affection (e.g., “to help others, ”to let others know I care”); inclusion (e.g., “because I need someone to talk to or be with,” “because it makes me less lonely”); escape (e.g., “to put off doing something I should be doing”); relaxation (e.g., “because it allows me to unwind”); and control (e.g., “because I want someone to do something for me,” “to get something I don’t have”).(pg.13). A *practical need, communication is* an everyday function. Communication is a tool that is used every day, doctors to patient, teacher to student, at family gathering we use communication in every aspect of our daily life. Talking with our family on day to day basis etc. This makes communication a central practical part of human life, an important part. Meaning that better communication is equal to better quality life.

2.10 Group Conflicts

According to Jehn and Mannix(2001), group conflicts can be divided into three types: relationship, task, and process. Relationship conflict stems from interpersonal incompatibilities; task conflict is related to disagreements in viewpoints and opinion about a particular task; and process conflict refers to disagreement over the group's approach to the task, its methods, and its group process. They noted that although relationship conflict and process conflict are harmful to a group, task conflict is found to be beneficial since it encourages diversity of opinions which could bring about improved ways of carrying a task.

According to Ellis and Fisher (1994) Groups experience different kinds of conflict, including procedural, substantive, and interpersonal conflict. *Procedural conflict* emerges from disagreements or trouble with the mode of group operations and deal with questions about “how” a group should do something. A leader may be able to resolve this conflict by changing or explaining a procedure or taking, from group members, proposals for or votes on procedural revisions. *Substantive conflict* focuses on group members' differing beliefs, attitudes, values, or ideas related to the purpose or task of the group. Leaders and other group members should avoid closing off this type of conflict before people have had a chance to be heard, as a lack of substantive conflict can lead to groupthink. Instead, listen to all viewpoints, try to find common ground, and then weigh and evaluate the information as a group.

Interpersonal conflict emerges from personal conflict between individual members of a group. This can be managed by getting to the root cause of the conflict. In some cases, interpersonal conflict may be disguised as procedural or substantive conflict, or it may develop as a result of poorly managed procedural or substantive conflict. Leaders, group

members not directly involved in the conflict or even outside third parties may also be able to effectively mediate interpersonal conflict.

According to Bomman and Bomman (1988) another type of conflict in a group is Primary and Secondary Tensions, members experience primary tension, which is tension based on uncertainty that is a natural part of initial interactions. In this stage people use vague language and indirect communication. This is however resolved after members get to break the ice and get to know each other. Secondary tension emerges after groups have passed the forming stage of group development and begin to have conflict over member roles, differing ideas, and personality conflicts. This is evidenced by less reserved and less polite behavior than primary tensions and people have lower tolerance levels, making it easy for conflict escalation. The solution to this lies in open effective communication..

2.11 Causes of conflict in a group

According to Pruitt and Kim (2004 p.35) conflict is a perceived divergence of interest, occurs when no alternative seems to exist that will satisfy the aspirations of both parties. This can occur because the parties have higher aspirations or because integrative alternatives appear to be short in supply. As explained above conflict could arise from simple disagreement on tasks, process or interpersonal issues. Conflict arising from interpersonal issues is based on interaction, when two people interact one of two things will happen, they either agree or disagree, in a setting of the group, people have to interact and work alongside other people whom they are interdependent with to accomplish the set goals. This forms a ripe basis for conflict to arise.

With interaction and socialization process people tend to develop codes of communication that is usually from vocabulary used by the group and the same is observable, the conflict sometimes arise from the interpretation or misinterpretation of these codes as aggression and intent to harm others. Hocker and Willmot (2001) Conflict could stem from the frustration of the *perceived incompatible goals* where an individual get emotionally frustrated because the other party would not understand something that is of great importance to him. People have different priorities and place importance on different things in life at different times, the lack of agreement of this to some people could be interpreted as contempt and hence conflict

Sense of injustice triggered by scarcity and uneven distribution of resources could bring serious conflict in a society, in the case of Somali; the unequal distribution of resources is what has led to their marginalization in the first place. Because of the small population of the Somali, the stigma that has been associated with them since the 1990's of the shiftas, cattle rustling and the geographical location of the Somalis in the arid and semi-arid area of extreme weather conditions, etc this becomes a serious trigger factor and a facilitator of conflict in this area.

A group has common goals and it depends on cooperation and teamwork to be able to realize this goal. Refusal to cooperate with group members to achieve the common goal would start a serious conflict. According to Hocker and willmot(2001) the interdependency aspect of group is essential for its survival, but when there is interference then the group will not survive. The lack of cooperation brings about direct frustration as the same is seen as direct sabotage from someone who should otherwise be supporting the cause. According to Simon and Peterson (2000) two types of conflicts have been identified in groups; task conflicts and relationship conflicts. Task conflict also called cognitive or substantive conflict focuses on task oriented disagreements from the perceived incompatibilities in views concerning a task to be

performed. Relationship conflict also referred to as emotional or affective conflict pertain to the individual oriented or relationship oriented disagreements arising from perceived interpersonal incompatibilities involving emotional tension or antagonism related to personality, trust, Attitude power, esteem, honesty or respect (zhang 2012) .

2.12 The process of conflict development

The conflict process can be seen as comprising five stages: potential opposition or incompatibility, cognition and personalization, intentions, behavior, and outcomes.

Potential opposition or incompatibility is the presence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict to arise including; poor communication, poor structures and differences in personal values. *Cognition and personalization* is actualized if the conditions cited in stage I negatively affect something that one party cares about. *Intentions* are decisions to act in a given way based on people's perceptions, emotions and overt behaviors. *The behavior* stage includes the statements, actions, and reactions made by the conflicting parties. *Outcomes* are the action–reaction interplay among the conflicting parties which may be functional or destructive

Brahm (2003) explains the first stage of conflict as the *latent stage* or the unstable peace. In this stage he explains that the differences are there but they are not great enough for parties to act upon or alter situations. He adds that Latent conflict is often rooted in longstanding economic inequality, or in groups' unequal access to political power. Sometimes conflict does not emerge from here. According to Louise Kriesberg (2003) *emergence* is the second stage which is the eruption of conflict as seen through violence. He states that conflict that was seen as latent may be triggered by underlying frustrations and grievances that have not been resolved. It is the first confrontation, these long outstanding grievances maybe

reshaped by the legacy issues that have been unresolved as new threats are issued and this results to other triggering events.

Third stage is the escalation stage; Kriesberg (2003) explains that Escalation refers to an increase in the intensity of a conflict and in the severity of tactics used in pursuing it. It is driven by changes within each of the parties, new patterns of interaction between them, and the involvement of new parties in the struggle. Theorists Pruitt and Rubin explain that changes occur during this change include: parties move from light tactics to heavy tactics, the conflict grows in size, parties devote more resources to the struggle, issues move from specific to general, and the relationship between the parties deteriorates, the number of parties grows from one to many, as more and more people and groups are drawn into the conflict and people concentrate on winning and hurting the counterparts.

Brahm (2003) explain the *fourth stage* as stalemate- a situation in which neither side can win, but neither side wants to back down or accept loss either. Stalemates emerge for a number of reasons: failed tactics, depletion of available resources to fuel the conflict, a reduction in support of the conflict by group members or allies, or costs becoming too high to continue this is the situation known as the "mutually hurting stalemate". Kriesberg explains the *fifth stage* as *de-escalation*, Conflict de-escalation are often also associated with reduced grievances, at least for members of one side. This change occurs as relations between the adversaries change, in the course of the struggle. Thus, some rights that one party sought may be at least partially won, and that party's goals are then accordingly softened.

Sixth stage according to Kriesberg, the underlying causes of the conflict are finally remedied, the conflict may be resolved permanently or at least for a long time. *Peace building and*

reconciliation is the last stage, it involves three elements as explained by Kriesberg, and the nature of the settlement must suit the present conditions of the conflict. Second and means must be taken to reconcile adversaries. Third, constructive intervention is useful to move the parties to a better path.

2.13 Approaches to conflict resolution

According to Francis (2000) Conflict resolution places great importance on the analysis of conflict: its history, recent causes and internal composition – the different parties, the nature of their involvement, their perspectives, positions and motivations, and the different relationships between them in terms of power, allegiance and interest – and the current conflict's evolution and dynamics.

Different people respond to conflict differently, according to what works for them and their situation. According to Wilmot and Hocker, (2001:129-177) there are five major responses to conflict. One of those responses is *avoiding* the conflict; this refers to when the individual does not immediately pursue his/her own concerns or those of the other person if he/she does not address the conflict. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation. Avoiding by not engaging in conflict, this can be in form of withdrawal or inaction. It involves doing nothing and waiting for the other party to make a move.

This gives the individual time to confront the situation and assess whether it is worth the fight or not. However this does not allow for the free flow of nature since conflict is part of life and being able to effectively deal with conflict is part of growth.

Another response is *accommodating*, this refers to an individual neglecting his/her own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person; there is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode. Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying

another person's order when one would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view.

This is giving in to the strongest

Confrontation, this involves being assertive. It involves high levels of emotions as the parties establish positions that can end up being hostile. The confrontation style to conflict resolution entails the party placing his desires above those of all others involved in the conflict. *Compromise* involves reaching each other halfway; it has a degree of both assertiveness and cooperation and so it is both accommodation and competition. It is a give and take way of resolving conflict. This conflict style is often chosen because it is expedient in finding middle ground while partially satisfying the concerns of both parties. *Collaboration*, the most preferred style of conflict, requires both assertiveness and cooperation. It is when both parties agree to a positive settlement to the conflict and attend fully to the other's concerns while not sacrificing or suppressing their own.

According to Pruitt and Kim (2004 p.5-6) people use different strategies to deal with conflict including contending, or imposing one preferred solution to the other party. Yielding or lowering one's aspiration to and settling for less than would have liked. Problem solving or pursuing an alternative that satisfies the aspiration of both sides, this can occur during negotiations or with the assistance of an outside intervener.

2.14 Theoretical Framework

Functional perspective theory as advanced by Hirokawa and Gourana

The functional approach to small group communication is concerned with the results or outcomes of group behaviors and structures. The theory posits that several conditions must exist for group members to make appropriate decisions and effectively solve problems.

Group members must commit to making the best decision, identify the resources needed to carry out the group's charge, determine procedures for the group to follow. Group members

must articulate procedural rules and interaction practices and they must review the decision-making process and make any necessary adjustments to the decision. The functional perspective focuses on the systematic procedures groups use to accomplish their tasks. According to these, Group members must demonstrate that they understand the charge, they must establish criteria with which to evaluate possible solutions and must develop alternative solutions. Group members must evaluate those alternatives by comparing them to each other and the previously-established criteria, and they must choose an alternative based on the group's evaluation.

Functional perspectives theory has been advanced by Hirokawa and Gouran who came up with several requisite to support the theory, they looked at the theory in terms of group decision making and communication and therefore discussed that groups should focus on: Making clear their interest in arriving at the best possible decision, Identifying the resources necessary for making such a decision, recognizing possible obstacles to be confronted, Specifying the procedure to be followed in working on the task, establishing ground rules for interaction, Employing appropriate interventions for overcoming affiliative, cognitive, and egocentric constraints that interfere with successful accomplishment of fundamental task requirements, Reviewing the process by which the group comes to a decision and, if indicated, reconsider judgments reached.

Communication plays a great role in this theory; Hirokawa and Gouran explain communication in three ways, *Proactive communication* also called promotive communication— an interaction that calls attention to one of the four decision-making functions. This communication emphasizes on one-to-one communication with group members to enhance collaboration leading to efficiency and productivity within the group. It Helps a decision-making group achieve its goals by specifying the goals, Works toward

moving the agenda along and keeping people on track (i.e., serves their objectives in effective ways). *Disruptive communication* is an interaction that detracts from the group's ability to achieve the four task functions. Diverts the group from its goals and takes it down side alleys. Does not push the group forward achieving its goals and does not help the group toward goals. *Counteractive communication* is an interaction that refocuses the group. Since most interaction is disruptive, the functional perspective relies heavily on counteractive communication to refocus the group. It gets the group back on track by reminding its members of its purpose.

The functional approach to small group communication has several strengths. The theory is prescriptive. It emphasizes the purpose communication serves in small groups. It makes it clear that, without communication, group members could not accomplish their goals. Researchers from this perspective have studied both laboratory groups and natural groups. The theory has weaknesses as well assessing outcomes is challenging. Some researchers argue that decision making is not rational. Researchers have found it difficult to consistently identify the key group functions essential to small group decision making and problem solving.

2.15 Summary

The theory has helped in deeper understanding of the group communication, cohesion and unity and how the same is dependent on the integration of the processes and all the persons involved. The theory also addressed interpersonal communication among Somali women by showing the ideal communication expectation in a group setup and the situation on the ground, the main gap here is that the Somali woman does not have a formal chain of communication, no formal structure or process for the group that is adhered to and the illiteracy and cultural confinements makes it difficult for the ideal situation to be achieved as

per Hirokawa and Gourana, however through this study, the researcher should be able to find out the true position and come up with better recommendations.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter includes methodology that was used to carry out this study: this includes research design, population and sampling, study timeframe, data collection, data analysis.

3.1 Research design

This is a descriptive research that describes a phenomenon. By description it means considering such basic questions as what, how, when and where about a given phenomenon. Being a descriptive study, the researcher aims at finding out the role of interpersonal communication in conflict resolution. The researcher is interested in Somali women groups. The researcher administered questionnaire and Carried Out interviews to investigate opinions of the group members involved. A review of the findings and results reported.

3.2 Population and sampling

Population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions Theresa Moyo (2013). It is also defined as the full set of cases from which a sample is taken, a group of potential participants to whom the researcher wants to generalize results of a study. In this research the population under the study includes residents of Isiolo Sub-County. According to the 2009 census Isiolo Sub-County has a population of 143,294, and this is the population under study.

3.3 Sample Size

A sample is a part of a population observed for the purpose of making scientific statement about the population. A sample is usually chosen from the population of the study when the population is too big to be studied as a whole. In view of this submission, the researcher

adopted a statistical model initiated by Yamani in Keyton (2001). To determine the sample size of this study:

The formula

$$N = \frac{n}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size required,

N the sampling frame,

e=margin of error=0.05% (at 95% confidence level)

Therefore, with a target population of 30 groups at an average of 15 members per group the sample size was estimated as follows

$$n = \frac{450}{1+450*(0.05*0.05)} = 211$$

This is to say that the sample size was 211 Somali women.

3.4 Sampling Method and Procedures

Researcher used convenience sampling, Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. Researcher preferred this sampling technique because it is fast, inexpensive, easy and the subjects are readily available. While in the field researcher realized that the groups were not easily available because they met irregularly and this could not tally with the researcher's availability because of work.

Researcher also realized that the groups though existed on paper as one group had a large number (128) and it was not easy to find another active group. Because of this group represent a distribution of Somali women in Isiolo county researcher opted to conduct research with this group. In view of this a response of 82 out of 128 members making a response rate of 64% is valid and considered good.

3.5 Data Collection

Data was collected between July 15th and September 15th, 2015. Using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested among ten women in a *chama* group and necessary adjustments made to the questionnaire.

Only women groups in Isiolo County were considered and only those that were found to be representative across groups in terms of demographics were picked.

Preliminary meetings were set up with the chairperson and secretary of each selected group in order to compile a list of all active members of the group. *In depth individual interviews* were then carried out with selected ten (10) members to get information on their individual and household characteristics, their income and their opinions on the management and performance of their group. Interviews were done on the group premises in an organized venue where privacy was guaranteed. A *questionnaire* with modules of demographics, group functioning was administered. Questionnaires bearing both open and closed ended questions were administered. Questionnaires are preferred because they are efficient and economical.

Researcher intended to carry out a *focus group discussion*, however due to difficulty of assembling the women in the group it was not possible. Researcher also intended to carry out observation especially for personality traits but the same was not possible and therefore inferences shall be made for in place of the observation.

3.6 Data Analysis

This involves the preparation of the collected data into useful clear and understandable information.

The quantitative data gathered through the questionnaires was entered into analyzed using the SPSS statistical package 16.0, the information was processed and the same generated percentages and figures which were used to create the graphs, frequency tables and pie charts

for visual presentations. For qualitative data narratives were used and analysis carried out against the objectives set and generalizations were made based on the findings. Visual presentation were done through frequency tables bar graphs and pie charts

3.7 Scope of the study

The study was carried out in Isiolo County and especially Isiolo central where more than half the Somali population and the self-help groups are found. The area has been selected because it is the general area with the most reported ethnic conflict between Somali and other communities and a representative of the larger Somali community interacting with other tribes in the north eastern region of Kenya. The study took three months to completion. This study aimed to find out more about group communication and conflict resolution in a cultural context.

3.8 Limitation of study

The researcher experienced a challenge in data collection because of language barrier, respondents had challenges understanding the questionnaire due to illiteracy, and however the researcher mitigated this by seeking the help of a local translator. Cultural and religion restrictions hindered face to face communication with the women since the research assistant was a man; this was mitigated by the help of a village elder and an assistant which made it easier to carry out data collection, even though more time was used.

The researcher only sampled one group rather than seven, however results from this group can be generalized to other smaller groups in the understanding that the groups is subdivided for discussions and resolution, therefore it can be argued that within this group there could have been ten small groups considering that according to Henman et al (2003) small groups are made up of between 3-15 people.

3.9 Ethical issues

Information received from this research will be treated with confidentiality and identities will not be disclosed. Confidentiality is particularly important since these are group members who work together and things said in confidence might be a source of conflict among the members. Culture and religion differences will be respected and boundaries observed.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 introductions

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the questionnaires, interviews. This chapter has two sections; section one data is presentation and interpretations, section two, data analysis.

Conflicts are common phenomena in many regions of the world especially in dry lands, which are endowed with scarce natural resources. The demographic consequences of conflict and violence in the developing world are receiving increased attention and so is conflict in Kenya.

The sample size of this study was two groups in Isiolo County, out of these 82 out of 128 members filled and returned the questionnaire, this gives a return rate of 64%. According to Cooper and Schindler 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting and this makes 64% response rate good.

Section one

4.1 Data Presentation

The data from the study includes the areas from which the samples were taken, the women groups, age, conflicts and escalation of conflicts within the group.

4.1.1 Presence of conflict within the women groups

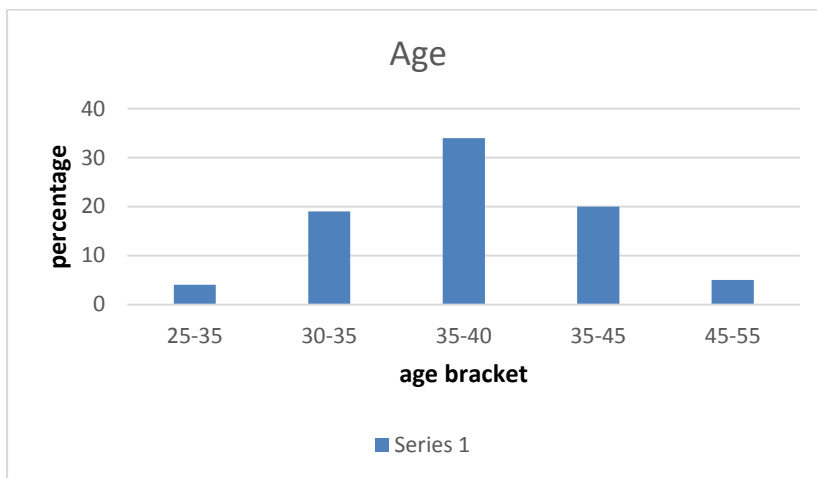
The respondents were asked if they experienced conflict among themselves in the community. 100% of women confirmed that they experience conflict within the group. From the findings it can be deduced that the women experience conflict brought about by the group gatherings and the interactions within the group.

4.1.2 Age of the respondents

The respondents were further asked to indicate their age, the results as shown in figure 1, the youngest was 25 and the oldest was 52.

According to the below data in figure 1, the highest percentages of women fall in the category of 35-40 years. This is a mature age with most women with children in high school or college for the one who married early, these are the women in their prime with more need to fend for their families, more often than not, it is at this age that the polygamous Somali man marries a second wife leaving the first family to take care of herself or to share the very scarce resource between the two families. The table does not have age bracket between 0-25, this is explained by the fact the unmarried women are discouraged by the culture and religion to leave the house without a chaperon, that's more is that they do not have a source of income to get the monthly contribution from. The age group 25-35 is young newly married women with more responsibilities of caring for the small children at home and limited time to attend the 'chama'. Ages 45-55 are the older women, these are fewer as they are older women mostly tired and would not keep up with the young people in the groups.

Figure 1: Age of the respondents

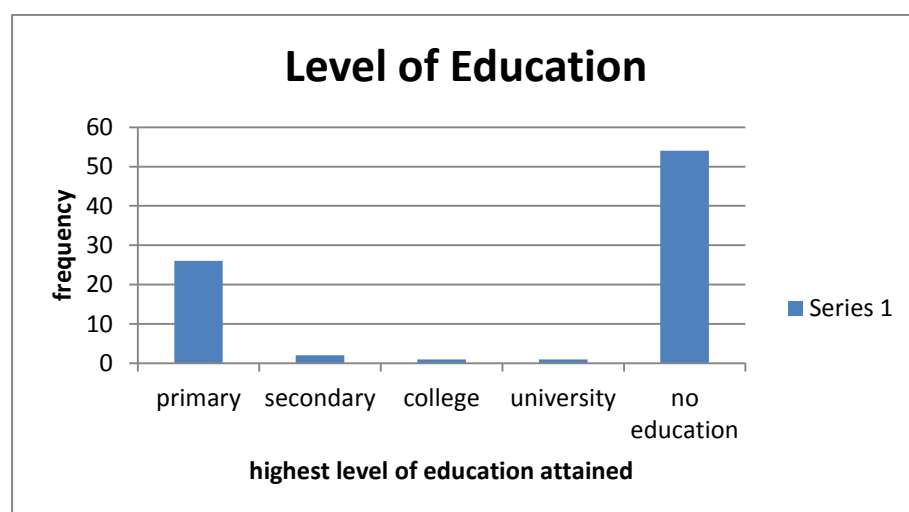


Source: field study 2015

4.1.3 Level of education

From the study most of the women confirm that they are house wives with no education, while the few that have managed to go to school only went up to primary school level.. Further the early marriages and practice of polygamy have left the women with little or no say in the decision of going to school. However many women have expressed the desire to want to take their children through school to better their children’s lives and more than 70% have attributed their being in the women groups as a way to ensure they can get money to sustain the family and pay school fees for their children.

Figure 2: Highest level of education attained by respondents



Source: field study 2015

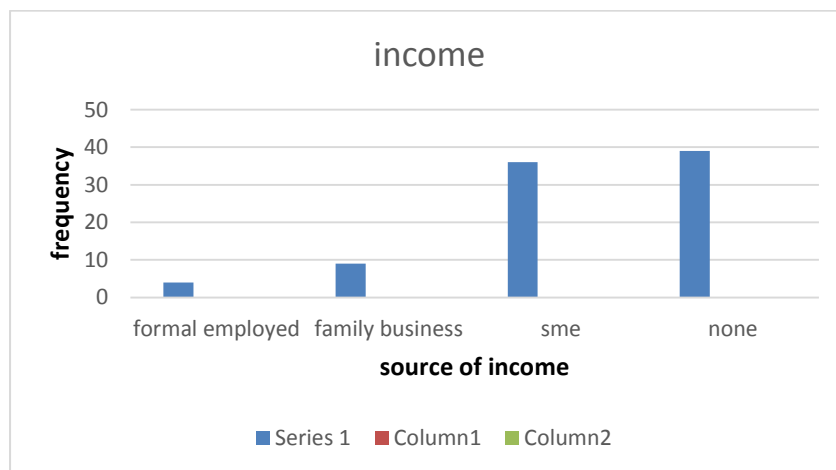
4.1.4 Source of income

The respondents were asked to state their source of income, and from the findings they indicated that (94%) did not have a formal employment, however (37%) operated small kiosks, hawking goods, ran a grocery shop, and while 16% relied entirely on the income of the husband and (43%) did not have any source of income. This left them with the women

group as a most probable source of income to substitute the meagre income from the small scale business and the lack of a source of income.

With lack of education, the women are unable to secure any formal employment and this leaves them with informal employment as a means to get income. Further the cultural and religious restrictions limits them to work away from home and that explains why the women work closely home by having the kiosk right in front of the house or hawking goods right in their villages.

Figure 3: source of income



Source: field study 2015

4.1.5 Conflict

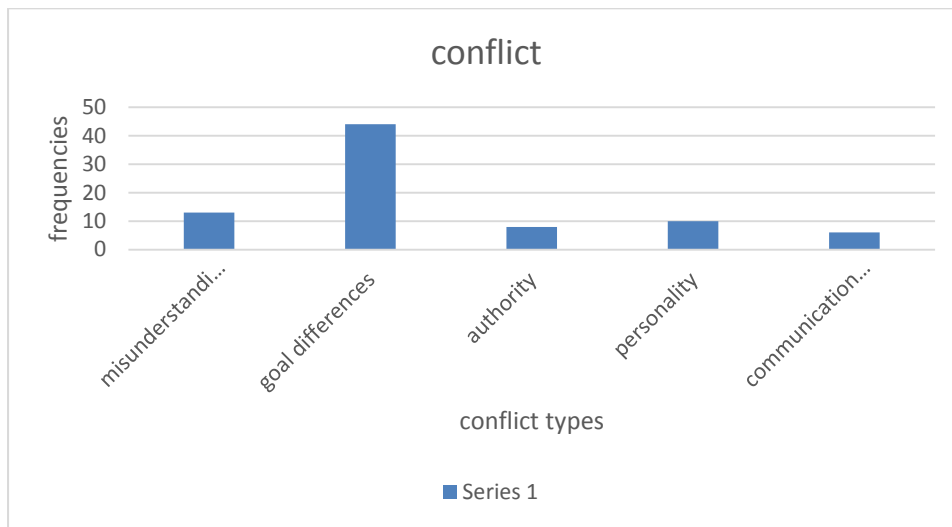
The major types of conflicts experienced within the group are evidenced through the responses from the questionnaires as follows:

From the findings - 53.7% of the respondents stated the goal differences the major source of conflict in the women’s group. 15.9% of the respondents stated misunderstanding of responsibilities as a main source of conflict, while 7.3% indicates conflict is due to communication breakdown and 12.2% conflict is due personality issues.

It comes out clearly that the women are joining the group for different purposes and this explains the disagreements and the goal differences, this is explained better by Pruitt and Kim who cite that ‘conflict is a perceived divergence of interest ‘which occurs where no alternatives seems to exist that will satisfy the aspirations of both parties. This eventually works against the group as the group unity on the common goal achievement is hindered. This is a concern for the researcher since all the women experience similar kinds of problems brought about by poverty and it is expected that they should be able to agree on the one way forward to empower themselves through the group.

The misunderstanding of responsibilities depicts a problem of a lack of clear laid down procedure, in a case of a group, a lack of rules, constitution or a simple guide and this contributes to conflict because of the serious lack of proper communication. Communication breakdown means there no proper channels of an escalation, meaning there is no leadership provided in the group. Conflict due to personality issues could be brought about by attitudes, beliefs and background differences; this is explained by the differences in the clan, religion and education background of the respondents which makes up the personality type of an individual and hence what determines how one communicate with others.

Figure 4: conflict

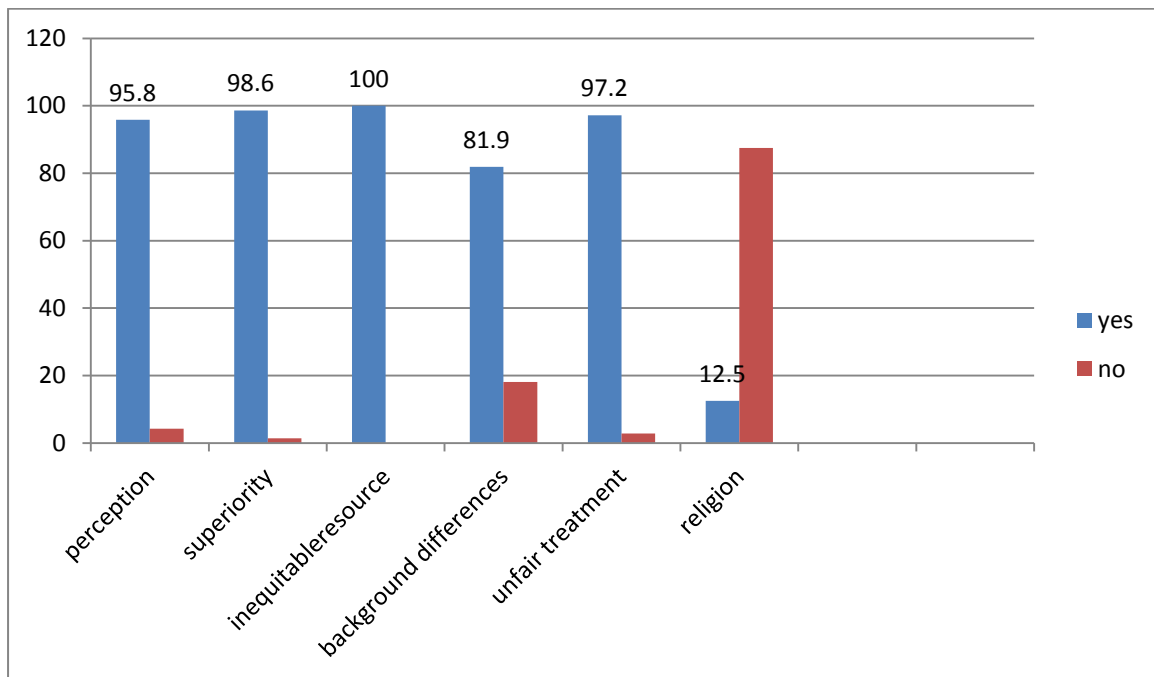


Source: field study 2015

4.1.5.1 Causes of conflict

The respondents were asked to agree or disagree on the probable causes of the conflict in their group. The respondents were asked to base their feelings on: perception, superiority, inequitable resource, background differences, unfair treatment, and religion. The response is summarized in the graph below.

Figure 5: causes of conflict



Source: Field study 2015

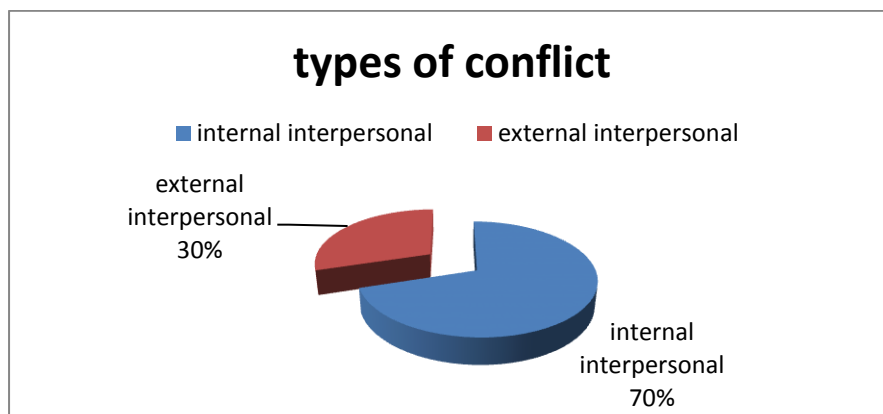
The respondents answered 'yes, to the following as items that encouraged conflict: Differences in perception- 95.8%, feelings of superiority 98.6% inequitable resource 100%, background differences contributed 81.9% while religion contributed up to 12.5%.

The major concern for the women seems to be inequitable resource, which as explained by Hocker and Wilmot could trigger a sense of injustice that could lead to serious conflict escalation, the fact that the group is made up of over 100 members increases the frustrations even further leading to poor communication, uneven distribution of resources and this leads to serious marginalization of some members by others and eventually the group objectives is not achieved.

4.1.6 Types of Conflicts

According to the findings 100% of the women indicated that they experience conflict within the group. 69% of women experienced intergroup conflict while 29% of women experienced interpersonal conflict.

Figure 6: types of conflict



Source: Field study 2015

From these findings we can deduce that the basis of the conflict is facilitated by gathering of the women since the women do not seem to have interpersonal conflict outside the group but the group conflict arising from interaction within the group. This is because within the group members have common things to fight about like: as explained by Ellis and Fisher procedural conflict based on operation of the group. The illiterate Somali woman has difficulty in understanding the formal operations of a group; her interpersonal communication does not give her an edge to express herself well in a group with people of over 120 people

4.1.7 Personality Trait and Interpersonal Communication during Conflict Handling

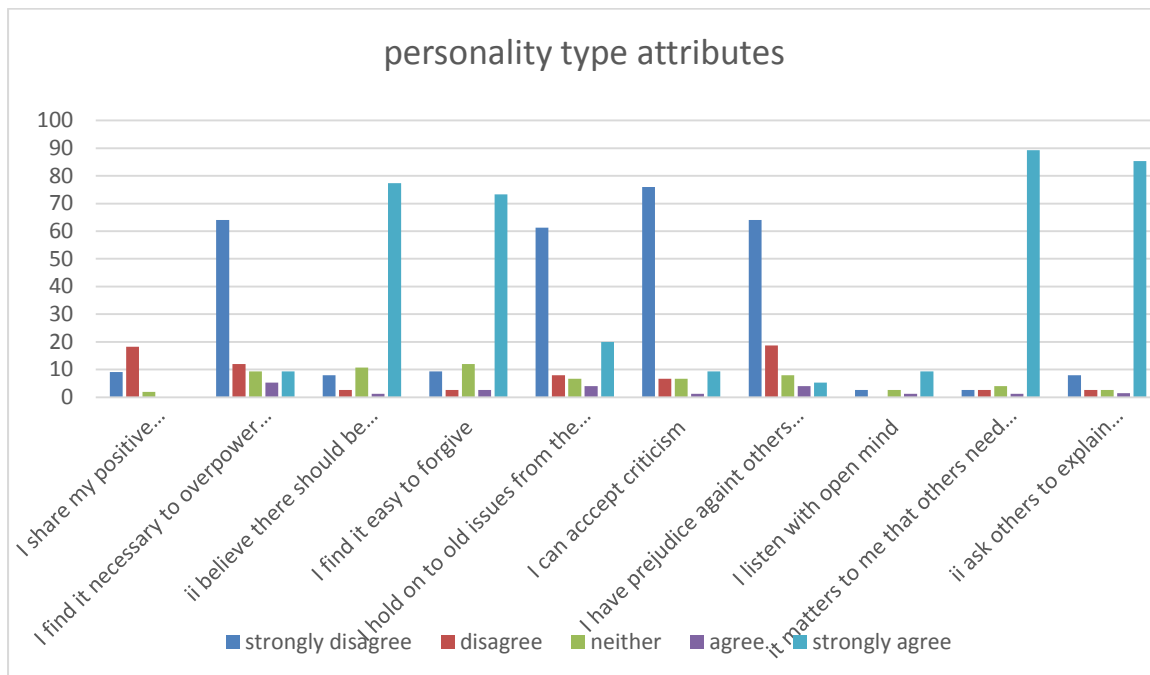
The initial methodological consideration was to conduct observation experiment; however this was not possible since the researcher met the members on the non-meeting day. The

findings on the type of personality types in the group are therefore inferred. Indicators used to measure personality types included: sharing positive attitude, finding it necessary to use power over others, believing in upper hand, forgiveness, bringing up old issues in conflict, accepting criticism, having preconceived notion, willing to let go, listening to others, having an open mind to alternatives, if other people 's feelings matter, listening to explanation from others.

From the findings, refer figure 7, the respondents indicated that they are agreeable team members who nevertheless came out as timid, they don't believe in using force and are quite forgiving- this is reinforced by the fact that women are naturally peacemakers, and instinctively nurturing and would deliberately try to avoid conflict escalation. In a conflict situation, the respondents have shown interest in the other parties, point of view, this indicates the willingness to want to resolve conflict and build peace. Respondents have also indicated that they tend to forgive past grievances and move on rather quickly in order to maintain peace an indication of nurturing nature of women.

Further, the respondents were asked how they felt about some attributes on attitudes, interpersonal skills that would help the researcher categorize the respondents into a personality type to enable easy analysis.

Figure 7: Personality types



Source: Field study 2015

4.1.8 Contribution of common language to conflict escalation

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which a common language contributes to conflict escalation in the group, from the findings figure 4, 44% of the respondents agreed that contributed and that showed in the disagreement that was evidenced in the goal differences that led greatly to the conflict within the group. 66% indicated that identity differences arouse feelings of anger and fear among the group members.

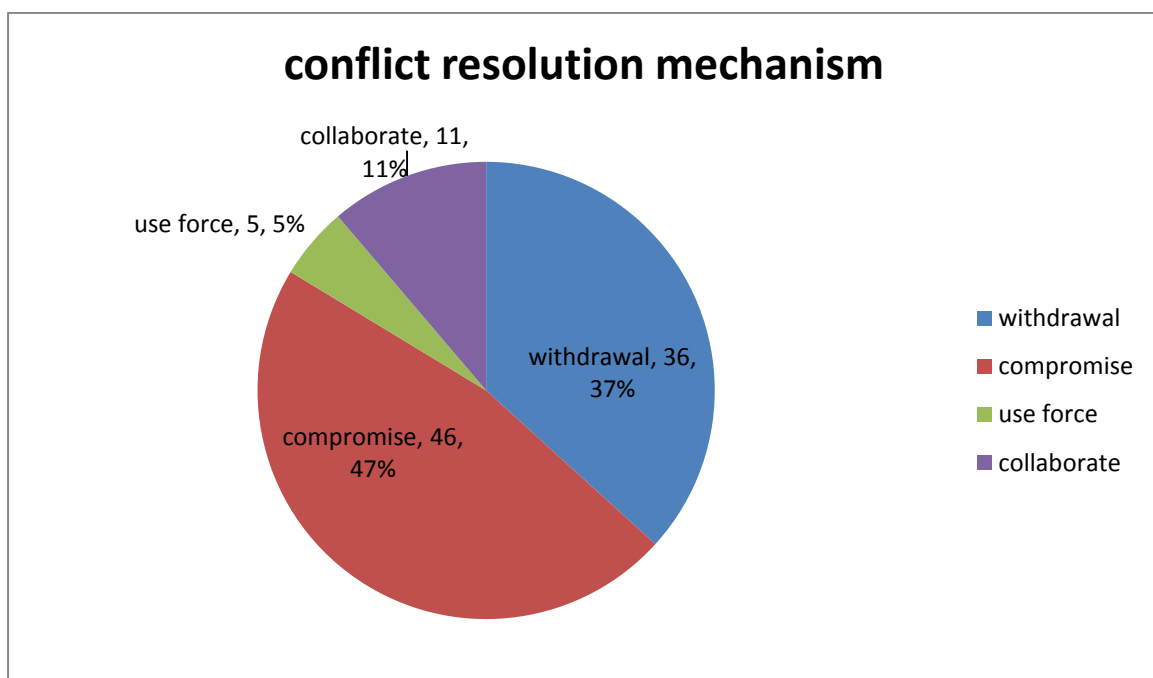
Further, respondents were asked to indicate the causes of conflict in the group, 97% agreed on difference in perception, this was enhanced by the feelings of superiority brought about by the social background difference that is entrenched in the clan differences among the Somali, borana and agree communities. Moreover, the superiority was indicated by the respondents in the preferential treatment that was seen as favoritism by some members in the group and this was seen as causing a major rift in the group. From the findings religious affiliations was not

a conflict issue in the area since 99% of the women in the group were Muslim and the 1% seemed accommodative of the religious difference.

4.1.9 Conflict resolution mechanisms

The respondents were asked to indicate how they resolved and adopted to conflicts whenever they occurred, the findings indicated that, results were as follows: 36% indicated that they would withdraw, 46% are willing to make a compromise, 5% are ready to use force while 11% opted for collaboration.

Figure 8: Conflict resolution mechanism



Source: Field Study 2015

4.1.10 Conflict management

Respondents further indicated that culturally mediation was a common practice in conflict management, group discussions were encouraged where root cause analysis of the conflict is done, committee is formed and conflict resolution process begins.

Section two

4.2 Data Analysis

According to the findings the data, highest percentage of the women that forms the major part of the group are between the ages of 35-40. These are the women with families, while it was expected that younger women would form a larger part of the group, the study confirms the opposite. Further the study confirmed that the Somali woman is illiterate and would not qualify for formal employment and is limited to avenues like a self-help group, small scale business or dependency on the husband for a source of living.

From the findings 100% of women confirmed that they experience conflict within the group, with major conflict triggers being goal differences, misunderstanding of member responsibility, communication breakdown, interpersonal. From this finding it can be deduced that the wrangles within the group has led to the group inefficiencies that in turns leads to inability to achieve set targets for the group. Another aspect of the failure is communication breakdown that would ideally result to group conflicts because groups conflicts is usually closely related to task related according Jehn and Mannix(2001) this would usually stem from interpersonal incompatibilities and it is harmful to the group if mishandled.

Groups experience different kinds of conflict, procedural, interpersonal and substantive conflict and the conflicts would be handled better if the members started with a root cause

analysis and if members got to break the ice and actually got to know each other. However this is usually not the case since the women in the group only meet for the purposes of the group objectives achievement and there is no bonding session that would allow for bonding to ensure that better interpersonal relationships are formed.

According to the functional perspective theory of small group communication which posits that several conditions must exist for group to run optimally, the conditions include: group members commitment, good understanding of the procedures which the group members must understand and own, members must allow for alternative changes to be made to ensure groups success, see threat and prepare to combat it regularly review their process and improve on it. However, from the findings 53.7% disagreed on goal of the group while 15.9% disagreed on member responsibility, this, based on the above theory is a clear indication of a group that lacks cohesion and unity. From the findings we can then deduce that, basing on the functional perspective theory the lack of a common understanding of the procedures of the group, the lack of agreement of the group's operations brought about by the differences in personality and difference of identity of the different team members is a facilitating factor for conflict escalation. The group should have had all the members clearly understand on their goal and objective and assign everyone a responsibility for the group to run efficiently and be fruitful. This would be made easier with a simple clear and understandable constitution for the illiterate Somali woman to understand.

According to the findings, the types of conflicts that emerges is external interpersonal at 30% and internal interpersonal at 70%, it is clear that the conflict are more during the interactions within the groups and reduces with interactions outside the group. Hocker and Wilmot relate conflict and communication closely, because according to them, "communication is the

central elements in all interpersonal conflict'. This is brought about by misunderstandings of background the differences in interpretations. It was found out that the women in the group are not all in the same clan and that was a difference that was taken seriously among the women. It is based on this differences that some women believed there was preferential treatment by others because of their background, for example the oitira clan group among the garre was favored more than the other clans in Somali and borana within the group, a few women expressed dissatisfaction with that but they were unwilling to voice their problems. The silence in itself is a problem since with no communication no agreements or changes can be made.

Further to this the study found out that common language was a challenge and it enhanced conflict escalation, from the findings 97% of the women agreed that differences of identity has greatly facilitated in conflict escalation, the group did not have a symbol of unity, no shared vision or a clear way of how to get there this is a very strong indication of a lack of a unifying factor within the group. With the lack of sense of belonging means the members will not go extra mile to ensure the longevity of the group.

The lack of common language or shared meanings within the group is an indication of a lack of or existence of poor communication within the group, this is because it is through the shared meaning, identity, symbols etc. that the group is able to build a healthy interdependence, construct a common ground for understanding communication, developing dialogue, grow capacity for listening and understanding each other and all this would help in achieving the groups ultimate objective.

Conflict resolution mechanism was found out to be mostly withdrawal 36%, 46% indicated are willing to make a compromise, 5% are ready to use force while 11% would use

collaboration. From the findings we can deduce the women, unlike men are peace lovers, and do not like aggression and are not confrontational, in cases of a conflict situation they avoid escalation, further the culture of the Somali woman has subdued her and made the Somali woman quite timid and hence she would prefer to maintain peace. Islam religion also upholds peace and the neighborliness, a virtue which is being taken seriously by the rural Somali woman and hence the nature of quick reconciliations.

Further the respondents confirmed that dialogue and negotiations are the most preferable means of resolving the conflict while strongly suggesting that a root cause analysis of the problem must be done for reconciliation. The 5% of women who indicated that they would use force to resolve their conflict brings in a new perspective of the Somali woman, this is because the Somali woman is expected and known to be submissive, timid and conformist, this is mostly because of the culture and the religion which socializes them to be like that, this also brings out an aspect of personality trait which would help explain why the Somali woman would want to use force. It could mean the few strong women would want to break free, a liberal Somali woman who is ambitious and ready for a challenge.

However the researcher further found out other conflicting results, while 93% of the respondents strongly agree to listening to the other during conflict, 76% of the respondents strongly disagree to criticism, this concerns the researcher more because the same respondents almost unanimously agree that their best and preferred mode of reconciliation is through negotiation and dialogue.90% of their preferred method involves listening, accepting criticism with a view of reaching a common ground and this would not be possible with the wrong attitude According to personality types of Myer Briggs there are different types of personality and this determines how we handle ourselves and interact with others, as such,

women who lack to use force are not team players, these are the types that rely on a subjective personal and social values and this often leads to wrong perceptions, meanings and this leads to being and lack emotional intelligence that would enable them handle conflict better and not result to violence. Further it is an indication of a rebellious subdued woman who seems to lack platforms of self-expression and feels that only use of force would get her point across. This is facilitated further by lack of education.

Another concerning finding for the research is the 77.3% of the respondents who believe that there should be an upper hand in conflict resolution, while the Somali woman has lived in a chauvinistic society and a religion that upholds patriarchy, the researcher expected that women in the groups would want to break away from the norm and exercise a little freedom, use the group as an avenue for venting, however that does not seem to be the case, for the Somali woman, apparently culture and religion is more deeply rooted than is seen and it is therefore easy to conclude that the Somali woman is docile and a peace lover.

From the study the researcher confirmed and agrees with the fact that scarcity of resource, or uneven distribution of a scarce resource is a major factor at play in conflict and conflict escalation, according to Hocker and Wilmot, these are major causes of conflict, they further explain that the scarcity and the uneven distribution brings about a sense of injustice that leads to further escalation of conflict.

Moreover the situation is made even worse from the fact that in a group scenario more often we have members experiencing challenges from incompatible goals adding more to inability to satisfy everyone's wish.

From the findings 100% of the women agree that resources are not well distributed, this was evidenced from other group members being unable to access loan because of the favoritism by a few members, also because of the large group that makes it hard to give everyone a soft loan. This has created a conflict leading some members to leave the group and others simply became dormant members.

The inequitable resource distribution is even more frustrating to the members who cannot access the facilities because all members contribute the same amount monthly, this would explain why a few members would want to use force to get their way this sensitive issue brings out the importance of managing conflict through communication. AS explained by Fleetwood, while communication behavior can create conflict, reflect conflict, communication also is a vehicle for productive management of conflict. With better communication there would be better consensus on the distribution of resources and more women would benefit from the group.

The researcher confirmed that Somali women are generally illiterate. It is also noted that literacy is a factor in group cohesion since it was evident that a few learned members were taking advantage of the majority of the members. This brings about a the principal of equality especially taking into consideration the culture and religion of the Somali which advocates for equality and fair treatment. The question in researcher's mind therefore is why is there mistreatment of members by a few to each other while they experience the same from the male dominated society? Researcher wonders if this is a factor of a socialization process, a personality issue or simply an adaptation issue. Further the researcher also confirmed that a personality type is a major cause of conflict and conflict escalation in the group. From the finding 95.8% confirmed that perception and 100% background differences influences how

they deal with each other and handle conflict, this agrees with Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman, Eric C. Marcus who state that our social reality and perception are shaped by our culture that we are born into, this explain why the Somali woman is unique in her ways of dealing with conflict in her setting. Her setting is that which is limited by religion, patriarchy and culture that still uphold the patriarchy, this must leave limited avenues for self-expression for the Somali woman making it even more difficult for her to be able to cope with people from other cultures.

According to Henman, successful group communication is dependent on the size, structure of the group, interdependence of the members, the shared identity. The researcher found out the group did not really have a strictly formal standardized constitution that was adhered to by the members; this becomes a challenge since it does not provide a platform for the women to actually interact and discuss important issues that would enable them progress as a team, and as Barge explain that effective communication involves capacity for listening, dialogue, self-disclosure to allow more than person understand each other, in a group setup this is hindered since all the members do is express frustration and it is always chaos. This is heightened by further frustration from the fact that the group does not share common goals and 53.7% of the members confirm that goal differences is their major source of conflict. It is easy to say therefore that face-to- face communication is greatly hindered. The very essence of agreement in a group is through the interpersonal communication and when this is challenged then the group is compromised from the very beginning and therefore goal achievement of the group becomes an impossible task.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 introduction

This chapter presents conclusion and recommendation for the study undertaken and further research on the problem of the study. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the contribution of interpersonal communication to conflict resolution among Somali women groups in Isiolo County

5.2 Summary

The study found out that the Somali women in the women groups are mostly illiterate, poor without a reliable source of income, and experience conflict both on a personal and group interaction level. Further the study confirmed that the cultural practices were strict and played a major role in how the women communicate with each both on interpersonal and group levels.

5.2.1 The extent to which personality trait affect interpersonal communication during conflict handling

The first objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which personality trait affects interpersonal communication during conflict handling among Somali women in Isiolo County. The conclusions of the findings on these are based on inferences since the researcher was unable to carry out observation as earlier intended.

The study found out that women in the group are docile and do not want to escalate issues, majority of the women want to quickly resolve conflict, even asking for mediation incases conflict reaches a stalemate. The respondents indicated that they easily move on from past grievances and this is an indication that they are peace makers. Majority of the respondents answered positively to being receptive to criticism and are open to dialogue, this is a show of

emotional stability given that all the women in the group are mature women in charge of families.

5.2.2 Contribution of common language to conflict escalation

The study found out that goal difference formed a major part of conflict in the group, 97 % of respondents agree that differences of identity has greatly facilitated in conflict escalation, this is an indication of a lack of a shared vision within the group, a suggestion of a probable lack of cohesion or unity within the group since there is nothing to equalize the members that might translate to an indication of a less commitment to the group. The fact that members join the group without being in agreement with what the group does means that the group has not cultivated the right culture to enable success of the group.

5.2.3 Interpersonal communication and conflict resolution mechanism

From the study women almost unanimously agree that negotiation and dialogue are their preferred conflict resolution mechanism, further those who anticipate a negative interaction from the group prefer to withdraw from the group until such time when there is peace and they are able to comfortably relate with other members, the women's choice of conflict is all based on interpersonal communication, and to a larger extent this agrees with the function of communication of identity and belonging In a group with a healthy interpersonal communication.

Identity is reinforced and cohesion enhanced and women being emotional being would feel easy in this environment. This also shows the difference in how conflict resolution is different for both men and women. In case of men, conflict would be tackled head on and no procrastination or withdrawal would happen, a man would charge at the rest and let the strongest one win.

Of interest here is the pattern of communication which is mostly affected by the type of clans that constitutes the group. Loyalty to clan members would mean that interpersonal communication is also hindered as approval is sought from the other clan members. However if interpersonal communication happened as it should- instantaneous, unrehearsed members would have a chance to tackle issues there and then and conflict would not be allowed chance to escalate and there would be no need for negotiations or third party mediation and this would result to efficient group since more time would be allocated to growing the team and achieving group objective as opposed to resolving conflicts.

Ansu-Kyeremeh's publication cites that cultural lag is always with us, therefore there is need to adopt all African values, motivations and forms of communications to reinforce existing African institutions and opening up spaces of freedom of local communication and community rituals: by adopting Ansu-Kyeremeh's Somali woman would learn a lot about self-expression and allowing herself the freedom to grow and empower herself through participatory communication, this would go a long way in allowing harmony in the group and a vibrant working environment.

5.3 Conclusion

From the foregoing findings the study draws five conclusions. First that interpersonal communication contributes to conflict escalation in Somali women group. The main reason why women in the group experience conflict is because of the interaction, meetings and gatherings. The low levels and lack of education make the levels of understanding within the group and the agreement hard. The study also found out that most women join the groups as alternative ways of earning income to feed the large families and to enable their children go to school. Majority of the women are housewives and live in a polygamous marriage with no

stable source of income. Further the study found out that the illiteracy among the Somali women has led to the majority of the women in the group to be taken advantage of by a few members, the illiteracy is more challenging to the group since it hinders interpersonal communication.

Secondly, The researcher concludes group communication would fail if the women do not all agree on a common group objective, Basing this on the functional perspective theory that suggest groups effectiveness and efficiency depends on a workable behavior and structure coupled with an environment that allow all members to be synchronized for the group to be able to achieve its success. While members of a group interacting is a ripe environment for conflict due to interpersonal incompatibilities and task related conflict a simplified methodology and process would ensure that the group runs smoothly. Group communication is supposed to be an avenue for creating common ground for understanding and developing common language, from the finding there seemed to be a lack of common language and no shared identity, this a bad indication for a group since it is through common language that group members are able to construct common meaning and this will in turn create a platform for disclosure and dialogue and this will enable group success.

Third, the study concludes that group cohesion is dependent on effective communication. As explained above, a group is a workforce, that involves more than one person and more than one thing to be done .a group has a process for example, some of the women group has other groups that is involved in selling milk, this is a process that involves collection, distribution and receiving money and banking the same. This is a whole process that needs coordination. The only way members are able to coordinate is through communication to ensure responsibilities are shared and the work flows smoothly.

Fourth conclusion is that communication simplifies work as explained above, simplifies relationships and enables goal achievement. I daresay that communication is the center of everything in our life .without communication everything would come to a standstill. The above two conclusions therefore agree with the function of communication as mentioned in my literature review, one of the function is a practical need of checking up on each other see if the member on duty has any challenges, if the milk supplier has delayed etc. further on the function of communication is the is the social need, the identity need and the physical need, if the members of a group use effective communication it would enable them get closer and form stronger bonds, this would in turn form stronger team since it would cultivate a feeling of belonging to a group, a cause and this would lead to unity and stronger cohesion.

Finally the researcher concludes that with good interpersonal communication conflicts are less, and if conflicts are experienced they are resolved better and resolutions last longer. This is because from the findings the majority of Somali women believe in dialogue and negotiation as a way of resolving their issues within the group, dialogue and negotiation involves face to face communication, interpersonal communication where members involved get to read each other's body language, see facial expression as well as hear what the other has to say, and where intended meaning is not lost through third party reporting, this therefore means that one on one or interpersonal communication has proven to be a better and effective tool in resolving group conflict as compared to other mechanism like courts.

5.4 Recommendation

The study found out that there are many groups in Isiolo which if it worked smoothly would greatly help the Somali woman get economic empowerment. Interpersonal communication

maybe simplified for the group members by having a simple, clear, understandable constitution that will run the group. The group meets every two weeks while there are still no major achievements, the group needs to have a specific investment goal in order to be able to achieve the group objectives.

This study also established that the group was experiencing internal wrangles that was brought about by clan differences, the study recommends forming groups that is more cosmopolitan to neutralize the conflict, further the sizes of the group is too large for management, the study found out that the groups had well over 100 members, smaller groups are more manageable and efficient.

5.5 suggestion for further studies

This study was limited to Somali women group in Isiolo County, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other women groups, this study therefore recommends further study should be conducted to compare the contribution of interpersonal communication to women in group. The study also recommends further studies on factors affecting interpersonal communication among women.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Conflict

1. Kindly indicate your age bracket

- 25-30**
- 30-35**
- 35-40**
- 40-45**
- 45-50**

2. What is your level of education?

- Primary**
- Secondary**
- College**
- University**
- None**

3. What is your source of income?

- Formal employment
- Family business
- Small scale business
- none

4. Do you ever experience conflict among the people in your community?

YES NO

5. What kind of conflicts do the members of your group experience most (Interpersonal,

Intergroup,

other)?_____

6. What are the most common sources of conflict in your group (misunderstanding of one

another's' responsibilities, goal differences, interdependence, authority relationship,

personality conflict, communication

breakdown)?_____

7.How do you solve conflicts whenever they occur (withdrawal, force, compromising, collaborating)?_____

8.Describe the techniques you adopt in resolving conflicts

9. Conflict escalation

How often do goal differences cause conflict in among your group members?

Never

Rarely

Often

10.How has matters relating to your identity affected conflict situations in your group?_____

11. Have matters relating to identity tended to arouse feelings of anger and fear among your group members?

{ } YES

{ } NO

12. On a scale of 1 to 5 where five is the highest, rate how you agree or disagree with the following statements

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Past grievances, feelings of injustice, and a high level of frustration have provoked escalation of conflict in my group					
Hostility-driven escalation is typically caused by grievances or a sense of injustice, and may ultimately be rooted in events of the distant past					
Deprivation, inequitable treatment, and pain and suffering thereby lead to a desire to punish or injure the other					
There are no "norms of redress" in place, the aggrieved party always feel compelled to strike back in response					

13. Causes of conflict between group members

	YES	NO
Difference in perceptions on certain issues		
Feelings of superiority by some group members		
Limited resources (finance, materials, facilities etc.)		
Differences in members social-cultural backgrounds		

Preferential treatment of certain group members by the administration		
Difference in target goals amongst group members		
Differences in religious affiliations		

14. On a scale of 1 to 5 where five is the highest, rate how you agree or disagree with the following statements

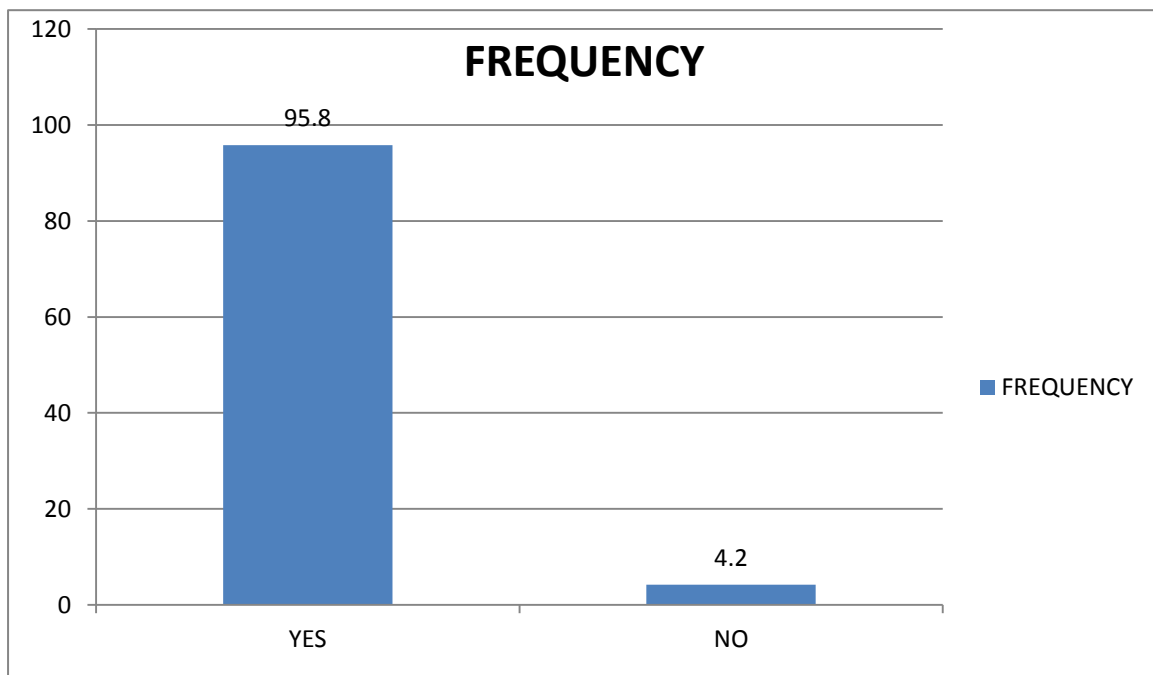
Statements	1	2	3	4	5
I share my positive attitude, hoping they will do the same					
I find it necessary to overpower others to get my own way					
In a conflict, I believe there should be no upper hand					
I find it easy to forgive my visitors					
I bring up old issues from the past during a new conflict					
I can accept criticism from others					
When dealing with conflict I have a preconceived notions about the other party that I am unwilling to let go of					
I listen with an open mind to alternative options					
At the end of a conflict, it matters to me that the other person's needs have been met as well as my own					
When in conflict with others, I ask them to explain their position					

APPENDIX B: TABLE 1

Findings from the study, on the agreements and disagreements on conflict and contribution of perception as a factor of conflict escalation.

perception

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	69	95.8	95.8	95.8
no	3	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

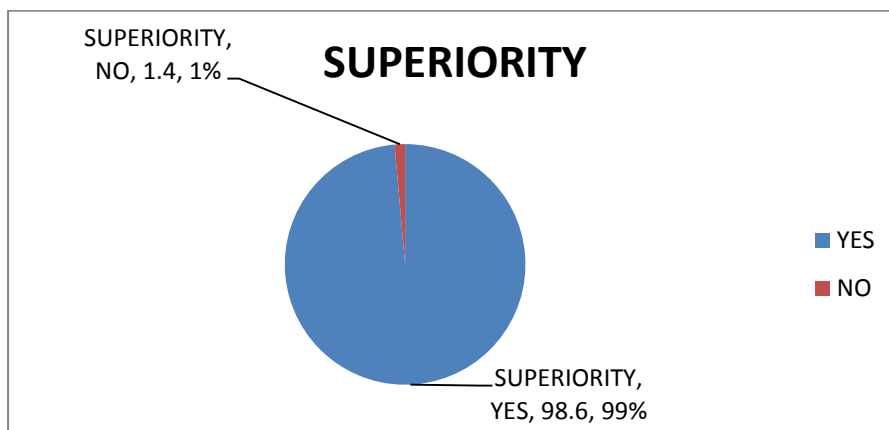


APPENDIX C: TABLE 2

Findings from the study, on the agreements and disagreements on conflict and contribution of personality trait of superiority as a factor of conflict escalation.

superiority

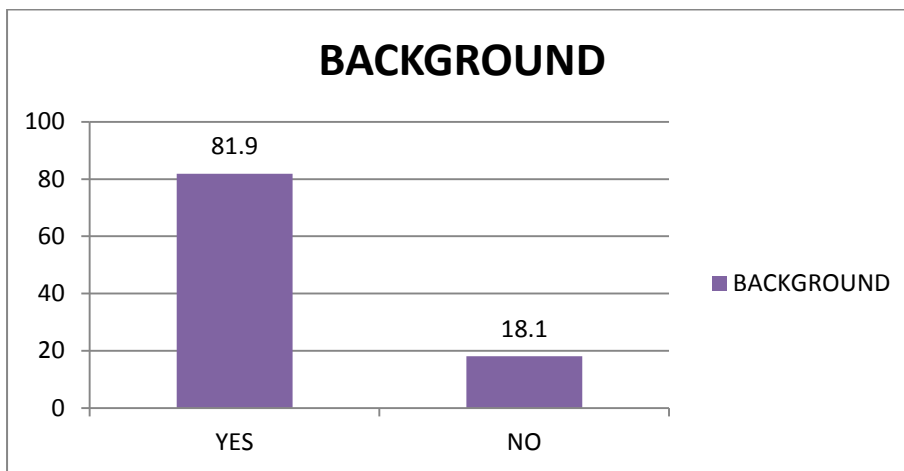
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	71	98.6	98.6	98.6
no	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	



APPENDIX D: TABLE 3

Findings from the study, on the agreements and disagreements on conflict and contribution of background differences as a factor of conflict escalation.

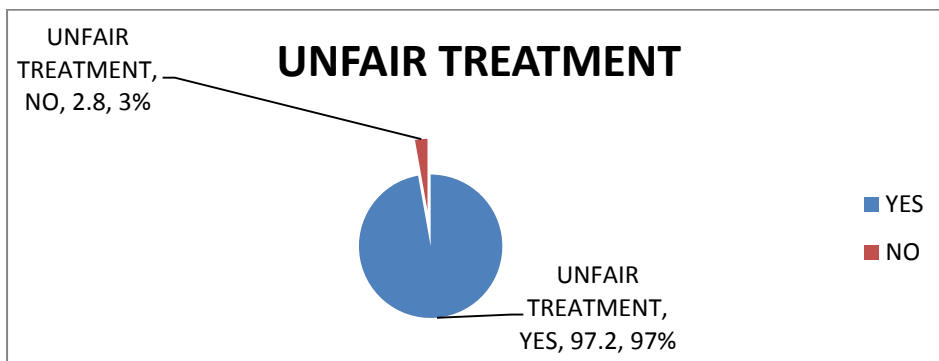
		background			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	59	81.9	81.9	81.9
	no	13	18.1	18.1	100.0
Total		72	100.0	100.0	



APPENDIX E: TABLE 4

Findings from the study, on the agreements and disagreements on conflict and contribution of unfair treatment as a factor of conflict escalation.

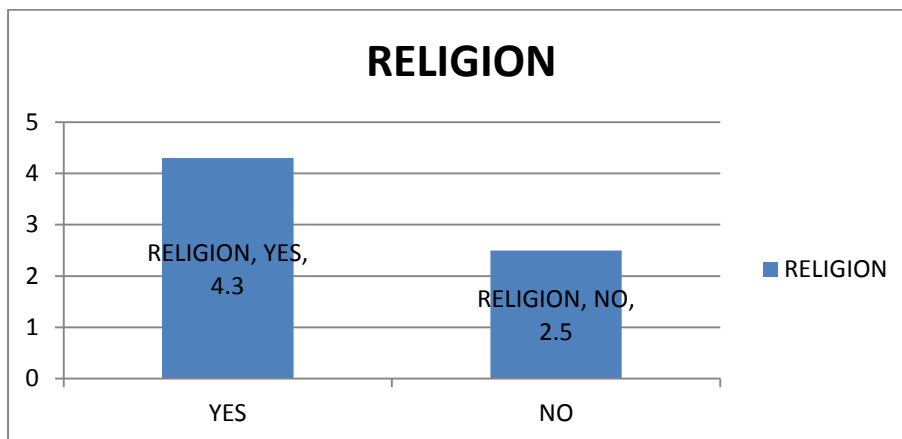
		treatment			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	70	97.2	97.2	97.2
	no	2	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total		72	100.0	100.0	



APPENDIX F: TABLE 5

Findings from the study, on the agreements and disagreements on conflict and contribution of religion as a factor of conflict escalation.

		religion			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	9	12.5	12.5	12.5
	no	63	87.5	87.5	100.0
Total		72	100.0	100.0	



APPENDIX G: TABLE 6

Findings from the study, on the agreements and disagreements on conflict and contribution of goal differences as a factor of conflict escalation.

		goals			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	62	86.1	86.1	86.1
	no	10	13.9	13.9	100.0
Total		72	100.0	100.0	

