

**INFLUENCE OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERS'
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES ON STUDENT'S
DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
MACHAKOS SUB- COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to mum Nancy Wambui and my late father Philip Ndambuki for showing me the essence of education.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B.O.M	- Board of Management
D.E.O	- District Education Officer
G & C	- Guidance and Counseling
KCSE	-Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KEMI	-Kenya Education Management Institute
MOEST	- Ministry of Education Science and Technology
S.G.B.S	- School Governing Bodies
S.P.S.S.	- Statistical Package for Social Sciences
T.K.I	- Thomas Kilman Instrument

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of board of management members' conflict management styles on student's discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub- county, Machakos County-Kenya. The study was guided by five objectives which were; to determine the influence of competing, collaborating, avoidance, accommodation conflict management styles on students' discipline in Machakos sub-county. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study targeted all students and Board of Management members in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County. Purposive sampling was used to pick 67 schools, 67 student presidents and 67 BOM members (one from each school). Stratified sampling was first used to categorize the schools according to their levels, before sampling was done. The study adopted Thomas-Kilman conflict mode instrument (T.K.I) which provided detailed information on how effectively the five different conflict management styles could be applied. Questionnaires were used to collect data from both the students and board members. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher through a drop-wait-and-collect method. Data analysis was done by SPSS programme. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used in the analysis. Data was presented using pie-charts, percentages, graphs and frequency tables. Through data analysis, the study established that the prevalence of indiscipline cases in schools was rated high at 95 percent. The study finding also revealed that avoidance, assertiveness and collaboration were commonly used by board members across all ages and gender. Compromising and accommodation styles were partially used. Furthermore, the study established that majority of the student took desirable actions to control conflicts between themselves and their colleagues. This meant that the cases of indiscipline in schools were largely due to conflicts between the school management and the students due to poor conflict resolution styles used. Essentially, more than half of the indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county were handled through suspension and expulsion, at the expense of timeout, conferences with adults, guidance and counseling and parent involvement. A comparison between the conflict management style used and frequency of indiscipline showed that, indiscipline in schools were mostly pronounced in schools where avoidance, assertiveness and collaboration conflict management styles were practiced. The study therefore concluded that cases of indiscipline in school were linked to the conflict management style used and recommended that school management should adopt styles that generate minimal conflicts when dealing with student indiscipline. The study suggested that further research on the challenges faced by school management boards in their quest to solve conflicts/indiscipline

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Cotton (2010) defines school discipline as a form of discipline appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in the school. Students' indiscipline is any form of disruptive behavior that interferes with the smooth running of an educational institution (Simkins, 2005). Such behavior may arise from interpersonal conflicts between Board Members, head teachers, teachers and students due to opposition or antagonistic interactions. Two systems or persons are in conflicts when they interact indirectly in such a way that the actions of one tend to prevent or compel some outcome against the resistance of the other (Katz and Kahn, 2008). This is a common phenomenon in schools as principals and teachers authoritatively enforce school rules against the resistance of some students.

Students' indiscipline in secondary schools is experienced worldwide. Students have in the past protested against political regimes, conditions in schools, school administration or some form of discrimination in the school or society as a whole. In the United Kingdom for example, student politics has existed since 1880s. In Iran, students protested against the secular monarchy and later against the theocratic Islamic republic. In the United States, student activism is often understood as oriented toward change in the American educational system (Cotton, 2010).

Student indiscipline in Africa has been rampant. In Uganda, research shows that indiscipline cases of secondary school students as a means of seeking attention or protest had become rampant. Hardly a term passes without a school striking and the pattern was becoming bizarre with school property being destroyed by students (Fiona, 2007). Okumbe (2008) defines discipline as the epicenter of success of a school. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) defined discipline as the force that prompts individual or groups to observe rules, regulations, standards and procedures deemed necessary for an organization. They also noted that discipline can either be positive or negative. Mullins (2010) noted that positive discipline can be achieved through rewards and effective leadership, while negative discipline is done through penalties used to make a student obey rules and regulations due to fear of suspensions, expulsions or any other form of punishment.

Conflict is a daily part of our lives; it takes many forms ranging from small encounters to full scale battles. However no matter the form of conflict, it can be resolved or prevented. If conflict management styles are well used they eliminate and reduce barriers that prevent the achievement of desired result (Deventer & Kruger (2005). A study conducted by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology MOEST (2001) revealed that secondary schools strikes in Kenya were not a new phenomenon and dated back to 20th century when the first case was reported in Maseno school. The trend continued and the strikes have been changing in nature and characteristics as the number of schools involved also

increases. One major feature of these strikes was that the school management was the primary targets of student's attacks and confrontations (Kinyanjui, 2009). The causes of the strikes as indicated by students were poor diet, inadequate learning resources, poor teaching methods, high handedness of head teachers and harsh school rules. Leaders in organizations are expected to create organizational systems that members perceive as fair, caring and open. In a just and ethical organization, decisions that leaders make should reflect fair treatment of people and concern for their welfare (Deventer & Kruger (2005). Every developing organization will experience a range of conflict at every level (Sanusi 2003) for it is an inevitable part of dynamic growth, whether in making resource, choices or unbalancing the interest of different groups. Conflict is also part of schools functioning. This implies no educator can permanently escape conflict in school environment.

A report by the Kenya Secondary School Heads Association in 1999 revealed that strikes in schools were on the increase and blamed it on the print and electronic media. In August 2001, the Ministry of Education formed a task force to look into the discipline in secondary schools. The task force established that lack of learning resources, food, high handedness, peer influence and lack of communication between the administration and the students were some of the causes of the strikes (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Karimi (2004) explained that student strikes were a symptom of inability of the schools to cultivate relevant moral values among the youth and that this situation was threatening the socio-economic development of

the nation. Between June and July 2008, approximately 300 secondary schools in Kenya went on strike (Juma, 2008) and the strikes were declared the worst ever to be witnessed in Kenya. In Machakos sub-county nine schools went on strike and many more schools experienced varied forms of unrest that were successively contained. The schools cited high handedness of the head teacher, harsh punishments and lack of communication channels as some of the causes of the strikes (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

Conflict continues to be a worrying reasons in secondary schools as they appear to be centers of tension and perhaps a manifestation of the problems in the community. According to Helloriegel and Slocum (2009), conflict arises whenever the perceived interests of an individual in such a way that strong emotions are aroused and compromise is not considered an option. Conflict may occur when a party possesses attitudes values ,skills and goals that are silent in directing his or her behavior but are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes , values (skills) held by other (Rahim, 2007). The over searching hierarchy of conflict starts with a distinction between substantive (performance, task, issue or active) conflict and effective (also called relationship) conflict are related (De Dreu & Weingart, 2013).

Substantive conflict involves disagreement among group members about the content of the tasks being performed or the performance itself of conflict occurs when two or more social entitles disagree on the recognition and solution to a

task problem including difference in viewpoints , ideas and opinion (Rahim, 2002). Organizational conflict whether substantive or effective it can be divided into interpersonal, intergroup conflict occurs between members of the same group. Affective conflict deals with interpersonal relationships or incompatibilities not directly related to achieving the groups function (Mannix and Trochim, 2008).

The nature and types of conflict that occur in public secondary schools can vary from one hand to another. Therefore managing conflict at school has become a challenge to all stakeholders of education , thus attention has been drawn to the uncontrollable levels of students unrest initiating conflict management programs is due of the best way of addressing uncontrollable issues in public secondary school. Conflict management minimizes the negative outcomes of conflict and promotes the positive outcomes of conflict with the goal of improving learning in organization (Rahim , 2002). Properly managed conflict can improve group outcomes (Alper, Tjovellis and Law, 2012; Bodkers and Jameson, 2011). Conflict management is something that organization and stakeholders of education need to deal with. Conflict handling styles refer to the specific behavioural patterns that people employ when dealing with conflict (Moberg, 2011). Improper conflict handling styles can make the existing conflict worse and bring additional conflicts. It is through the application of appropriate conflict management style that discipline in public secondary schools can be improved.

According to Bodkers & Jameson (2011), there are five styles for conflict management that include competing, avoidance, accommodation, compromising and collaborating. Conflict handling involves the aspect of approach to conflict behavioral carried out to resolve the conflict, the prosperity to handle conflict and the relationship between individuals involved in the conflict (Janeja, 2011). A school is a system, the social behavioral which is found in the system is a function of two major elements, intuitional role and expectation it has a goal – oriented objective which is academic excellence of all learners who go through it (Okumbe, 2008). The element are the teachers, students and non- teaching staff and is comprised of people acting according to roles, regulation and expectations unfortunately because a school has human beings then every individual though interaction will have different thought and opinions that can make individuals not work in an harmonious relation, therefore conflict occurs, which interferes with the teaching and learning process.

In south Africa indiscipline cases escalated in schools after corporal punishment was out flowed, for example, learners were alleged to have murdered other in school premises (Haber 2011) and this raised concerns about safety of school and classroom environment. Conflict management and resolution in secondary schools has also been studied in Nigerian school in Osun state as reported in an article by Olu and Abosede (2003). The study identified the cause and various ways of how conflicts are manifested in the administration of secondary schools in

the state. Kenya is not an exception as many conflicts in secondary schools are characterized for example, in 13th July 1991, male students at St. Kizito mixed secondary school invaded girls dormitory and violently raped over 70 girls but 19 lost their lives. It was due to girls refusing to join strike planned by boys on 25th May 1999. In Nyeri boys' high school, male students locked four school prefects in their cubicles after they were killed. Motive behind the prefects they had differed with some students (Republic of Kenya, 2001).

In October 2010, 2 boys were burnt to death at Enderasha boys' secondary school dormitory in Nyeri County after some students torched the building. Since a wave of schools unrest marked by violent strikes and shocking incidents of indiscipline has brought a great alarm to the Nation (Daily Nation August 8, 2015) for example 45 students from schools in Kirinyaga was arrested from smoking bhang and drinking alcohol and engaging in sexual activities in a hired bus in Kiambu three step joy high school students are facing murder charges for allegedly starting a fire that assaulted in the death of three schoolmates, (Daily Nation, Tuesday August 4, 2015). On the 25th March 2001, 68 students of Kyanguli secondary in Machakos county died this was due to angry students who set the blaze over the annulment of final exam result and demands that they pay outstanding school fees. Mosley (2008) observed that unfair management practices, lack of effective leadership, communication barriers, defective supervision, divide and rule policy victimization, differing, grievance can cause students indiscipline. Therefore board of management should have the ability,

exposure, experience, good qualifications and leadership styles to successfully maintain discipline in public secondary schools and this will depend on the capability to employ effective conflict management styles .

The South African School Act of 1996, mandates the establishment of school governing bodies (SGBS) whereby it can suspend learners from attending school as a corrective measure and also deal with disciplining hearings among students indiscipline. For example in South Africa indiscipline cases have really escalated in schools after corporal punishment was outlawed when learners were alleged to have murdered other in school premises (Haber, 2011). Conflict appears to be unpleasant issue to many schools in the world and more so Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2009). Karimi (2010) did a research on the factors influencing conflict resolution in secondary schools in Machakos District. The findings indicated that conflicts were caused by poor conflict management by head teachers. Study done by Kasivu Gideon Mutuku (2011) on influence of secondary school head teachers' conflict management styles on maintenance of student discipline in Mukaa District , Kenya ,it recommended that head teachers should be encouraged to use a combination of all the conflict management styles depending on the situation at hand. It is on the premise of the study that the researcher carries out the current study to determine the influence of conflict management styles used by the board of management on the students discipline in Machakos Sub-County.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the recent past Machakos Sub-County has experienced conflicts in schools that have been reflected in the high level of indiscipline in the secondary schools in the sub county. In the year 2015, eight public secondary schools in the sub county had several strikes and indiscipline cases that led to destruction of property (Machakos District Education Office Annual Report, 2015), compared with Kangundo Sub-County where only four public secondary school that went on strike. The level of conflict and indiscipline in secondary schools in Machakos has been a headache for the Board of Management in the public secondary schools. This may be attributed to poor conflict resolution by the school management. The question is; do the conflict management styles used by the Board of Management influence the student discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub County? This is the question that this study seeks to answer.

A study done by Simbambi (2013) on head teachers conflict management styles and their effect on discipline in secondary schools in Central Division Machakos District, observed that, head teachers conflict management styles have an effect on the discipline of students and also school administration need to enhance communication among all stakeholders in the school for better decision-making. According to the researcher conflict management styles adopted by school

management affects the discipline of the students in secondary schools. The current study therefore sought to establish the influence of conflict management styles on student discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of board of management members' conflict management styles on students' disciplines in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub- County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives

- i. To determine the influence of Board of Management members use of competing conflict management style on students discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub- county, Kenya.
- ii. To assess the influence of Board of Management members use of compromising conflict management style on students discipline in public secondary school in Machakos sub- county, Kenya.
- iii. To determine the influence of Board of Management members use of collaborating conflict management style on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Kenya.

- iv. To establish the influence of Board of Management members use of avoidance conflict management style on students discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Kenya.
- v. To determine the influence of Board of Management members use of accommodating conflict management style on students discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub- county, Kenya.

1.5 Research questions

- i. How does the use of competing conflict management style by Board of Management members influence students discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub- county, Kenya?
- ii. How does use of compromising conflict management style by Board of Management members influence students discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub- county, Kenya?
- iii. How does the use of collaboration conflict management style by Board of Management members influence students discipline in public secondary school in Machakos sub- county, Kenya?
- iv. How does the use of avoidance conflict management style by Board of Management members influence students' discipline in public secondary in Machakos sub-county, Kenya?

- v. How does the use of accommodating conflict management style by Board of Management members influence students discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub- county, Kenya?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study informs management members of importance of using conflict management styles in the institutions to maintain discipline. It also provides information to ministry of education and policy makers on the way they can up with guidelines for conflict management to be used in Kenyan Schools. The findings of the study may also guide the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) in planning and training school managers on the management of discipline in school. Furthermore, the Kenya Secondary school Heads Association (KSSHA) would be informed of the proper styles of conflict management in schools. Through the findings, the association will be able to advice school heads on the best management styles that they can adopt to avert conflicts and unrests in schools. The sub-county director of education can, through his/her office, reach out to school management boards and together identify, adopt and implement the appropriate management styles that can lead to stability in schools through the reduction of indiscipline cases amongst students.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The research was faced with the following limitations. The respondents took a long time to respond to questionnaires and others were initially not willing to cooperate, but through the researcher's social approach, they finally yielded and

cooperated. The delays in the filling of questionnaires resulted to time constraints in the analysis and interpretation of data but every effort was put to ensure that the final research document was resented in the appropriate time. The limitation in the scope of the study could have limited the generalizability of the study, though not to the extent of discrediting the study.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

This study was delimited to public secondary schools in Machakos sub-County in Machakos County. Although there were many other factors contributing to student indiscipline in public secondary schools, the study only focused on the influence of Board of Management conflict management styles; which were Avoidance, Collaboration, Competing, Compromising and Accommodation. This study was conducted in Machakos Sub-County where most affected schools were located. The study targeted board members, and students in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County. This was because the Board of Management members (BOM) was the body entrusted with the management of all the affairs of the school; including discipline and the students were the victims of the conflict management styles employed by the school.

1.9 Basic assumptions of the study

The study assumed that all the respondents were truthful and honest in their responses

1.10 Definition of significant terms

The following is the definition of significant terms as used in the study

Accommodating conflict management refers to allowing the other party to satisfy their concerns while neglecting your own in a conflict.

Avoidance conflict management refers to a method of dealing with conflict, which attempts to avoid directly confronting the issue at hand. This style involves not paying attention to the conflict and not taking any action to resolve it.

Conflict management refers to the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflicts while increasing the positive aspects.

Collaborating conflict management refers to a conflict management style where the parties to the conflict become partners or pair up with each other to achieve both of their goals

Compromising conflict management refers to lose-lose scenario where neither person really achieves what they want. This requires a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation

Competing conflict management refers to involves acting in a very assertive way to achieve own goals, without seeking to cooperate with the other party and it may be at the expense of the other party.

Discipline refers to the suppression of base desires, and is usually understood to be synonymous with restraint and self-control amongst secondary school students.

1.11 Organization of the study

The study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduced the study in the context and defined the problem under investigation. The objectives were stated and the significance of the study was outlined. Further, the limitations as well as the delimitations of the study were described. It also captured the basic assumptions and defined the key terms used. Chapter two reviewed the related studies and generated the relational aspects of the concepts. The conflict management concept was discussed and the theoretical framework given with the relevant theories explained. Empirical studies in the area were also reviewed. The relationship between the variables was conceptualized and the research gap established. The third chapter outlined the research methodology; which included the research design, the target population, the sample and sampling procedures, the data collection procedures as well as the instruments used to collect the data. The data analysis techniques were also explained, alongside the ethical considerations. Chapter four was data analysis, interpretation and discussions. The discussions were as per the research objectives and the demographic information of the respondents. Chapter five summarized the key findings, and outlined the recommendations for implementation and research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter involves literature review on the concept of conflict Management, conflict management styles and their use by school Board of Management to control students discipline, summary of literature review, theoretical framework and the conceptual framework.

2.2 Concept of conflict management and students' discipline

Dincyurek and Civelek (2008) noted that conflicts are normal segments of daily life. However, many conflicts may be considered to have negative effects as they cause disagreements, stress, social chaos and violence. The positive view of conflict is that it helps the individual to know themselves, enhances their awareness of others, encourages change, increases energy and they are motivated to be better problem solvers (Stevahn,2004). Mattingly (2009) indicates that while conflict is natural it does not have to be destructive and its root are often the result of cultural and societal injustice.

At the heart of every conflict can be misunderstandings, differing perceptions, wants and needs and therefore conflict can be an opportunity for growth and problem solving among all those who are concerned (Morrison, Shaw and Cota, 2011). Conflicts in schools have been characterized by physical and verbal aggression, incivility and property damage. Conflicts have an important role for

adolescents as they help classify personal identity values, increase social status, promote growth and generate interpersonal insights hence; it is an important part of growth and development among young adults and adolescents (Stevahn et al, 2012). Conflict can help in calling attention to search for solutions and improvement that can cause fundamental changes for the welfare of the organization or the parties involved. It has been noted that individuals can have preferences for particular conflict handling styles depending on the nature and the context of the disagreement (Callanan, Benzing & Perri, 2006)

Henkin, Costone, and Dee (2000) stated that it has become common that conflict between students, teachers and principals happen regularly. Therefore management of conflict is vital for the smooth functioning of an organization. Rahim (2002) defined conflict Management as the process of doing things to limit the negative aspects of conflict. The effectiveness of a conflict management may be limited according to the school situation (Ghaffar 2009). Conflict styles were first articulated by scholars and consultants associated with the human relations and human resources movements. Style refers to ones preferred response or natural inclination when faced with conflict (Rahim, 2002). Conflict management styles refer to the specific behavioral patterns that people employ when dealing with conflict (Moberg, 2001).

Improper conflict management styles can make the existing conflict worse and bring additional conflicts. There are five styles for conflict management as identified by Thomas and Kilman (2004) they include competing, Avoiding, Accommodation, Comprising and collaborating. They are exhibited to people in a conflict as they try to handle it. Each of us is capable of using all five conflict-handling modes. None of us can be characterized as having a single style of dealing with conflict. But certain people use some modes better than others and, therefore, tend to rely on those modes more heavily than others—whether because of temperament or practice. Your conflict behavior in the workplace is therefore a result of both your personal predispositions and the requirements of the situation in which you find yourself.

2.3 Conflict management styles and demographics

2.3.1 Gender

A study Brewer, N., Mitchell, P. and Weber, N (2012) found that women have a cooperative approach to conflict whereas men have a more competitive one. Studies conducted by Rahim, M.A. (2011) found that women prefer accommodation and compromise more unlike men who prefer domination and competition. The results of the study revealed that females tend to avoid conflicts significantly more than males and males prefer the dominant style more than females. Another study carried out by Çetin and Hacıfazlıoğlu (2006) found that female faculty members favored avoidance more significantly than their male

counterparts. Some research suggests that males and females occupying similar positions behave in much the same way in managing conflict. A research conducted by Chan et al. (2006) showed that males and females did not differ significantly in terms of using conflict management styles. Gender was non-significant in all models after controlling for the personality variables. Portello, J.Y. and Long, B.C. (2014) came to the same conclusion a few years later when they stated in their study that women managers do not differ from their male counterparts in preferred conflict-handling style.

In a study conducted by Gross, M.A. and Guerrero, L.K. (2010), it was found that conflict management styles differed according to biological sex and gender role. The feminine group used more avoiding styles compared to male and androgynous groups, whereas male groups tend to be more dominating. Similarly, Portello and Long (2014) have proved in their studies that gender roles play an important part in the choice of conflict resolution styles. For example, individuals with a masculine gender role are found to be more aggressive and, hence, would utilize a dominating or competing style. On the other hand, feminine individuals are found to be more cooperative and thus, favor the avoiding style. This line of reasoning is supported by the belief that masculine and feminine characteristics are learned, especially when individuals progress in an organization.

2.3.2 Age

Age was observed to be one of the main important variables that affect conflict management styles. As teachers and academics get older, they become more flexible and constructive in their dialogues with their peers. This was proved by the more frequent use of collaboration style by the older subjects. Results also revealed that academics' faculties affected their conflict management styles. Academics in the faculty of education were found to use accommodation and collaboration more than academics in the faculty of business administration. This finding is indirectly supported by another study conducted by Cornille et al. (2008). The study conducted to compare the conflict management styles of teachers and business managers with those of their peers. It found that there are significant differences in the conflict management styles used by teachers when compared with those of business managers.

2.3.3 Length of service

However, tenure in position was found to have influence on the choice of style of conflict management used. The more tenure a head nurse had in position, the more frequent she used the collaborating style for conflict management (Hendel et al., 2005). The explanation brought for this finding is that people with longer tenures of service had higher levels of experience on particular types of conflict that have taught them to realize and put into use various types of conflict management styles. Academics within the range of 11-20 years of experience were found to

choose a collaborating approach more, in contrast to academics within the range of one to five years and 21 and above years of experience. This could be related to the career path they are on. It could be thought that reaching a stable point in their careers might be a factor leading them to behave in a more compromising way

2.3.4 Level of education

Research conducted by Davis, P.S. & Harveston, P.D. (2011) to determine the impact of professional education on the choice of conflict management style by 130 academic department chairpersons of colleges in Korea found no significant relationship between deans holding administrative degrees below the PhD educational level nor deans with experience and the choice of conflict management style used.

2.3.5 Category of school

One of the significant in-school factors that influence students 'discipline is the schools social environment or organizational climate for that matter (Copland, M.A. 2003). This refers to the way members of the school community; especially teachers, students, and parents relate and interact with each other. If the school's organizational climate is favourable, the members are likely to increase their level of interaction and consequently enhance learners capacity to attain learning goals. The reverse is applicable. This is particularly so when the school is viewed as a social organization whose principal participants are teachers, students and parents.

This implies that the extent to which members of the school community will direct their efforts to the laid down goals depends on the kind of organizational climate created by a principal

Studies by Mandi C. (2001) observed cases of indiscipline in Kenya's secondary schools tend to vary markedly between schools with comparable locality and category. They attributed this to both the entry behaviour and social background of students they admit from primary schools. Kanjogu and Bosire (2012) did a study on the relationship between the type of school and student indiscipline in secondary schools. The study found that, level of students discipline increased from boarding schools towards day schools. This was attributed to the observation that, principals 'inclusiveness and teachers and parental support for discipline management were comparatively higher in boarding, and day and boarding schools compared to bay schools.

2. 4 Competing conflict management style and student discipline

Competing is assertive and uncooperative—an individual pursues his own concerns at the other person's expense. This is a power-oriented mode in which you use whatever power seems appropriate to win your own position—your ability to argue, your rank, or economic sanctions. Competing means "standing up for

your rights," defending a position which you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.

Competing Style of conflict management is the "Win-Lose" approach. It maximizes assertiveness and minimizes empathy (Ghaffar, 2008)). This means people using this style dominates in discussion and seeks to achieve their own goals. They stress winning a conflict at the expense of losing the relationship with the other person involved. They fear that loss of such control will result in solutions that fail to meet their needs. Competing style tends to result in responses that increase the level of threat.

Board of management should use this style when quick, decisive action is vital or in emergency situations (Henkin, Cistone & Dee, 2000). Also it can be used when discipline needs to be implemented. Board of management must be able to be assertive in their opinion when dealing with student's discipline. They should also develop an ability to argue or debate on the burning conflict at hand among the students involved in the indiscipline issue. Board of management can use their rank or position for the students to give out their opinions and also stand their ground on the matter at hand they can also use threat to the students involved in the indiscipline issue or criticizing the students involved in indiscipline cases verbally (Callanan et al, 2006). The disadvantage of over-using this conflict

management style is that it can increase conflict and losers may retaliate. Inflammatory statements may be used due to lack of interpersonal skills training.

Birundu (2013) did a study on teacher conflict resolution styles and their effects on students discipline in schools. He found that the teachers with a controlling (assertive) style had the highest number of referrals followed by collaborative, compromising and lastly, accommodating. The reasoning for this is that despite the fact that controlling teachers provided a safer classroom environment due to the restriction of students' autonomy; teachers with a controlling style tended to yield a higher number of altercations that ensued because of the restrictive environments and lack of flexibility.

2.5 Compromising conflict management style and students discipline

Compromising is moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. The objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. It falls intermediate between competing and accommodating. Compromising gives up more than competing but less than accommodating. Likewise, it addresses an issue more directly than avoiding, but does not explore it in as much depth as collaborating. In some situations, compromising might mean splitting the difference between the two positions, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground solution. Compromising conflict management style is a "Lose-Lose" approach where neither party really achieves what they want

(Intermediate on both assertiveness and Empathy dimensions). It's simply a strategy where either of the parties abandons their initial desires, interests and needs to seek a common ground that is agreeable to all those involved (Dincyurex and Civelex, 2008)

Board of management when using this style should be able to attend to the issue openly, frankly and neutrally by communicating with the other party (Flanagan and Runde 2008). Board of management should involve a give and take situation in which both parties will give up something after negotiation in order to reach at an agreement (Yuan, 2007). Board of Management should seek the middle ground of a problem –solving strategy and willing to get information from the students involved in indiscipline cases. Msila (2012) did a study on the relationship between conflict management and school leadership. This was a qualitative study that included eight school principals from four primary and four secondary schools in two historically black African areas (townships) in the Gauteng Province, South Africa. The participants were interviewed and their schools were observed as well. The study found out that few principals are prepared adequately for conflict management. They tend to misunderstand the role of conflict and maintain that it should be immediately avoided or halted. The study further found that majority of the school leadership rarely compromised their positions for conflict resolution. This created issues where a common ground is not found for conflict resolution and student discipline boost in the schools.

The benefit of this style is that it can resolve a conflict in a short time while the relationship is still maintained. People who use this style change their own opinion either because they found sufficient reasons to do so or simply to avoid continued confrontation (Dincyurek & Civelek, 2008). If this style is overused it may cause greedy and ask for several times to get achieve their desires.

2.6 Collaboration conflict management style and students discipline

Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative—the complete opposite of avoiding. Collaborating involves an attempt to work with others to find some solution that fully satisfies their concerns. It means digging into an issue to pinpoint the underlying needs and wants of the two individuals. Collaborating between two persons might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights or trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.

This is where you partner or pair up with the other party to achieve both of your goals. It's highly assertive and highly empathetic at the same time or it seeks win-win paradigm. It is a style that focuses on satisfying the needs of both parties involved. Board of Managements should actively listen to the grievances of students or listen to their burning issues use non-threatening confrontation to the situation, analyzing input and identifying concerns over a certain situation. The

benefit of this style is that it makes all parties happy with the final decision (Montaya-Weiss et al 2001). Unfortunately when board of management and students are satisfied with the final decision, it may use longer time and put in more effort than other styles. Therefore it's important for both parties to construct an integrative solution.

Heydenberk and Warren (2008) did a study on the metacognitive competence and conflict resolution. This study involved over 3,000 students in Australian junior high and high school. They found that relationship-based discipline had a positive effect on student responsibility and attitude towards schoolwork. They found that more responsible students were in classes where teachers involved them in the decision making. The study also found that students who received more relationship-based discipline such as discussions were more interested in their learning. Borrazzo (2010) did a triangulation study on the impact of teacher conflict styles on student discipline outcomes. The study was carried out on 60 eighth grade students enrolled in Water's Middle School Academy in Michigan. Triangulation of data was done to allow the quantitative component to outline general patterns and the qualitative phase to give clarity and depth to the process of teacher and student discipline. Accommodating, Collaborative, Controlling, and Compromising were among the styles used by the teachers for students discipline control. The study found that the conflict styles used by the teachers affected the

discipline outcomes of the students. The collaboration style was found to be the best conflict resolution style for improved student discipline outcomes.

2.7 Avoiding conflict management style and students' discipline

Avoiding is unassertive and uncooperative—the person neither pursues his own concerns nor those of the other individual. Thus he does not deal with 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. This is when the parties simply avoid the issue by not helping the other party reach their goals and not being assertively pursuing their own goals (Low in assertiveness and low in empathy).

Avoidance conflict management is a method of dealing with conflict, which attempts to avoid directly confronting the issue at hand. Methods of doing this can include changing the subject, putting off a discussion until later, or simply not bringing up the subject of contention. Conflict prevention can be used as a temporary measure to buy time or as permanent means of disposing of a matter. The latter may be indistinguishable from simple acquiescence to the other party, to the extent that the person avoiding the conflict subordinates their own wishes to the party with whom they have the conflict. However, conflict prevention can also take the form of withdrawing from the relationship. Thus, avoidance scenarios can be either win-lose, lose-lose or possibly even win-win, if terminating the

relationship is the best method of solving the problem. This works when the issue is trivial or when the party has no chance of winning. Board of management can use this style when they have been faced with a conflict or problem and have not yet gathered enough information about the conflict from the students and other stakeholders of the school. Avoidance style does provide the Board of Management with time to collect information necessary for the solution of the problem (Deutshe, 2005).

Huang (2009) did a comparative study on solving conflict in academic contexts. The study was done on U.S. and Taiwanese students. The US and Taiwanese samples were chosen as representative of two different cultures, individualistic and collectivistic, respectively. Specifically, 15 US college students and 15 Taiwanese college students were selected from a US college campus. The Taiwanese group included students who have spent less than one year in the United States. The instrument consisted of a written questionnaire with four conflict scenarios and an audio-recorded interview with six randomly selected participants from both groups. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, Discriminant Function Analysis and content analysis. The study found that the avoidance conflict management style does not resolve conflict. This style was found to hurt relationship of a team people usually let the conflict be lessened while time goes on. Avoiding the conflict just postpones it but does not resolve it.

Board of management must be aware that avoiding conflicts is closely associated with negative impact (Deutsche, 2005) Board of management when using this style should have the ability to withdraw any issue concerning conflict can also leave things unresolved by using evasive remarks to avoid sensitive topics or shifting the topic away from the conflicts, also say the issue isn't important enough spend time on. The benefit of this style is that avoidance persons tend to distance themselves from the conflict and avoid engaging with others and they often tend to end the conflict (Ghaffar, 2008).

2.8 Accommodating conflict management style and students' discipline

Accommodating is unassertive and cooperative—the complete opposite of competing. When accommodating, the individual neglects his 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 you would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view. Of the five conflict styles, accommodating or harmonizing, is viewed as the "peacekeeper" mode as it focuses more on preserving relationships than on achieving a personal goal or result. However in a dispute this creates a lose/win relationship where the accommodating party may make a choice to acquiesce to the needs of the other, sometimes out of kindness and sometimes to avoid conflict or stress. "Giving in" and letting the other person "take" is the result when this

choice is made. While this may be seen as a weak or non-productive position there are situations when this approach is preferable and will gain more for a person than by taking a strong position. It can be both a productive and unproductive strategy in the "give and take" process (Thomas-Kilmann and Kraybil, 2015)

Type Research using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (1987) shows that individuals who prefer to be accommodating or harmonizers when dealing with conflict typically are more feeling than thinking oriented. They are often described as being "nice" and find satisfaction in helping others to get their needs met. They tend to be sensitive to the feelings of others and try to be supportive, kind and nurturing. They will often put the needs of others before their own and portray a spirit of cooperation demonstrating the proverb "it is better to give than to receive". These traits were probably ingrained during childhood and may be reinforced by family, religious or other values. Individuals who have a tendency to be accommodating prefer the harmony, good will and reciprocity that is often associated with this behavior trait and feel that it serves them well most of the time. The appreciation and friendliness accommodators receive from others supports the old adage that "you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar". For this reason accommodators often feel that they get more than they give by taking this approach to life

Persons using this style yield their needs to those others trying to be diplomatic (it maximizes empathy and minimize assertiveness). It is used when the issue is not as important to one party as it to the other party. Board of management members should be able to give up their own concerns so that they accommodate the needs of the students. They should allow the needs of the students to overwhelm their own needs so that they can preserve the relationship which is very important. Misuse of this style is that may lead to loss of relationship. Secondly it takes a lot of time and energy to get information or solve the student conflict situation.

2.9 Summary of literature review

The empirical studies done on conflict management and students discipline are limited. Most of the studies were carried out outside Africa and were mostly based on the teacher's and head teachers other than the board of management. The literature review has very little research on conflict management in education. There are a few local studies done on the same. Karimi (2010) did a research on the factors influencing conflict resolution in secondary schools in Central division of Machakos District. She found that conflicts were caused by poor conflict management by head teachers. Birundu, (2013) did a study on participatory leadership styles and their effects on students discipline in Schools. He found that the teachers with a controlling style had the highest number of referrals followed by collaborative, compromising and lastly, accommodating. These studies have failed to investigate the effect of conflict management styles used by board of

management on the students discipline in public secondary schools. This creates a research gap that necessitates the need for this study.

2.10 Theoretical framework

The study was guided by dual concern theory which originated with Blake and Mouton's (1964), and which is found in a journal on organization behavior by Wiley and Sons (2001). The theory states that conflict management is a function of high or low concern for self (assertiveness) and high or low concern for others (empathy). The theory makes use of Thomas- Kilman Instruments of conflict management which are designed to measure a person's behavior in conflict situations. "Conflict situations" are those in which the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible. In such situations, we can describe an individual's behavior along two dimensions: (1) assertiveness, - the extent to which the person attempts to satisfy his own concerns, and (2) cooperativeness, -the extent to which the person attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns.

Interpreting Thomas- Killman Conflict Mode Inventory Scores

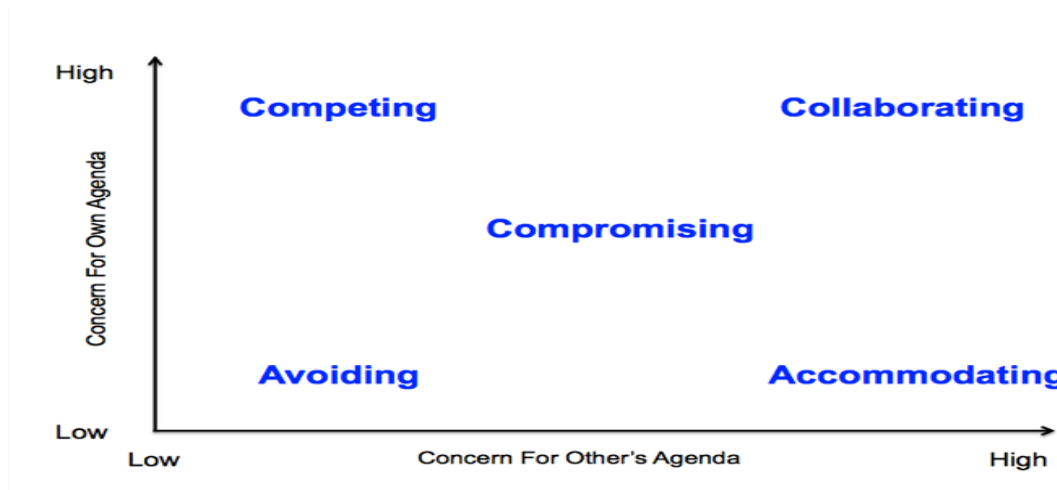
Usually, after getting the results of any test or assessment, the first question people ask is: "What are the right answers?" In the case of conflict-handling behavior, there are no universal right answers. All five modes are useful in some situations: each represents a set of useful social skills. Our conventional wisdom recognizes,

for example, that often “two heads are better than one” (Collaborating). But it also says, ““Kill your enemies with kindness” (Accommodating), “Split the difference” (Compromising), “Leave well enough alone” (Avoiding), and “Might makes right” (Competing). The effectiveness of a given conflict-handling mode depends upon the requirements of the specific conflict situation and the skill with which the mode is used.

Each of us is capable of using all five conflict-handling modes: none of us can be characterized as having a single, rigid style of dealing with conflict. However, any given individual uses some modes better than others and therefore, tends to rely upon those modes more heavily than others, whether because of temperament or practice. The conflict behaviors which individuals use are therefore the result of both their personal predispositions and the requirements of the situations in which they find themselves. The Thomas-Killman Conflict Mode Instrument is designed to assess this mix of conflict-handling modes.

Figure 2.1: Theoretical framework

As figure one shows, low and very high conflict interfere with task relevant



activities especially in a school situation whereas too little conflict may promote in-competence and loss of creativity. The theory provided solid bases for the development of instruments to assess conflict management styles in a school. Hence the Board of Management members were guided by this theory to control and manage the intensity of conflicts on students' discipline.

2.11 Conceptual framework

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a concept is a word or phrase that symbolizes several interrelated ideas. Presented below is the study conceptual framework on the influence of Board of management conflict management styles on students discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub County. The figure below shows the conceptual framework for the study

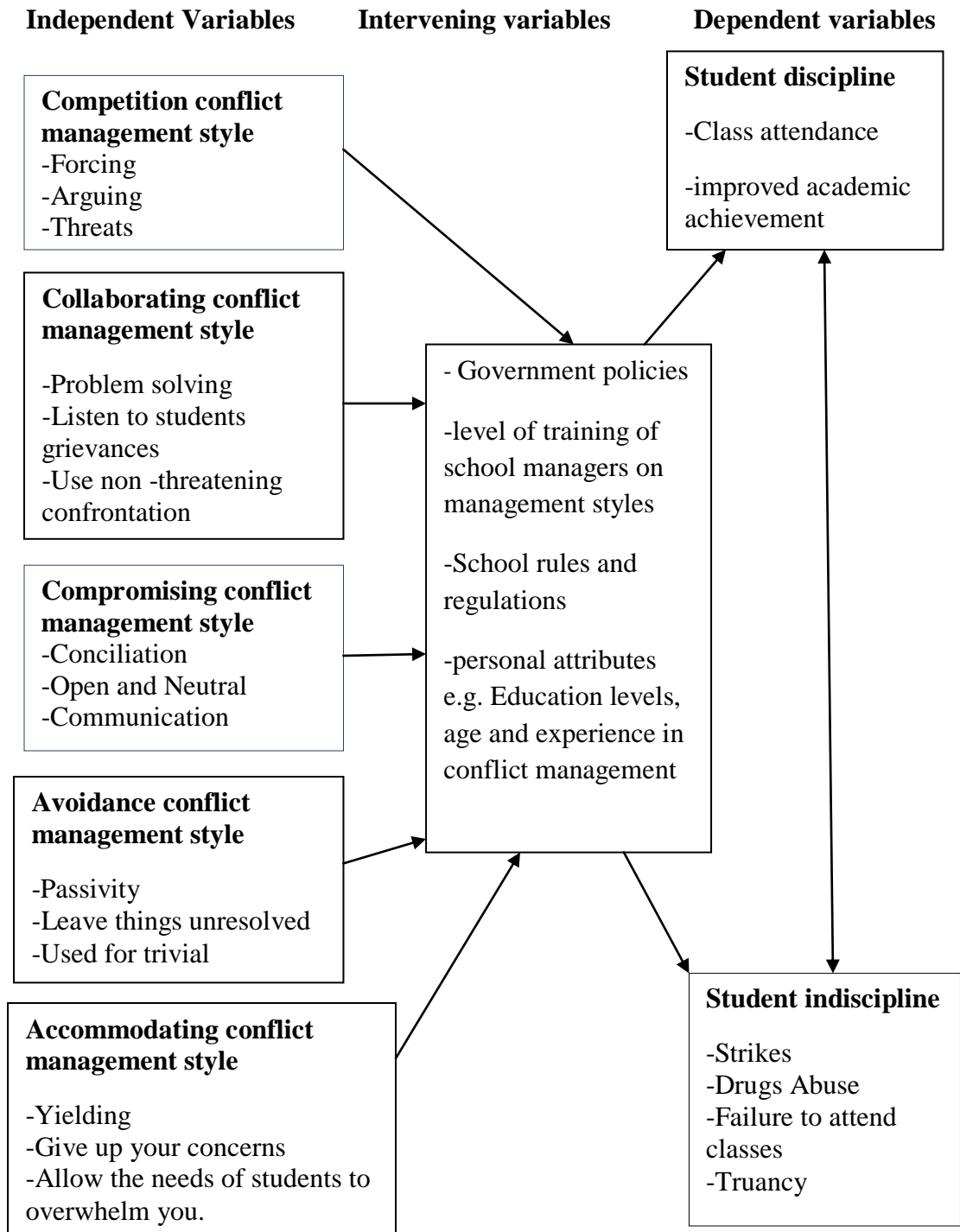


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework of the study

The conceptual framework proposed that discipline of students was influenced by the conflict management style adopted by the Board of Management members. All the conflict management styles (competing, compromising, collaborating, avoidance, and accommodating) could lead to the formulation of policies, and rules and regulations that can be implemented by the education stakeholders. Better policies, rules and regulations applied by the Board of Management members through conflict management styles can lead to good discipline of students e.g. punctuality in class attendance and improved academic achievement. On the other hand, poorly developed or implemented policies, rules and regulations applied by the Board of Management members through the conflict management styles could bring about indiscipline of students e.g. strikes drug abuse , poor class attendance, truancy , and absenteeism.

Poor level of training of school managers on conflict management styles can influence students discipline especially if some styles are applied to deal with the burning issues in schools. But better level of training of school managers on conflict management styles can improve students discipline if applied well by the Board of Management members. Personal attributes of Board of Management members can also affect student discipline especially the level of education, if not well educated the members will not be able to apply better conflict management styles and if they are well educated they can apply better conflict management styles to improve discipline in schools. The variables of primary concern in the conceptual frame work were the Board of Management members' conflict

management styles; as the independent variables and student discipline as the dependent variable. The intervening variables were the government policies on education, school rules and regulations, level of training of school managers on management styles, personal attributes of the board members e.g. Education levels, age and experience in conflict management. Depending on how the intermediate variables are applied and controlled, the influence on discipline could be positive or negative.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with a brief description of the research methods. It also includes; research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, instruments validity and reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

A research design is a work plan deliberately selected to guide the process of research to answer the research problem. This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The researcher was interested in gathering information on conflict management styles used by Board of Management members on students' discipline. This method was therefore appropriate because the researcher was able to come up with questionnaires that facilitated the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data (Orodho, 2003)

3.3 Target population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) target population is an entire group of individuals' events or objects having common observable characteristics. The study was carried out in 67 public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county. The study targeted the student presidents and the board members in the schools. The

management board of every school had 17 members. This gave a total target population of 1206; comprising 1139 board members and 67 student presidents.

3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample is a small group from the accessible target population. A sample size must be able to accurately represent population characteristics which are under investigation. Purposive sampling was used to pick the student presidents and the chairman of the Board of Management. Before sampling was done, the schools were first stratified into their respective categories i.e. National, County, Extra County, and sub-county. The categories were further classified into day, boarding, and mixed day and boarding schools. Table 3.0 below summarizes the category of the respondents and their corresponding sample sizes for the study.

Table 3.0: Sampling frame for the study

Population	Number of schools	Sample from each school	Total sample size
Board of Management	67	1	67
Student presidents	67	1	67

Table 3.0 above resents the total number of schools targeted by the study, the actual number of schools involved in the study, the sample of respondents from each school and the total number of respondents that took part in the study. The members of the sample were picked based on researcher's belief that they possess important and fast hand information of the issues under investigation. For this reason, the chairperson of the board and the student president in each school were purposively selected.

3.5 Research instruments

The study adopted Thomas -Kilman conflict mode instruments (T.K.I) because they provided detailed information on how effectively the five different conflict management styles could be applied and assessed. The instruments were in the form of questionnaires which assessed behaviour in conflict situations. They were based on a model of conflict modes which enable an analysis of individual styles in the various situations that they encounter. The items were in the form of an inventory where a participant carefully selects an appropriate response depending on the situation he/she has encountered or the decisions they have made under different circumstances.

The instruments Thomas- Kilman Instruments are scored in percentage, so that, high percentage represents high use of a given mode/style and vice versa. For the sake of this study, the instruments were modified to fit in the school situation by

aligning them to indiscipline and conflicts in school set-up. The items were improved to fit in the Likert-scale types so that scoring was on a five point scale of Strongly Agree-1, Agree-2, Not sure-3, Disagree-4, Strongly Disagree-5. This type of questionnaires was preferred because; they were effective data collection instrument that allowed respondents to give much of their opinions regarding the research problem. Secondary data was gathered from past published scholarly articles, books, newspapers and internet reports, explaining theoretical and empirical information from the respondents on conflict management styles and students discipline in public secondary schools.

3.6 Instruments validity

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define validity as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on research results. The researcher tested both face and content validity of the questionnaire. In order to assess the validity of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted on a sample reminiscent of the target population. The researcher then sought the expertise of the supervisor in comparing the pilot questionnaire responses. The supervisor assessed the items for their representativeness, ethical appropriateness and suitability based on the research objectives. After the pilot study, items/questions which were seen to be ambiguous were clarified and irrelevant were removed from the instruments.

3.7 Instrument reliability

Reliability is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. To ensure internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The value of the alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1 and may be used to describe the reliability of factors extracted from dichotomous (that is, questions with two possible answers) and/or multi-point formatted questionnaires or scales (1 = poor, 4 = excellent). A higher value shows a more reliable generated scale. The Cronbach's alpha calculation gave a reliability coefficient of 0.795 for the questionnaires used. Cooper and Schindler (2008) indicated that any value of reliability coefficient above 0.7 was acceptable instrument for a given research instrument; a condition which this study successfully satisfied.

3.8 Data collection procedure

The data was gathered by use of questionnaires. The researcher first obtained a letter of introduction from the University of Nairobi and got a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), to undertake the research. The permit was presented to the Sub -County Director of Education, principals and Board of Management members of participating schools. The researcher then visited the selected schools to make appointments for administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher through a drop-wait-and-collect method. This involved administering

the questionnaire to the respondents and waiting as it is filled. The questionnaires were then picked immediately they were dully filled.

3.9 Data analysis technique

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were edited, coded, cleaned and entered into statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), which is statistical package for analysis; with the ability to handle statistical presentation with array of formulas for ease of interpretation. The descriptive statistics employed were frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. The demographic information was analyzed using frequencies and percentages and presented in form of tables pie charts and bar graphs. The data on the research objectives was analyzed descriptively using means and standard deviations and presented by use of tables. The analyzed data was then then presented in form of tables, charts and graphs for quick for easy interpretation.

Qualitative techniques used in the analysis of qualitative data obtained from the open ended questions in the questionnaire. The data was first coded by assigning numbers, then grouped into themes and merged according to their categories, patterns and trends. The data was then presented in form of arguments and statements. The Likert items which captured data on the objectives of the study (conflict management styles) were analyzed using descriptive statistics where

means and standard deviations were generated. Explanations in trends and variations were then based on the values obtained.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Written consent of the respondents was sought from the relevant authorities before carrying out the study. Each respondent was assigned an introduction letter for identifications purposes; after which their informed consent was sought. Data was tabulated based upon the letter identification rather than a characteristic which may have had the potential for identifying the respondent. A range of measures were also taken to ensure the rights and safeties of the participants were safeguarded. These included confidentiality of respondent identities, anonymity and faithfulness. Data collection was solely based on the voluntary participation of respondents. No coercion was done at any point in time to solicit responses from participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with data analysis, presentations of findings, interpretations and discussions according to the, research questions, objectives, reviewed literature and the trends in the background information. The presentations and discussions have logically been organized into; questionnaire return rate, demographic information of respondents, and the findings of each research objective. The discussions have been related to the literature reviewed to ensure that the study has articulated itself to the key research issues and has addressed the knowledge gaps identified.

4.2 Questionnaire return rate

Questionnaire return rate is the proportion of the questionnaires that were returned after they were administered to the respondents. Out of the 134 questionnaires administered to the respondents in this study, 134 were returned; representing a questionnaire return rate of 100 percent. Any questionnaire return rate above 90 percent is considered representative enough for a study (Mugenda and Mugenda , 2003)

Table 4.1 below shows a summary of the actual questionnaires administered, those returned, and their percentage return rate.

Table 4.1: A summary of the actual questionnaires administered, those returned, and their percentage return rate

Sample	Sample size	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires returned	Questionnaire return rate
BOM members	67	67	67	100%
Student presidents	67	67	67	100%

As presented by table 4.1, all the questionnaires administered to the respondents were successfully returned for analysis. This was possible because the researcher administered the questionnaires through a drop-wait-and-collect method; whereby, the questionnaires were administered to the respondents, allowed some time to fill them, and picked immediately after they were dully filled.

4.3 Demographic information of respondents

This section deals with the demographic information of the respondents such as gender, age, level of education and length of service

4.3.1 Gender of Board of Management members

The study sought the gender of the Board of Management members with the aim of establishing whether there was a preference of a certain management style by a particular gender of Board of Management members. To do so, a cross-tabulation was done between gender and the management style used. Table 4.2 summarizes the results obtained.

Table 4.2: Cross tabulation between gender of Board of Management and conflict management styles used in resolving student indiscipline

		Conflict management styles used in resolving student indiscipline			Total
		Competing	Collaboration	Accommodating	
Gender	Male	2	28	0	30
	Female	0	30	7	37
Total		2	58	7	67

Table 4.2 shows that some male Board of Management members prefer the use of competing conflict management styles in resolving conflicts, as opposed to females who believe in accommodation. Both genders however seem to converge at the use of collaboration as their most preferred style. This finding concurs with that of a study by Brewer, N., Mitchell, P. and Weber, N (2012) who found that women had a cooperative approach to conflicts whereas men had a more

competitive one. The study observed that women prefer accommodation and compromise more unlike men who prefer domination and competition. Another study carried out by Çetin and Hacifazlıoğlu (2006) found that females favored avoidance more significantly than their male counterparts. The results of the study revealed that females tend to avoid conflicts significantly more than males and males prefer the dominant style more than females.

Green et al. (2002), asserts that, conflict management styles differed according to biological sex and gender role. He argues that, gender roles play an important part in the choice of conflict resolution styles. For example, individuals with a masculine gender role are found to be more aggressive and, hence, would utilize a dominating or competing style. On the other hand, feminine individuals are found to be more cooperative and thus, favor the avoiding style. However, a close look into the data shows that, there is no much difference between the choice of a conflict management style; as majority, and almost an equal number of either gender use the collaboration style. Some research suggests that males and females occupying similar positions behave in much the same way in managing conflict. The research conducted by Chan et al. (2006) showed that males and females did not differ significantly in terms of using conflict management styles; especially when other personality variables are controlled.

4.3.2 Age of respondents

The study also sought to establish the age of the board members with the aim of establishing whether age had any influence on the type of conflict management styles used by school Boards of Management. The age of the students were sought to establish whether the students involved in the study were within the ages of students expected at their level of education. This was necessary because any erroneous age for students could negatively undermine the validity of the responses obtained. Table 4.3 below distributes respondents by their age brackets.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Board of Management and student presidents by age

Student presidents			BOM members		
Age	Freq.	Percentage	Age	Freq.	Percentage
Below 14 years.	3	4.5	Below 25yrs.	7	10.4
15-18years	47	70.1	25-34 years	6	9
19-22 years.	15	22.4	35-44 years	23	34.3
Above 22 years.	2	3	45-54 years	31	46.3
Total	67	100		67	100

The table 4.3 indicates that 70.1 percent of presidents in schools are within the ages of 15-18 years. 4.5 percent and 25.4 percent are below and above this bracket respectively. The analysis in the table also indicates that 46.3 percent of the board members are between 45-54 years of age; 34.3 percent are in the age bracket of

35-44 years, and only 19.4 percent are below 35 years. The age bracket of 15-18 of the students signifies adolescent period which is characterized by identity crisis and role confusion which may cause conflicts between students and fellow students, or between students and the school administration. Therefore, students require constant guidance and counseling, and the application of the appropriate conflict management style to avoid or minimize conflicts. The Kenyan education system is organized in such a way that, learners at the ages of 15-18 years are in secondary level of education. This means that, majority of the students in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county meet the requirement. However, due to other factors such as lack of school fees, some students defy this age requirement. This however warrants some research to establish whether or not there is a relationship between the age of learners and the conflict management to be used. In order to obtain a clear comparison between the age of Board of Management members and the preferred conflict management style used, a cross tabulation was done as follows

Table 4.4: A Cross-tabulation between the age of Board of Management members and the conflict management styles used in resolving student indiscipline

		Conflict management styles used in resolving student indiscipline			Total
		Competing	Collaboration	Accommodating	
Age	Below 25 yrs.	0	7	0	7
	25-34 years	0	4	2	6
	35-44 years	2	21	0	23
	45-54 years	0	26	5	31
Total		2	58	7	67

The table 4.4 shows that, collaboration is the most preferred conflict style across all the ages. However, its application seems to be improving with age, as affirmed by 21 and 26 members within the ages of 35-44 years and 45-54 years who. This is however with the exception of two members within the ages of 35 and 44 years who opt for competing style. These findings are indirectly supported by a study conducted by Cornille et al. (2008) which observed that, as teachers and academics get older, they become more flexible and constructive in their dialogues with their peers. This was proved by the more frequent use of collaboration style by the older subjects, as compared to relatively younger members. This is because, with age come experience. Therefore, the experience with different conflict styles across the

ages have equipped them with enough experience of the best style for different of conflict situations.

4.3.3 Highest academic qualification of Board of Management members

The academic qualifications of the Board of Management were sought in an attempt to establish whether there was any influence of education level on the members on the conflict management style used. It was also aimed at identifying whether the board members had attained the minimum academic qualification of Kenya Certificate of Secondary education (KCSE) stipulated by the ministry of education as the prerequisite qualification for membership. Figure 4.1 below summarizes the highest qualifications of the board members

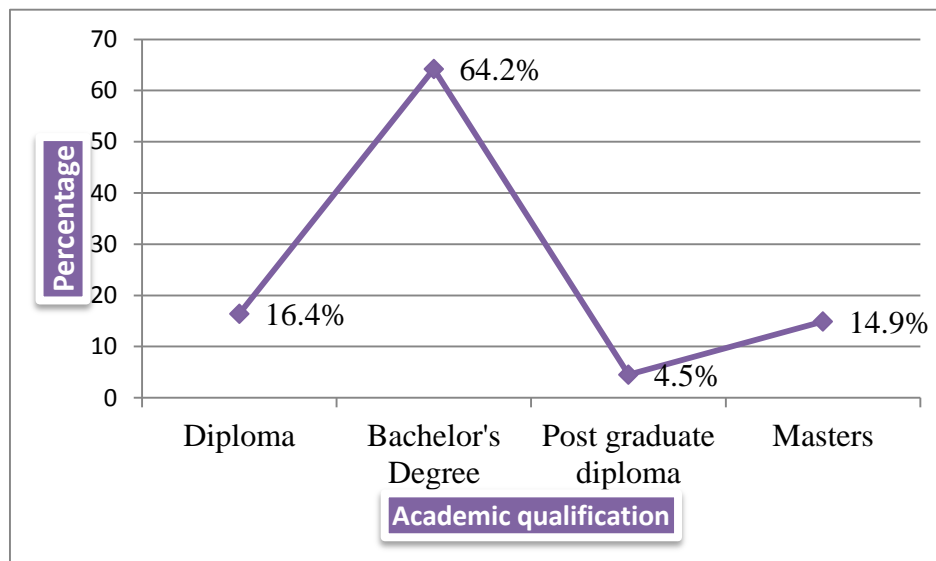


Fig 4.1: Distribution of Board of Management members by their academic qualifications

Figure 4.1 shows that more than half of the Board of Management members (64.2%) had Bachelor's degrees; 4.5 percent and 14.9 percent had post-graduate diplomas, and master's degrees respectively. Only 16.4 percent had ordinary diplomas. This means that, all the members of school boards in Machakos sub-county had attained the minimum qualification for membership into school Boards of Management. In order to establish the influence of education level on conflict management style used by the board members, a cross-tabulation was done and results resented in table 4.5 below

Table 4.5 Cross tabulation between academic qualifications of the Board of Management members and conflict management styles used

Highest academic qualification	Conflict management styles used			Total
	Competing	Collaboration	Accommodating	
Diploma	0	8	3	11
Bachelor's Degree	0	41	2	43
Post graduate diploma	0	3	0	3
Masters	2	6	2	10
Total	2	58	7	67

Table 4.5 shows that, majority of the board members across all academic levels used collaboration style, followed by accommodation. However some members with master's degrees practiced competition to resolve conflicts. Generally, the results show a similar trend in behavior; therefore, it is difficult to clearly infer causality between academic qualifications of board members and preference of certain conflict management styles.

Davis, P.S. & Harveston, P.D. (2011) did a study to determine the impact of professional education on the choice of conflict management style by 130 academic department chairpersons of colleges in Korea. The study found no significant relationships between chairperson's educational level and the choice of conflict management style used. However, this only holds if the members have the same educational experience and training. This is because; some studies have revealed that, academics' faculties affected conflict management styles chosen by managers. Such kind of study is one by Cornille et al. (2008), which found that, academics in the faculty of education were found to use accommodation and collaboration more than academics in the faculty of business administration; although the underlying reason(s) for this is subject for further study.

4.3.4 Length of service of Board of Management members

The study sought the length of service of a Board of Management member in the same school. This was aimed at establishing whether the tenure of service of a

board member could have any influence on the conflict management. Figure 4.2 below summarizes the results obtained.

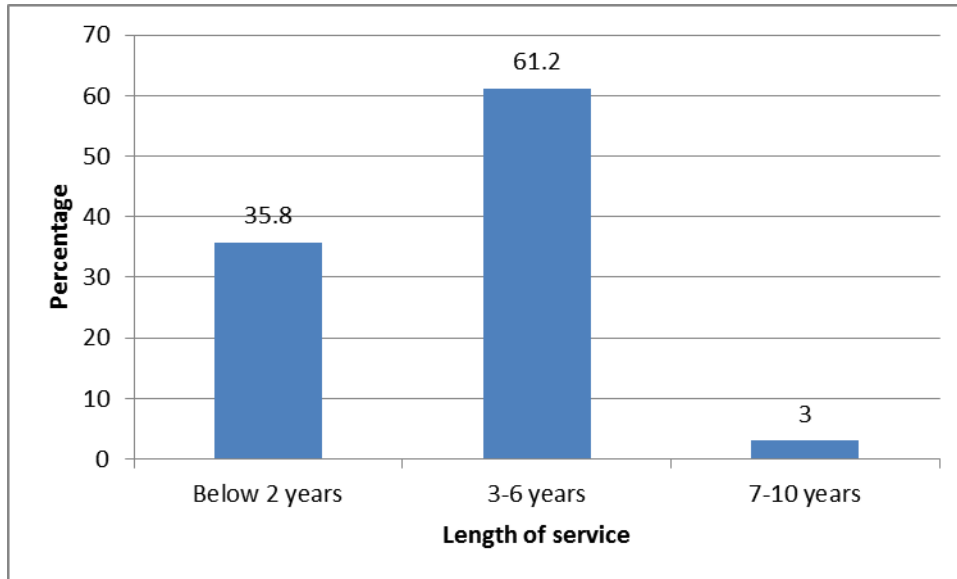


Figure 4.2: Length of service of Board of Management member in the same school

The figure 4.2 shows that 61.2 percent of the Board of Management members had served for a period between 3-6 years. 35.8 percent of them had tenures below two years and only two; representing 3 percent, had served for a period between 7-10 years. This means that, majority of the members had relatively short tenures in school Boards of Management. This could be attributed to the requirement by the ministry of education that a new Board of Management in all public schools be elected after every three years; a condition which limits the tenure of some board members when they fail to secure re-election.

A study by Hendel et al., (2005) showed that, the tenure of a manager in the same position influences his/her choice of conflict management style. The longer the tenure, the more frequent he/she uses collaborating style for conflict management. To ascertain the validity of this assertion, a cross tabulation was done between the length of service and the conflict management style used was done and the results summarized as follows.

Table 4.6: cross- tabulation between the length of service as Board of Management members and the conflict management styles used in resolving student indiscipline

		Conflict management styles used			Total
		Competing	Collaboratio n	Accommodating	
Length of service as board member	Below 2 years	0	19	5	24
	3-6 years	2	37	2	41
	7-10 years	0	2	0	2
Total		2	58	7	67

From table 4.6, collaboration is a common style across all tenures. However, it appears more pronounced among members who have served for a period between 3 and 6 years. The explanation for this finding could be that, members with longer tenures of service had higher levels of experience on particular types of conflicts

that have taught them to realize and put into use various types of conflict management styles. These findings concur with those of a study by Hendel et al., (2005) which found that, academics within the range of 11-20 years of experience were found to choose a collaboration approach more, in contrast to academics within the range of one to five years.

4.4 Category of school, in relation to student indiscipline

The study sought the categories of the schools with the aim of establishing the influence of the school category on student indiscipline. Fig 4.3 below presents the results obtained.

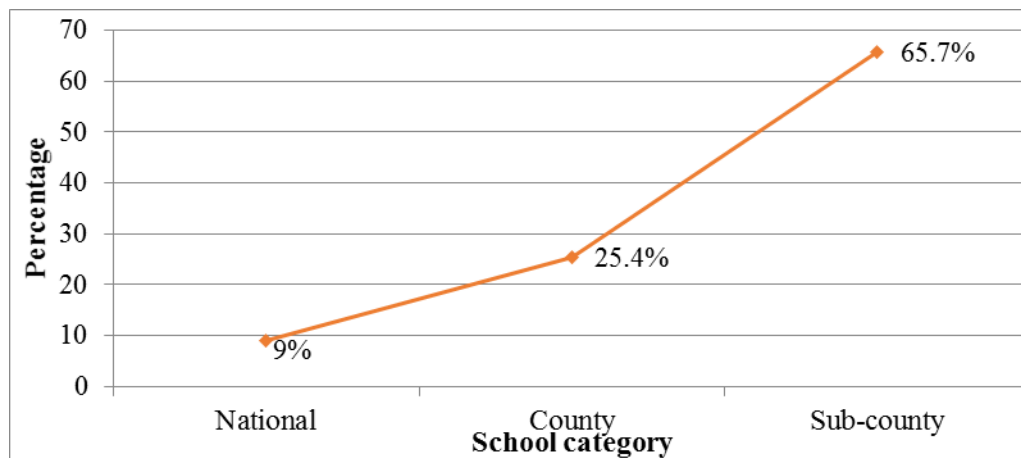


Fig 4.3: Classification of schools by category

From fig 4.3, 65.7 percent of public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county are sub-county schools; 25.4 percent are county schools and 9 percent are national schools. This means that, large populations of students in the sub-county are

enrolled in sub-county schools. The schools were further classified into day and boarding. The results obtained are summarized in fig 4.4 below

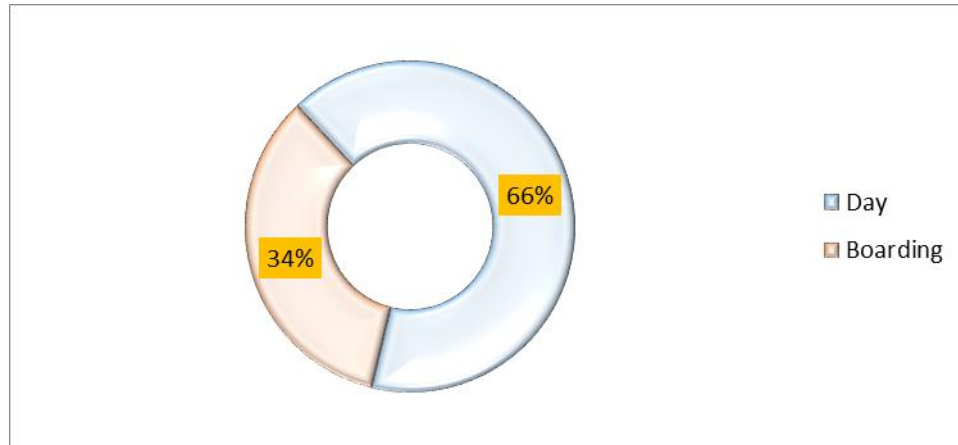


Fig 4.4: Classification of schools into day and boarding

The chart presents day schools at 66 percent and boarding at 34 percent. Studies by Mandi, (2001) observed cases of indiscipline in Kenya's secondary schools tend to vary markedly between schools with comparable locality and category. They attributed this to both the entry behaviour and social background of students they admit from primary schools. In order to establish how the category of school influenced student indiscipline, a cross-tabulation was done between the two and the results are as presented by table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Cross-tabulation between indiscipline and the category of school

cases of indiscipline are experienced	Type of school		Total
	Day	Boarding	
Strikes	0	12	12
Drug Abuse	17	2	19
Failure to attend class	24	3	27
Truancy	3	6	9
Total	44	23	67

Table 4.7 shows that, day schools led in drug abuse and failure to attend classes, while boarding schools topped in acts of truancy and strikes. The drug abuse by day scholars could be attributed to the ease of accessibility of these substances by students due to their daily interaction with the outsiders. The failure to attend classes could partially be attributed to the time they spent away from school due to suspensions or doing punishments outside the classroom. For the case of boarding schools, the high cases of truancy and strikes could largely be attributed to the manner/style in which of handling the indiscipline within the school. It could also mean that, the boarding factor have some depressing effects on the students, and therefore, conflicts need to handled cautiously, through the use of a conflict management style that best suits the situation.

Generally, cases of indiscipline are rampant among the day schools than boarding schools. This finding is confirmed by the findings of a study by Copland, M.A. 2003 on the relationship between the type of school and student indiscipline in secondary schools. The study found that, level of students discipline increased from boarding schools towards day schools. This was attributed to the observation that, principals 'inclusiveness and teachers and parental support for discipline management were comparatively higher in boarding, and day and boarding schools compared to bay schools.

4.5 Occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools

The study also established the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools. This is because, the frequency of occurrence is a measure of the level of success/failure of the conflict styles used to manage indiscipline. The respondents were to respond on a scale of; Very often-3, Often-2, and Rarely-1. Table 4.8 below presents a summary of the responses given.

Table 4.8: Occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools

Indiscipline case	N	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mean	Std. Dev.
Strikes	64	1.00	3.00	2.2031	.85782
Drug abuse	61	1.00	3.00	2.4590	.62112
Failure to attend class	47	2.00	3.00	2.4255	.49977
Truancy	41	1.00	3.00	2.5854	.80547
Valid N (list-wise)	41				

The mean of above 2 for all responses shows that, schools experienced indiscipline cases quite often. This means that, school management should find the best ways of addressing discipline issues in public secondary school so as to minimize the undesirable outcomes. A cross tabulation between the conflict management style used by Board of Management and the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline in schools gave the following results.

Table 4.9: Cross tabulation between conflict management styles used and the extent of indiscipline in public secondary schools

Conflict style	Extent of indiscipline			Total
	Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	
Competing	0	2	0	2
Collaboration	10	38	4	52
Accommodating	0	2	5	7
Avoidance	3	3	0	6
Total	13	45	9	67

Table 4.9 above shows that, indiscipline cases are mostly pronounced in schools where avoidance and collaboration conflict management styles are used. This could be because in avoidance, the problems are not solved at all hence they breed with time. In collaboration, none of the parties is ready to let go of its ambitions. This means that, conflict arises when one of the parties feels shortchanged by the other. Generally, conflicts moderately occur for all the styles; except for compromise which is not practiced in schools. This implies that, compromise

could be a game changer in as far as indiscipline and conflict management is concerned. These findings are consistent with an observation by Janeja, (2011) that, assertiveness attracts more conflicts, followed by collaboration, avoidance, compromise, and accommodation in that order.

4.6 Discipline ratings of public secondary schools

The respondents were asked to rate the levels of discipline in their schools and the results were summarized as in fig 4.5 below

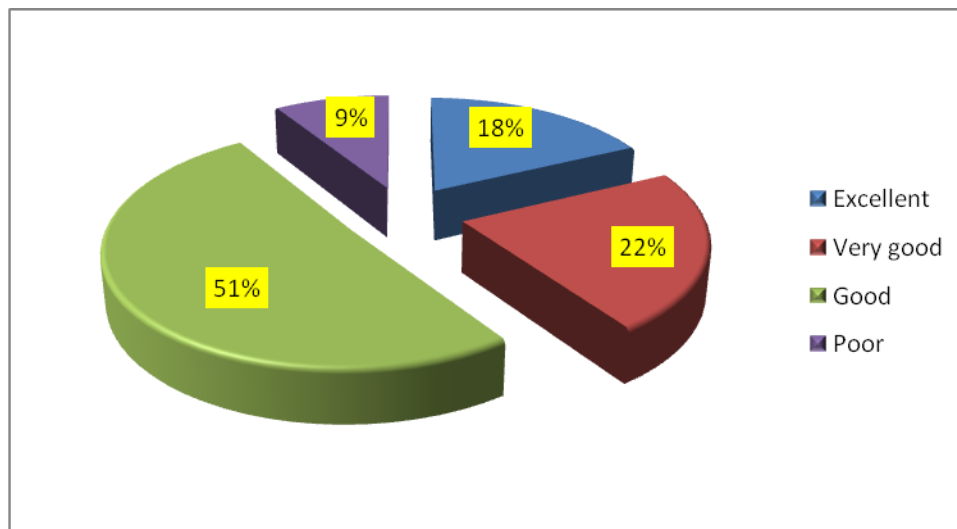


Fig 4.5: Discipline ratings of public secondary schools

The ratings in figure 4.5 above show that discipline ratings of public secondary schools in Machakos County are slightly above average. This is however expected because of the earlier statistics that indicate high frequency of indiscipline cases in schools; which means that, a lot needs to be done by the school management to improve the discipline ratings in their school. This could involve the use of

appropriate discipline and conflict management mechanisms. It is also a reflection of the level of success of the conflict management styles employed by the board members in managing student indiscipline in schools.

4.7 Conflicts in public secondary schools

4.7.1: Prevalence of conflicts in schools

Through an item in the questionnaire, the researcher sought to assess the prevalence of conflicts in schools. This was necessary because the level of prevalence is an indication of the effectiveness of the conflict style used by school management. Fig 4.6 shows a summarizes the results obtained

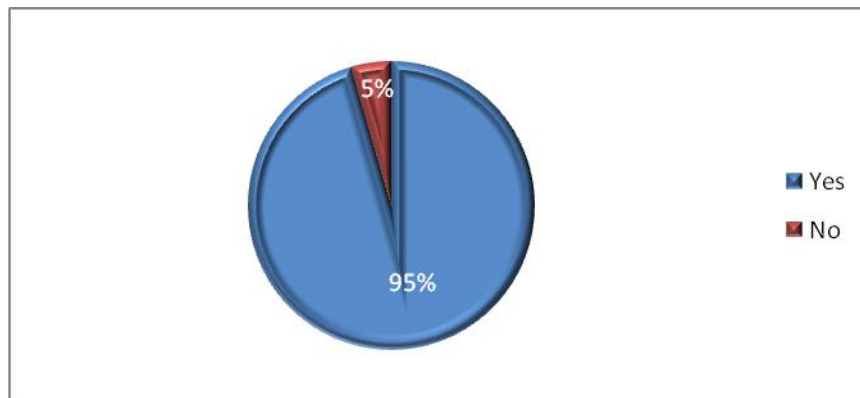


Fig 4.6: Prevalence of conflicts in schools

The figure 4.6 shows high rates of prevalence of conflicts at 95 percent. This could be attributed to the diversity of the members of school community in terms of age, education levels, family backgrounds, genetic habits, levels of training on conflict management, etc. This means that, each person will always have different

viewpoints to issues, and it is not possible to satisfy all their demands at the same time through the application of a single conflict style.

Henkin, Costone, and Dee (2000) stated that it has become common that conflict between students, teachers and principals happen regularly. Sanusi (2003) noted that every developing organization will experience a range of conflict at every level for it is an inevitable part of dynamic growth, whether in making resource, choices or unbalancing the interest of different groups. Conflict continues to be a worrying reasons in secondary schools as they appear to be centers of tension and perhaps a manifestation of the problems in the community. According to Helloriegel and Slocum (2009), conflict arises whenever the perceived interests of an individual in such a way that strong emotions are aroused and compromise is not considered an option Conflict is also part of schools functioning. This implies that, no educator can permanently escape conflict in school environment. Therefore proper management of conflict is vital for the smooth functioning of an organization.

4.7.2: Causes of conflicts in public secondary schools

Having established the prevalence and the common types of conflicts in schools, the study was also interested on the major causes of the conflicts. The respondents were therefore presented with some statements regarding potential sources of conflicts, and the frequency in which they caused conflicts. They were requested

to rate them on a scale of ‘Often-1, ‘Sometimes-2, and ‘Rarely-3’. Table 4.10 below summarizes the responses obtained.

Table 4.10: Causes of conflicts in public secondary schools

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Expectation to be competitive	62	1.00	3.00	1.7419	.90419
Intolerance between adults and students	58	1.00	3.00	2.0517	.88699
Intolerance between students	53	1.00	3.00	1.9623	.61900
Poor communication	47	1.00	3.00	2.0638	.60449
Anger	42	1.00	3.00	2.3810	.62283
Rumours	42	1.00	3.00	2.5000	.59469
Frustration	37	1.00	3.00	2.6216	.68115
Valid N (list wise)	37				

The table 4.10 shows that, intolerance between students and the expectation to be competitive, are the often causes conflicts in schools. This is as evidenced by their means of 1.9623 and 1.7419 respectively. The interpretation here is that, majority of the respondents responded in favour of ‘often’. Intolerance between adults and students, anger and poor communication were also identified as major causes of conflict; though not always. Rumours (mean=2.50) and frustrations (mean=2.62) were the least cause of conflict.

4.7.3 Management of conflicts by students in public secondary schools

In an attempt to establish how students manage conflicts between themselves and their peers, the student presidents were asked to state the specific strategies they used to handle conflicts. Table 4.11 below summarizes the responses given.

Table 4.11: Methods used by students to manage conflicts between themselves and their peers

Statement	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Tell another person how i feel	12	9.2%	17.9%
Respect authority	36	27.5%	53.7%
Control anger	29	22.1%	43.3%
Ignore someone who is bothering me	7	5.3%	10.4%
solve problems with other students	47	35.9%	70.1%
Total	131	100.0%	195.5%

From table 4.11, most student take desirable actions to control conflicts between themselves and fellow students. These include solving problems with other students (35.9 %), Respect authority, (27.5%), Controlling of anger (22.1%), sharing with others (9.2%), and ignoring bothersome people (5.3%). This means

that the cases of indiscipline in schools are largely due to conflicts between the school management and the students due to poor conflict resolution mechanism used; and this confirms an observation by Kinyanjui, (2009) that, the major feature school strikes was that the school management was the primary targets of student's attacks and confrontations.

4.7.4 Actions taken by Board of Management to handle student indiscipline

The Board of Management members were also asked to state the specific actions they undertook in handling student indiscipline. This was to establish whether the action taken by the board of school management had any influence on the prevalence of indiscipline cases in schools. Table 4.12 summarizes the responses

Table 4.12: Actions taken by Board of Management members to handle student indiscipline

Action	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Timeout	12	8.4%	18.2%
Detention	4	2.8%	6.1%
Conference with an adult	13	9.1%	19.7%
Suspension	57	39.9%	86.4%
Contacting parents	33	23.1%	50.0%
Expulsion	24	16.8%	36.4%
Total	143	100.0%	216.7%

From the table 4.12, more than half of the indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county are handled through suspensions (39.9%) and expulsions (16.8%). Timeout, conference with adults, and contacting of parents are minimally used. Suspensions and expulsions are assertive in nature, and their persistent use could create some resistance and retaliation; hence increased indiscipline cases. Moberg (2011) observes that improper conflict handling styles can make the existing conflict worse and bring additional conflicts. Deventer and Kruger (2005) lamented that leaders in organizations are expected to create use conflict management systems that members perceive as fair, caring and open.

4.7.5: Suggested actions of handling indiscipline in public secondary schools

In light of the above discussions, the student leaders were asked to state the actions that should be adopted by the school management in handling student indiscipline. Their responses were then summarized in a table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Suggested actions of handling indiscipline in public secondary schools

Suggestion	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Establishment of G & C centre in each school	57	54.3%	85.1%
Non-admission of students with indiscipline records	18	17.1%	26.9%
Conducting regular parent-teacher meetings	30	28.6%	44.8%
Total	105	100.0%	156.7%

From table 4.13 it is clear that the students want less abrasive ways of handling student indiscipline. They advocate for the establishment of guidance and counseling centres in each school (54.3%), conducting regular parent-teacher meetings (28.6%), and non-admission of students with indiscipline records (17.1%). These actions are preventive, accommodative and less abrasive.

4.8 Styles used by board of management members to solve Conflicts and Indiscipline in public secondary schools

4.8.1 Competing conflict management style and student indiscipline

The Board of Management members were asked to respond to some statements regarding the use of competition as a conflict management style. The statements were in a scale of; 1-strongly agree, 2-Agree 3-Not sure, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree. The results are as in table 4.14 below

Table 4.14: Influence of competing conflict management style on student indiscipline

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am usually firm in pursuing my goals in indiscipline cases in my school	65	1.00	5.00	1.8615	.91646
I try to win my position in indiscipline cases in my school	65	1.00	5.00	2.6000	1.19635
I make effort to get my way in the student indiscipline cases brought before me	65	1.00	5.00	2.6923	1.27381
I press to get my points made in student indiscipline cases	65	1.00	4.00	2.1692	.89389
I try to show the parties involved see the logic behind my position in student indiscipline cases	67	1.00	4.00	1.9104	.90002
Valid N (list-wise)	65				

From table 4.14 the mean of the responses, which revolve around 1 and 2, it is clear that the respondents responded in favour of the statements. The statements express high level of competition where the member tries to have his way in any conflict. As expressed by the literature, competing style of conflict management is the “Win-Lose” approach. It maximizes assertiveness and minimizes empathy (Ghaffar, 2008)). This means people using this style dominate discussion and seek to achieve their own goals. They stress winning a conflict at the expense of losing

the relationship with the other person involved. Henkin, Cistone and Dee, (2000) asserts that, board of management should only use this style when quick, decisive action is vital or in emergency situations. The disadvantage of over-using this conflict management style is that it can increase conflict and losers may retaliate. A study by Birundu (2013) on teacher conflict resolution styles and their effects on students discipline in schools showed that teachers with a controlling style had the highest number of referrals and tended to yield to higher number of altercations ensuing from the restrictive environments and lack of flexibility.

A cross tabulation between competing conflict management style and cases of student indiscipline in schools was done and the results presented as in table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Cross tabulation between the use of competing conflict management style and the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools

		Extent of Conflict			Total
		Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	
I am usually firm in pursuing my goals in indiscipline cases in my school	Strongly Agree	5	14	4	23
	Agree	2	30	2	34
	Not sure	3	2	0	5
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	3	3
Total		10	46	9	65

From table 4.15 shows that, the extent of indiscipline cases in schools were relatively higher where the Board of Management members applied competing conflict management style in resolving student indiscipline. This means that, competing should not be frequently used in resolving student conflicts as it generates a lot of conflicts.

4.8.2 Compromising conflict management style and student indiscipline

Table 4.16 below summarizes the ratings of statements regarding the use of compromising as a conflict management style. The statements were in a scale of; 1-strongly agree, 2-Agree 3-Not sure, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree

Table 4.16: Influence of compromising conflict management style on student indiscipline

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
I prefer middle ground in student indiscipline cases	65	1.00	4.00	2.1231	.92715
I try to get a compromise solution to student indiscipline cases	65	1.00	5.00	3.2462	1.22514
I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses in student indiscipline cases	67	1.00	4.00	2.2090	1.05223
I let the teacher/principal have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine in student indiscipline cases	65	1.00	5.00	2.5692	1.17219
Valid N (list-wise)	65				

From table 4.16, majority of the respondents agreed, disagreed or were neutral with the statements. This is according to the means of the responses, ranging between 2 and 3. This means that compromising style of leadership is partially used by board of management members in solving conflicts in schools. The findings mirror those of a study by Msila V. (2012) on the relationship between conflict management and school leadership. The study found that majority of the school leadership rarely compromised their positions for conflict resolution; a situation which created issues where a common ground is not found for conflict resolution and student discipline boost in the schools. Yuan W. (2007) asserts that Board of management should involve a give and take situation in which both parties will give up something after negotiation in order to reach at an agreement. They should seek the middle ground of a problem –solving strategy and willing to get information from the students involved in indiscipline cases. The benefit of this style is that, it can resolve a conflict in a short time while the relationship between the conflicting parties is still maintained

A cross tabulation between compromising conflict management style and cases of student indiscipline in schools was done. Table 4.17 below, presents the

Table 4.17: Cross tabulation between the use of compromising conflict management style and the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools

		Extent of Conflict			Total
		Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	
I try to get a compromise solution to student indiscipline cases	Strongly Agree	0	3	0	3
	Agree	2	19	2	23
	Not sure	2	2	0	4
	Disagree	6	15	4	25
	Strongly Disagree	0	7	3	10
	Disagree				
Total		10	46	9	65

The results present a moderate extent of occurrence of indiscipline cases with the use of compromising conflict management style. This means that, compromising style is a fair style of conflict management as it does not yield many conflicts when used.

4.8.3 Collaboration conflict management style and student indiscipline

In order to assess the extent of use of collaboration in schools, the board management members were asked to rate of statements regarding the use of collaboration as a conflict management style. The statements were in a scale of; 1-strongly agree, 2-Agree 3-Not sure, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree. Table 4.18 gives a summary of the responses.

Table 4.18: Influence of collaboration conflict management style on student indiscipline

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
I consider the concerns of others and my concerns in indiscipline cases	67	1.00	4.00	1.7164	.95037
I consistently seek the help of other people in working out a solution to the indiscipline cases in my school	67	1.00	4.00	1.8507	.70181
I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open	67	1.00	4.00	1.8358	1.00901
I share my ideas with the teachers and management, and seek their views on indiscipline cases	67	1.00	2.00	1.5672	.49921
I have a direct discussion of the student in my school with the concerned parties	67	1.00	4.00	1.5970	.65273
Valid N (list-wise)	67				

The responses indicated that collaboration style of conflict management is highly rated (means ≥ 1 ; ≤ 2); implying that majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statements. This means that, collaboration is the commonly used style of solving conflicts in schools. A study by Heydenberk and Warren (2008) showed that more responsible students were in classes where teachers involved them in decision making. The study also found that students who received more relationship-based discipline such as discussions were more interested in their

learning. Borrazzo (2010) did a triangulation study on the impact of teacher conflict styles on student discipline outcomes and found that, collaboration was the best conflict resolution style for improved student discipline outcomes. Board of Managements should therefore actively listen to the grievances of students or listen to their burning issues; use non-threatening confrontation to the situation, analyzing input and identifying concerns over a certain situation.

A cross tabulation between competing conflict management style and cases of student indiscipline in schools, gave the following results;

Table 4.19: Cross tabulation between the use of collaboration conflict management style and the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline

		If yes, to what extent			Total
		Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	
I have a direct discussion of the student in my school with the concerned parties	Strongly Agree	0	25	6	31
	Agree	10	21	3	34
	Disagree	0	2	0	2
Total		10	48	9	67

The results in table 4.19 shows moderate extent of occurrence of indiscipline cases with the use of collaboration conflict management style. This suggests that collaboration is a fair style of conflict management as it is not associated with many conflicts.

4.8.4 Avoidance conflict management style and student indiscipline

The study also sought the opinions of Board of Management on statements regarding the use of avoidance as a conflict management style. The statements were in a scale of; 1-strongly agree, 2-Agree 3-Not sure, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree. Table 4.20 gives a summary of the responses obtained.

Table 4.20: Influence of avoidance conflict management style on student indiscipline

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
There are times when i let others take responsibility for solving the indiscipline issues	67	1.00	5.00	2.2537	1.09189
I try to do everything possible to avoid useless tensions	67	1.00	4.00	1.6567	.74979
I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself	67	1.00	5.00	3.0149	1.23696
I try to postpone the indiscipline issues until i have had some time to think over it	67	1.00	5.00	3.4030	1.14230
I feel that the differences are not always worth worrying about	67	1.00	5.00	3.2388	1.11586
I try to do what is necessary to avoid unnecessary tensions between the students and other people in my school	67	1.00	4.00	1.8507	.76384
I sometimes avoid taking positions which could create controversy in indiscipline cases	64	1.00	5.00	2.5156	1.27232
Valid N (list-wise)	64				

From the responses in table 4.20, Board of Management members try to do everything possible to avoid taking positions which could create unnecessary tensions between the students and other people in their schools school. This is according to the means of ≤ 3.0 ; which means that, the respondents were in agreement or were neutral about the statements. The findings also show that, some of the members postpone indiscipline issues until they get enough time to think over it. In so doing, they let others take responsibility for solving the indiscipline issues.

A comparative study done by Huang (2009) on U.S. and Taiwanese students, on solving conflict in academic contexts found that, avoidance conflict management style does not resolve conflict. This style was found to hurt relationship of a team; as conflict just postponed but does not get resolved. Board of Management must therefore be aware that avoiding conflicts is closely associated with negative impact (Deutsche, 2005). Board of Management when using this style should have the ability to withdraw any issue concerning conflict by using evasive remarks to avoid sensitive topics or shifting the topic away from the conflicts.

To establish the influence of the use of avoidance on the extent of student indiscipline, a cross tabulation between the two was done, and the results obtained are as summarized in table 4.21 below.

Table 4.21: Cross tabulation between the use of avoidance conflict management style and the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools

		Extent of Conflict			Total
		Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	
I try to do what is necessary to avoid unnecessary tensions between the students and other people in my school	Strongly Agree	5	14	4	23
	Agree	3	25	5	33
	Not sure	2	7	0	9
	Disagree	0	2	0	2
Total		10	48	9	67

The results in table 4.21 indicate high extent of indiscipline cases in schools where avoidance conflict management style is used. This is because when school management avoids addressing student grievance, the students may think that they are being ignored, and that becomes a source of conflict. School boards should therefore try to address issues of concern promptly

4.8.5 Accommodation conflict management style and student indiscipline

On the use of accommodation style of resolving conflicts, the views of the Board of Management members were sought in line with some statements touching on accommodation. The rating of the items is similar to that of the others. Table 4.22 below summarizes the responses.

Table 4.22: Influence of accommodation conflict management style on student indiscipline

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
In student indiscipline, i stress things agreed upon by the concerned parties	67	1.00	3.00	1.5224	.56025
I value my relationship with other parties in resolving student indiscipline cases in my school	67	1.00	4.00	2.3134	1.06186
I try not to hurt the feelings of the parties in student indiscipline in my school	67	1.00	5.00	2.9552	1.28432
I take the views of other people in resolving the student indiscipline in my school	67	1.00	5.00	2.4478	1.17142
Valid N (list-wise)	67				

The table 4.22 shows that the members were either neutral or in agreement with the statements (means ≤ 3.0). The variation in responses implies that, the style was partially in use in schools. In accommodation, an individual neglects his own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. Board of Management in schools should therefore be able to give up their own concerns so that they accommodate the needs of the students. Research using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (1987) shows that individuals who prefer to be accommodating or harmonizers when dealing with conflict typically are more feeling than thinking oriented. They are often described as being

"nice" and find satisfaction in helping others to get their needs met. With these traits, it means that conflicts are unlikely to occur in situations where accommodation is used to solve conflicts.

A cross tabulation between the use of accommodation and extent of student indiscipline gave the following results

Table 4.23: Cross tabulation between the use of accommodation conflict management style and the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools

		Extent of Conflict			Total
		Great extent	Moderate extent	Little extent	
I try not to hurt the feelings of the parties in student indiscipline in my school	Strongly Agree	0	6	3	9
	Agree	2	18	2	22
	Not sure	0	6	0	6
	Disagree	8	11	4	23
	Strongly Disagree	0	7	0	7
Total		10	48	9	67

The results in table 4.23 show that, cases of indiscipline among students were not very pronounced when accommodation style was used to resolve conflicts in schools. This means that accommodation should be utilized by school boards in resolving conflicts as it creates an apparent position of harmony.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and presents conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the study

The main purpose of this study was to establish the influence of board of management members' conflict management styles on student's discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub- county, Machakos County-Kenya. The study was triggered by high cases of indiscipline in schools which had adversely affected the academic achievement of the students. The study also endeavored to determine the best conflict management styles that can be used to manage indiscipline and conflicts in schools. The study was guided by five objectives which were;

To determine the influence of Board of management members use of competing conflict management style on students discipline

To assess the influence of Board of Management members use of compromising conflict management style on students discipline,

To determine the influence of Board of Management members use of collaborating conflict management style on students' discipline,

To establish the influence of Board of Management members use of avoidance conflict management style on students discipline,

To determine the influence of Board of Management members use of accommodating conflict management style on students discipline.

The study adopted descriptive survey research design because the researcher was interested in collecting both qualitative and quantitative data using a questionnaire. The study targeted all students and board of management members in public secondary schools in Machakos Sub-County. Purposive sampling was used to pick 67 schools, 67 student presidents and 67 Boards of Management members (one from each school). Stratified sampling was first used to categorize the schools according to their levels, before sampling was done. The study adopted Thomas Kilman conflict mode instrument (T.K.I) which provided detailed information on how effectively the five different conflict management styles could be applied.

Data was collected by use of questionnaires. Questionnaires were preferred because they were an effective data collection instrument that allowed respondents to give much of their opinions in regard to the research problem. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data directly from the questionnaires. The

questionnaires were administered by the researcher through a drop-wait-and-collect method. Secondary data was gathered from past published scholarly articles, books, newspapers and internet reports, explaining theoretical and empirical information from the respondents on conflict management styles and students discipline in public secondary schools.

The data analysis was done by first sorting the questionnaires to avoid mix-ups, and allow systematic handling. After sorting, the questionnaires were edited to identify problems resulting from misunderstandings from the respondents. The data was then coded and fed into the SPSS programme where it was analyzed in line with the research design adopted and the requirements of the research objectives. After entry, data was counter-checked to eliminate any erroneous entries. Qualitative data was quantized to enable merging of both data strands Data was the analyzed by use descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) software programme. Cross tabulations were done to establish the extent of influence of conflict management styles on student indiscipline. The results were then presented using pie-charts, percentages, graphs and frequency tables. Data was finally interpreted in line with the objectives, and the results discussed by linking with the reviewed literature.

Through data analysis, the study established that, more than half of the board members (64.2 %) had Bachelor's degrees; 4.5 percent and 14.9 percent had post-graduate diploma, and master's degrees respectively. Only 16.4 percent had ordinary diplomas. This meant that, all the members of school boards in Machakos sub-county had attained the minimum qualification for membership of school Boards of Management. The study further established that 61.2 percent of the members of school boards in Machakos sub-county had served in their respective schools for a period between 3-6 years; 35.8 percent for a period below two years and only two of them, representing 3 percent, had served for 7-10 years. This meant that majority of the members had relatively short tenures in their respective boards.

Regarding the conflict styles commonly used by school Boards of Management in resolving conflicts in schools, collaboration was found as the preferred conflict style across all the ages and gender. However, its application seems to be improving with age, as depicted by 21 and 26 members within the ages of 35-44 years and 45-54 years who highly rated it. Compromising style of leadership was partially used by board of management members in solving conflicts in schools. Majority of the school leadership rarely compromised their positions for conflict resolution; a situation which created issues where a common ground is not found for conflict resolution and student discipline boost in the schools. Most of the

statements regarding collaboration style of conflict management were highly rated (means ≥ 1 ; ≤ 2); implying that it was commonly used style of solving conflicts in schools.

Accommodation style of conflict management was partially in use in schools. In accommodation, an individual neglects his own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. Board of management in schools should therefore be able to give up their own concerns so that they accommodate the needs of the students. Board of management members try to do everything possible to avoid taking positions which could create unnecessary tensions between the students and other people in their schools school. This was according to the means of ≤ 3.0 ; which means that, the respondents were in agreement or were neutral about the statements. In so doing, they let others take responsibility for solving the indiscipline issues. Avoiding conflicts is closely associated with negative impact on behaviour.

A comparison between the conflict management style used and frequency of indiscipline showed that, indiscipline in schools were mostly pronounced in schools where avoidance, assertiveness and collaboration conflict management styles were practiced. This could be because in collaboration, competition where the member tries to have his way in any conflict none of the parties is ready to let go of its ambitions. (i.e., it maximizes assertiveness and minimizes empathy), in

avoidance, the problems are not solved at all hence they breed with time. Conflict resolution styles and their effects on students discipline in schools showed that teachers with a controlling style had the highest number of referrals and tended to yield to higher number of altercations ensuing from the restrictive environments and lack of flexibility

Majority of the student took desirable actions to control conflicts between themselves and fellow student colleagues. These included solving problems with other students (35.9 %), Respect authority, (27.5%), Controlling of anger (22.1%), sharing with others (9.2%), and ignoring bothersome people (5.3%). This meant that the cases of indiscipline in schools are largely due to conflicts between the school management and the students due to poor conflict resolution mechanism used. Specifically, more than half of the indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county are handled through suspension (39.9%) and expulsion (16.8%) and this could be catalytic in as far as indiscipline is concerned. Timeout, conference with adults, and contacting of parents are minimally used

5.3 Conclusions

The goal of education in developing a responsible citizenry cannot be achieved in schools where acts of indiscipline are prevalent. The supreme goal of school discipline is to bestow in each student, good behaviours including self-respect, integrity and ability to observe standards of good conduct whether compulsory or under supervision and grow up with these habits. They further opine that discipline is an indispensable component for a happy and productive school community.

From the findings of this study, collaboration and avoidance styles were commonly used by the management of schools while accommodating and competing were partially used. Compromising style was hardly used. The study is of the opinion that, the overdependence of school managers on some conflict management styles and the minimal or complete lack of use of some, could create a vacuum for conflict/indiscipline to breed in schools. The study was categorically concerned with the fact that, more than half of the indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county were handled through suspensions and expulsions, (which are more assertive), at the expense of more inclusive methods such as conferences with adults, inclusion of parents in the management of student indiscipline, time outs, and guidance and counseling.

The study findings established that, some styles such as assertiveness (competing) and avoiding were associated with high indiscipline cases, while others e.g.

accommodation and compromising, register relatively lower cases. Collaboration was moderately rated as far as its use and occurrence of indiscipline cases were concerned. However, although the results revealed some differences in conflict management styles in relation to the frequency of occurrence of indiscipline cases resulting therefrom, it is important that for conflicts to be managed functionally, one style may be more appropriate than another depending upon the situation.

Generally, it can be concluded that, interventions used on students will always have varied results depending on the students' traits, conflicting but dynamic parenting styles and school disciplinary standards. Therefore, discipline interventions should remain diverse in order to obtain the maximum result. However, the school management should in as much as possible try adopt styles that minimize the occurrence, and effects of conflicts; and that bring a touch of harmony in the school. This is in the back drop of the fact that, conflicts are unavoidable in daily interactions of people.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions and the research findings, the research recommends the following;

- i) School Boards of Management should adopt conflict management styles that promote positive discipline e.g. use rewards and effective leadership (preventive measures), and minimize the use of penalties such as suspensions, expulsions, detention or any other form of punishment (curative measures). The management should in as much as possible make use of conflict management styles that are less assertive; but which are more cooperative
- ii) School management should ensure that there is an open communication system between them and the other members of the school community. This minimizes suspicions, mistrust, and fear of uncertainties and hence, chances of conflicts.
- iii) The government should oversee the establishment of guidance and counseling centres in every school so as to ensure that, conflicts and indiscipline cases are adequately handled at their formative stages

iv) The management of schools should conduct regular parent-teacher consultative meetings so that, potential sources of conflicts can be identified and averted in time before they eventually escalate to unmanageable levels.

5.5. Suggestions for further research

Based on the findings of the study the researcher makes the following suggestions for further research.

- i) A research on the challenges faced by school management boards in their quest to resolve conflicts/indiscipline in schools
- ii) A research on the influence of inter-personal conflicts between the members of the school board of management and student indiscipline in schools.
- iii) A research on the relationship between the academic qualifications of board members and their preference of certain conflict management styles
- iv) A research to determine the impact of the age of female and male board members on the preference of conflict management styles

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO RESPONDENTS

The University of Nairobi,
Department of Education
Administration and Planning,
P.O. Box 92, Kikuyu,

The Principal

.....school

Dear Sir/ Madam,

REF: PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing masters of education degree course in corporate management. I am undertaking a research on *“Influence of Board of Management members’ conflict management styles on student’s discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Kenya’*.

Your school has been selected to participate in this research. I will highly appreciate if you assist me to gather data from your school which will be used for the study only. You are assured that the information from you will be handled with a lot of confidentiality.

Yours faithfully,

Josephine Nzeli Ndambuki

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERS

The questionnaire aims at establishing conflict management styles of Board of Management members on student discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos sub-county. Please respond to all questions.

Section A: Demographic Information

(Tick (√) where appropriate)

1. What is your gender?

Male Female

2. What is your age?

Below 25 years 25 - 34 years 35-44 years 45-54
years

Above 55 years

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

Diploma Bachelor's Degree Post graduate diploma

Master (MED)

4. How long have you served in the board in your current school?

Below 2 years 3-6 years 7 - 10 years 11- 14 years
 15 years and above

5. How many streams does your school have?

1 2 3 4 5

6. What type is your school?

Day Boarding

7. What is your school category?

National Extra-county County Sub-county

8. What gender category is your school?

Boys school Girls school Mixed

Section B: Conflict management styles and student discipline

1. Have you experienced conflict in your school?

Yes No

2. If yes, to what extent do you experience conflict in your school?

Very great extent

Great extent

Moderate extent

Little extent

3. Do you experience cases of indiscipline in your school?

Yes No

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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I am usually firm in pursuing my goals in indiscipline cases in my school					
I try to win my position in indiscipline cases in my school					
I make some effort to get my way in the student indiscipline cases brought before me					
I press to get my points made in student indiscipline cases					
I try to show the parties involved see the logic behind my position in student indiscipline cases					

4. What is your level of agreement on the following statements relating to compromising conflict management style and discipline in secondary schools in Machakos Sub County? (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= not sure , 4=disagree and 5= strongly disagree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer a middle ground in student indiscipline cases					
I try to get a compromise solution to the					

student indiscipline cases in my school					
I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses in student indiscipline cases					
I let the teacher/principal have some of his positions if he lets me have some of mine in student indiscipline cases					

5. What is your level of agreement on the following statements relating to collaboration conflict management style and discipline in secondary schools in Machakos Sub County? (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= not sure , 4=disagree and 5= strongly disagree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I consider concerns of others and my concerns in indiscipline cases					
I consistently seek the help from other people in working out a solution to the indiscipline cases in my school					
In student indiscipline cases, I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open					
I share my ideas with the teachers and					

management and request their ideas on how to solve student indiscipline cases in my school					
I have a direct discussion of the student indiscipline in my school with the concerned parties					

6. What is your level of agreement on the following statements relating to Avoidance conflict management style? 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= not sure , 4=disagree and 5= strongly disagree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the indiscipline issues					
I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions					
I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself					
I try to postpone the indiscipline issues until I have had some time to think it over					
I feel that the differences are not always worth worrying about					
I try to do what is necessary to avoid unnecessary tensions between the students and other people in					

my school					
I sometimes avoid taking positions which could create controversy in indiscipline cases					

7. What is your level of agreement on the following statements relating to accommodating conflict management style and discipline in public secondary schools? (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= not sure , 4=disagree and 5= strongly disagree)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
In student indiscipline in my school, I stress things agreed upon by the concerned parties					
I value my relationship with other parties in resolving student indiscipline cases in my school					
I try not to hurt the feelings of the parties to student indiscipline in my school					
I take the views of other people in resolving the student indiscipline in my school					

Thank you!

APPENDIX III:

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS PRESIDENT

Kindly respond to all items in this questionnaire by ticking (✓) the appropriate response.

Section A: Demographic information

1. What is your gender status?

Female [] Male []

2. What is your age?

Below 14 years [] 15- 18 years [] 19-22 years [] above
22 years []

3. In which class are you?

Form one [] Form two [] Form Three [] Form
four []

Section B: Conflict management and Indiscipline

1. How do you rate your school in terms of discipline?

Excellent [] Very good [] Good [] Poor []

2. Have you witnessed the following forms of indiscipline in your school?

Strikes []

Drugs Abuse []

Failure to attend class []

Truancy []

3. If yes, how often?

Form	Very often	Often	Rarely
Strikes			
Drug abuse			
Failure to attend class			
Truancy			

4. Does the management meet the student leaders on a regular basis?

Yes [] No []

5. Which of the following causes conflicts in your school?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Expectation to be competitive			
Intolerance between students and adults			
Intolerance between students			
Poor communication			
Anger			
Rumours			
Frustration			

6. Which of the following actions have been applied to handle student indiscipline in your school?

Timeout []

Detention []

Conference with adults []

Suspension []

Contacting parents []

Expulsion []

7. Which of the following things do you do when there is a conflict between you and others?

Tell another person how you feel []

Disagree about making the other person angry []

Respect authority []

Control Anger []

Ignore someone who is bothering me []

Solve problems with other students []

8. What would you propose as the best ways of preventing student conflicts and other forms of indiscipline in secondary schools?

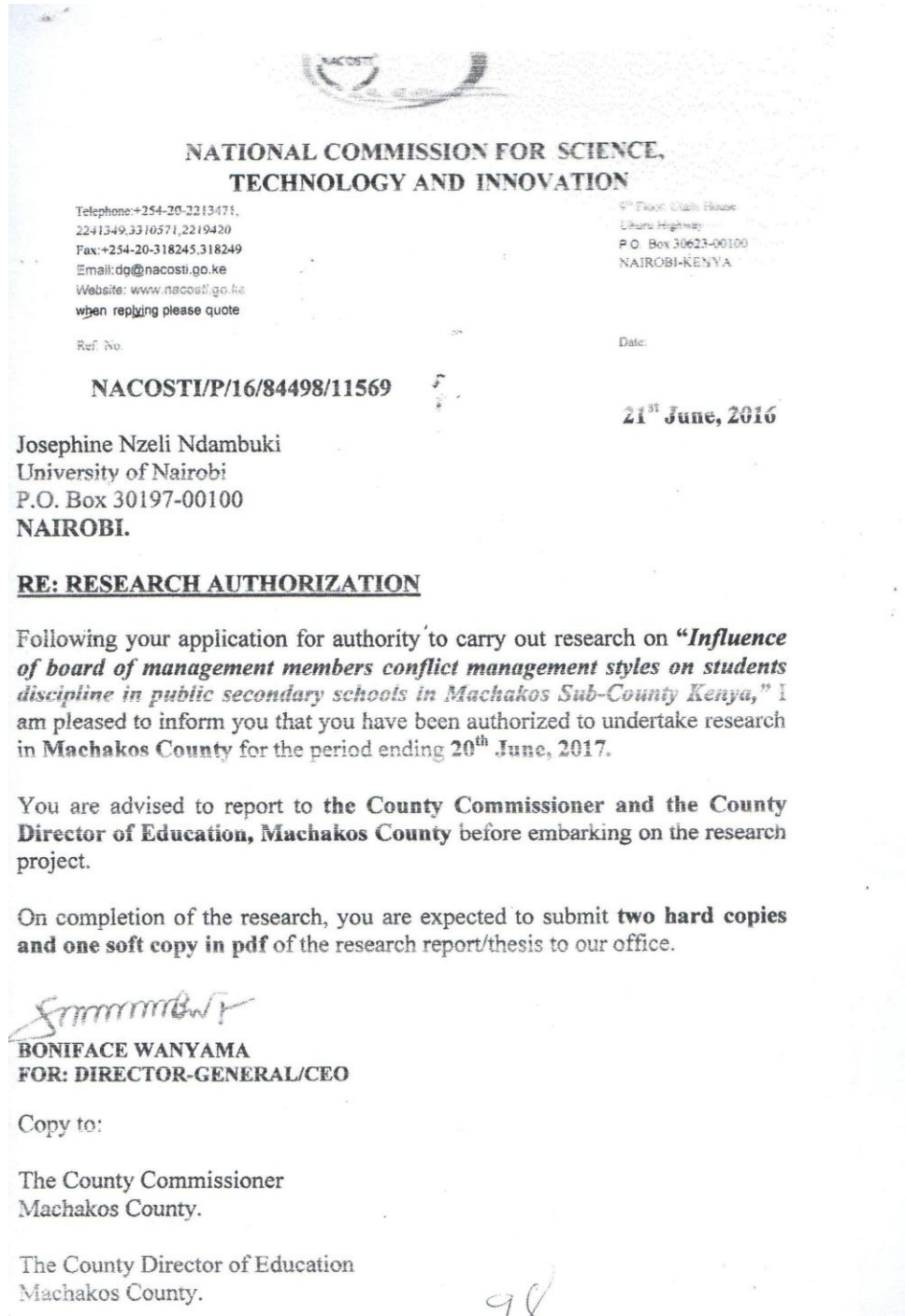
Establishing student counseling and guidance services centre in every school []

Non-admission of students with a record of acts of indiscipline []

Intensifying regular parent-teacher meetings []

APPENDIX IV

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FROM NACOSTI



APPENDIX V

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT-MACHAKOS
COUNTY



THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telephone: 21009 and 21983 - 90100
Email Address: countycommasaku@gmail.com
Fax No. 044-21999

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
P.O. BOX 1 - 90100
MACHAKOS.

When replying please quote:

REF: CC/ST/ADM 5/9 VOL.II/33
and date.

29th June, 2016

The Deputy County Commissioner
MACHAKOS COUNTY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - JOSEPHINE NZELI NDAMBUKI

The above named student has been authorized to carry out research on
*"Influence of Board of Management Members' Conflict Management Styles
on Students Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Machakos Sub-
County Kenya"*, for the period ending 20th June, 2017.

Please be informed.

George Opiyo Juma
For: County Commissioner
MACHAKOS

APPENDIX VI

MAP OF THE STUDY LOCATION

