

THE EFFECTS OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of principals' leadership skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The study was guided by two objectives which were to investigate the effects of principals' communication skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon and to explore the effects of principals' coaching skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The objectives were transformed to give two hypotheses. The survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire for teachers and an interview guide designed for principals. Data were collected from 372 teachers and 40 principals. Participants were sampled using the purposive and convenient sampling techniques. The reliability analysis of the instrument most especially that for the teachers was tested using the Cronbach Alpha test with a coefficient value stood at 0.873. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 23 with the aid of frequency count and percentages while the hypotheses of the study were tested using the Spearman's rho test. As for the qualitative data, there were thematically analysed. Findings showed that principals' communication skills ($R=0.199^$, $P=0.021$, <0.05) and coaching skills ($R=0.261^{**}$, $P=0.002$, <0.05), significantly and positively affect conflict resolution among teachers. The positive nature of the effects implies that principals are more likely to resolve conflict among teachers when they portray good communication and coaching skills and less likely to resolve conflict among teachers when they lack good communication and coaching skills. Therefore, it was recommended that principals should be trained. That is they need to undergo formal training and that they need to possess good communication and coaching skills to effectively run the day to day activities of their schools and to better manage their teachers, most importantly in times of conflict.*

Key words: Principals, Communication skills, Coaching skills, Teachers and Conflict resolution.

Introduction

Education is a universal practice in which societies are engaged at all stages of development. One of the ultimate aims of education is to strengthen the individuals and the society's problem solving capacity and ability; that is, people can solve different problems using education. Education lies at the heart of social and economic development. It has the power to reduce poverty, improve health, and promote democracy. In order to gain these benefits from education the role of principals' is highly significant in managing conflict generating practices in education (schools) (Steyn et al, 2003).

In most cases the reason for conflict is because educational officials, teachers and school principals do not understand the new paradigm underlying and driving transformation and cannot adapt their work style accordingly. This may lead to conflict that may become imminent and inevitable (Steyn et al, 2003). The manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive (Ownes, 1998). According to this conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings, because of the wide range of

potential differences among people, the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict resolution involves the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms and types of conflicts. Principals and teachers do involve in conflict resolution and management in the school system.

This study explores the various leadership skills used by principals to resolve conflict among teachers in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, research hypothesis, justification of the study, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of terms as used in the study.

Background to the Study

Principals are the educational leaders and managers of secondary schools. Contemporary drive has identified the lack of principal's professional training on conflict resolution as one aspect of education which has caused a lot of problem in secondary schools. Principals play a vital role in setting the direction for successful schools, but existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is sparse. Until recently, one category of personnel frequently neglected in the educational domain with regards to the issue of training is the school principals in Cameroon. There appear to have been an implicit assumption that principals require minimal specialized preparation, despite the enormous contributions trained principals can contribute to revitalise secondary education. In-service training in Cameroon comes in the form of induction training for new employees, seminars and workshops for capacity building and training for Principals, Deputy principal, HODs and Bursars. The training of principals, who are directly in charge with the effective running of schools, has been frowzy over the years. Cameroon, like Many Africa countries, have no formal curriculum for preparing and inducting principals in to this daunting office of managing a school, but they expect optimal results (Anjah, 2017).

Principals in Cameroon do not undergo any formal training; appointment into administrative positions is based on teaching experience and output, after obtaining formal training in the higher teachers training college. This indicates that they lack the conceptual skills in educational administration and management which creates a gap in effective management of conflict and administration of secondary schools. The efficient and effective management of conflict in any organization lies on the ability of the top management or its manager to motivate the workforce. In the case of secondary education in Cameroon and other parts of the world, the principal is the head of the school and the manner in which the principal performs his/her roles and functions are paramount in resolving conflict among teachers (Nwosu, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is an ever-present reality in human relations and there is no known institution that is exempted from it (Loomis, 1965). Conflict among teachers has remained persistent in most if not all schools in Cameroon and particularly in secondary schools in the South West Region. Principals face many challenges in an attempt to resolve conflict in their schools probably because they lack training on leadership. The series of problems which the school system is facing lies in the hands of the leadership skills the school principal uses to carry out his or her day to day running of the system. Some of these leadership skills are communication and coaching. However, the speed at which classroom teachers are turned into principals in secondary schools in Cameroon shows the lack of emphasis on leadership training. Teaching experience appears to be the major yardstick that is being used currently to promote teachers to the rank of school principals in Cameroon. Leadership and managerial competencies are needed for principalship rather than good teaching abilities and longevity. The fact that any teacher who graduates from Ecole Normal Supérieur (Advanced Teachers Training College) (ENS) can become a principal of a secondary school in Cameroon without much experience in leadership is an issue. They use trial and error as substitute for leadership skills in resolving conflict in schools hence, the need for this study.

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to find out the effects of principals' leadership skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Specific Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the effects of principals' communication skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.
2. To explore the effects of principals' coaching skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

General Research Question

To what extent can principals' leadership skills affect conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools in the South west region of Cameroon?

Specific Research Questions

1. What is the effect of principals' communication skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools?
2. What is the effect of principals' coaching skills on conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant effect between principals' communication skills and conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools.

H2: There is a significant effect between principals' coaching skills and conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools.

Significance of the Study

The study will be significant in that the findings will be useful to principals, teachers, educational researchers, educational planners and other scholars of educational administration as it will hopefully increase their awareness of the values of conflict as well as conflict resolution methods which are constructive and beneficial to the school. In addition, the findings will also help principals of secondary schools to adopt measures to minimize and resolve conflicts in schools. Furthermore, the results of the study will help policy makers and educational planners to make adequate adjustments that will enhance performance in management and administration of secondary schools. Lastly, the study will be important to the Minister of Secondary Education by providing measures which will help them in their bid to deal with conflict in the ministry and in schools thereby improving the education standard in the country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution

Communication has become an integral part of the process of school administration and it is impossible to conceive of organization, administration or any major step in the administrative process without communication. It is important in decision-making, planning, coordinating and evaluation. (Fonkeng &Tamanjong, 2009). The communication processes involves verbal, nonverbal and Para verbal component and is designed to mediate students and teacher behaviour. According to the Republic of Rwanda Public Service Commission's Causes and

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

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

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

Most conflicts in schools, according to Wanjama et al (2010), are all rooted in poor communication and thus the need for individuals to acquire effective communication. In his study, Onsomu (2014) observed that a lot needs to be done on schools' management approaches especially regarding the staff-management conflicts as they were inordinately high in Nyamira and could lead to teacher frustrations and their (teachers') desire to leave schools, which may in turn lead to conflicts between students and administrations of their schools. It is for such reasons that Lunenburg (2010) emphasizes the need for school administrators to be able to work with stakeholders of a school who include teachers and to grow a shared sense of what the school is striving to achieve. Because school administrators are in a position to develop a shared mission, vision, values, and goals, the school will become more effective. As such, establishing and maintaining a good relationship between school managers and other stakeholders of a school requires effectiveness in communication (Lunenburg, 2010) as it is through communication that members of a group interact and effective communication is a requirement for every part of group functioning (Johnson & Johnson, 1997).

The school as an organisation is deemed stable, peaceful and progressive if there is effective communication. In other words management of the educational system requires the instrument of communication because it determines and directs the school actions. Managerial elements of planning, organising, staffing, directing, controlling, "decision making and execution of decisions" all depend on effective communication for success (Okoh 1998). He believes that all human interactions, mutual understanding and interpersonal relations that exist in any organisation exist only through communication.

Coaching Skills and Conflict Resolution

Conflict coaching is defined as a set of skills and strategies used to support peoples' ability to engage in, manage, or productively resolve conflict. In this process, the conflict coach works one-on-one with a coach experiencing conflict with another person. Conflict Resolution Coaching is a voluntary process to assist an individual to more effectively cope emotionally and mentally with a specific conflict, and address that conflict in a constructive manner. The individual works one-on-one with a neutral facilitator. Conflict resolution coaching provides the support and guidance that the individual needs to understand the conflict, and empowers the individual to maintain control of the decisions about their situation as well as provide the skills necessary to better handle the conflict (Amadei, 2010). The coach assists the individual to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict at hand, including perspectives of the parties involved, and the influences, dynamics and factors that may affect the conflict. The individual, with the guidance of the coach, then identifies goals of what the individual wishes to achieve in resolving or addressing the conflict. With the goals in mind, interaction strategies and/or concrete skills are developed to help the individual to constructively resolve the conflict with the other parties. Conflict Resolution

Coaching can be particularly helpful if other means of resolving the conflict are not available. For example, the parties involved in the conflict may not all agree to participate in mediation. This process can also be used for individuals who want assistance with how to approach another individual or to develop skills to more effectively deal with conflicts which commonly arise.

Types and Methods of Educational Coaching

Peer coaching was the first type of educational coaching reform to address instructional improvement. Showers (1982) identified peer coaching as a process that included a training routine in which teachers worked with each other through observations and non-judgmental feedback. Ladyshevsky and Flavell (2011) defended peer coaching as an effective method of coaching where individuals of equal status actively helped and supported each other in learning tasks. Showers and Joyce (1996) also noted that peer coaching helped nearly all participating teachers implement new instructional strategies, and this method resulted in measurable differences on student learning. They further commented on the need for periodic monitoring of strategies so teachers who participated in continual peer collaboration could evaluate, adjust, and continue to improve in the area of student achievement. The notion of teachers working cooperatively with others is well documented as an important support structure for improvement of instruction.

One methodology that compliments peer coaching is the practice of cognitive coaching. Uzat (1998) identified cognitive coaching as the process of self-questioning to improve professional skills that lead teachers to become reflective practitioners. She asserted that the role of a coach as a mediator is crucial to the improvement of instruction. Cochran and DeChesere (1995) found that cognitive coaching encourages different ways of thinking about instruction and learning and has the potential to form positive change.

Costa and Garmston (1994) agreed that cognitive coaching worked best when administrators and teachers engage in a non-judgmental process. They described cognitive coaching as a structure that uses three types of conversation: the planning conversation, the reflective conversation, and the problem solving conversation. According to Costa and Garmston, several coaching techniques, such as paraphrasing, rapport building, mirroring, and asking questions, allow teachers a means to self-evaluate their practices. At the time of this literature review, instructional coaching was emerging as a popular trend in educational coaching. Instructional coaching is a teacher support structure developed through the best practices of peer and cognitive coaching. Marzano (1995) considered instructional coaching as a main component of the Professional Learning Community (PLC).

Knight (2007) described the instructional coach as a fellow teacher who provides intensive, differentiated support for teachers so they can implement proven research-based practices. He suggested that the ideal instructional coach is someone who possesses excellent communication skills and thorough knowledge of instructional practices, demonstrates modeled lessons, performs classroom observations, and maintains the ability to share simplified explanations of classroom practices to teachers in need of improvement. Successful instructional coaches are skilled communicators and relationship builders, and they possess the capacity to listen (Knight, 2007).

Virtual coaching applies the methods of peer and instructional coaching in a new environment. Virtual coaching encompasses all of the qualities of peer and instructional coaching, but uses advanced online and mobile technologies (termed bug-in-ear technology [BIE]). With BIE technology, a coach can be located remotely or in the classroom to observe a teacher's lesson and offer discreet feedback (Rock, Zigmond, Gregg, & Gable, 2011). Specifically, virtual coaching offers an effective alternative to the coach being in the classroom. Since 2007, virtual coaching has been used to improve teacher performance. According to Rock et al., more than 800 real time bug-in-the-ear coaching sessions with 29 practicing teachers have used this cost effective way to achieve instructional improvements.

Conflict Resolution

Peter Wallensteen (2015) stated the definition of conflict resolution as "conflict resolution is a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solve their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued

existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other". Conflict resolution involves the reconciliation or elimination of fundamental differences and grievances underlying the conflict. Parties involved in conflict resolution in schools include; principals, teachers, students, parents, stakeholders and support staff. Conflict resolution occurs when the incompatibility between the preferences of the various parties to a conflict disappears or when the sources of conflict situation are removed. Conflict resolution is a development process, which includes not only preventing violence but also the removal of source of conflict situation.

Challenges Faced by Principals in Managing Conflicts

Msila (2011) states that the challenge of school heads are to identify the problems endemic in their schools. Msila added that the workload of school heads is becoming unmanageable and as a result many school heads become unable to manage conflict in their school. As a result the performance of the school may be lower due to the strategies used by them in managing conflict in their schools.

Furthermore some of them do not yet master the basic principles of school management or face problem understanding which may hinder the efficiency of the general administration of the school. Moreover, the initial training of some of them does not allow them to acquire enough knowledge in school administration and management.

Theoretical Review

Human Relations Theory by Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) and George Elton Mayo (1880-1949)

The Human Relations Theory by Elton Mayo (1950) stemmed from developments in the decade between 1930 and 1940 following the great depression in America. It is in this era that people started paying more attention to social factors that affected employees in their work in organizations after years of applying Fredrick Taylors' scientific management, which viewed people as parts of a machine. The following theorists are concerned with the Human Relations theory; Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) and George Elton Mayo (1880-1949).

According to the theory, departmental level group dynamics need to be informed by healthy leadership (Markert, 2008). The theory focuses on keeping channels of communication in an organisation open and ensuring that communication between administrators and their juniors flows continually, with a premise that information motivates as an informed employee is more involved and therefore more productive (Markert, 2008). The Human Relations Theory operates on the belief that the central problem in all organisations is in developing and maintaining dynamic and harmonious relationships (Okumbe, 2007). This theory is related to the study in that the principals' communication skills will help to ensure the flow of communication among teachers thereby motivating them as an informed teacher will be more involved hence minimizing the occurrence of conflict. Therefore a principal should maintain dynamic and harmonious relationships among teachers, use his/her communication skills effectively in order to resolve conflict among them.

Transformational Leadership Theory by James MacGregor (1978), Bernard M. Bass (1985) and David Burkus (2010)

This theory focuses upon the connections formed between leaders (principals) and followers (teachers). These leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. Transformational leaders are focused on the performance of group members, but also want each person to fulfill his or her potential. These leaders often have high ethical and moral standards. The theorists of the Transformational leadership theory are James MacGregor (1978), Bernard M. Bass (1985) and David Burkus (2010). According to this theory, principals should motivate and inspire their teachers by helping them see the importance of task. Principals should therefore focus on the performance of their teachers by ensuring that each teacher fulfils his/her potential. Principals can therefore use motivation and inspiration to resolve conflict in their various institutions.

The above theories were appropriate for this study because schools are organisations composed of individuals that need to work together as a team to achieve their organizational goals. To achieve a school's set objectives and

mitigate conflicts in the school setting, there is need to be open communication between teachers and the school administrators.

Methodology

Research design: This study adopted the survey research design using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to allow for in-depth exploration of the variables under study.

Population of study: The population of the study comprised of secondary teachers and principals in the South-West Region of Cameroon which comprised of six divisions namely, Manyu, Meme, Fako, Kupe Maunenguba, Libialem and Indian Divisions. The target population consisted of teachers from three of the six divisions which are Manyu, Meme and Fako divisions. As for accessible population of the study, teachers and principals were sampled from 40 secondary schools.

Sample size and Sampling technique

The sample size of the study comprised of 372 teachers and 40 principals and the participants were sampled using the purposive and convenient sampling techniques.

Sample description

Table 1: Distribution showing principals by demographic information

Demographic information	Frequency	Percentages	
Sex	Male	23	57.5
	Female	17	42.5
	Total	40	100
Longevity in service	Less than 5 years	16	40.0
	5-10 years	8	20.0
	11-15 years	9	22.5
	16 years and above	7	17.5
	Total	40	100
Highest qualification	DIPES I/Equivalent	9	22.5
	Bachelor's Degree	6	15.0
	DIPES II/Equivalent	12	30.0
	Master's Degree	13	32.5
	PhD	0	0.0
	Total	40	100
School type	Public	26	65.0
	Confessional	6	15.0
	Lay Private	8	20.0
	Total	40	100

Sex

Out of the 40 principals sampled, 23 (57.5%) were male and 17 (42.5%) were female.

Longevity in service

Describing the principals by longevity in service, 16 (40.0%) of them have worked as a principal for less than 5 years, 8 (20.0%) of them have been in the post for 5-10 years, 9 (22.5%) of them have been principal for 11-15 years and 7 (17.5%) of them have been principal for more than 16 years.

Highest qualification

Furthermore, describing the principals by highest qualification, 9 (22.5%) of them have DIPES I/Equivalent, 6 (15.0%) of them have Degree, 12 (30.0%) are holders of DIPES II/Equivalent, 13 (32.5%) of them have Master's Degree and none of them have a Ph.D.

School type

Finally, describing the principals by school type, 26 (65.0%) of them were from Public schools, 6 (15.0%) from Confessional schools and 8 (20.0%) of them were from Lay Private schools.

Table 2: Distribution showing teachers by demographic information

Demographic information		Frequency	Percentages
Sex	Male	215	57.8
	Female	157	42.2
	Total	372	100
Age range	21-30	115	30.9
	31-40	176	47.3
	41-50	69	18.5
	51 and above	12	3.2
	Total	372	100
Years of working experience	1-5 years	149	40.1
	6-10 years	110	29.6
	11-15 years	57	15.3
	16-20 years	37	9.9
	21 years and above	19	5.1
	Total	372	100
Highest teaching qualification	GCE 'A' level	24	6.5
	Bachelor's Degree	145	39.0
	Master's Degree	42	11.3
	DIPES I	47	12.6
	DIPES II	112	30.1
	PhD	2	.5
Total	372	100	
School setting type	Rural	105	28.2
	Urban	267	71.8
	Total	372	100
School type	Public	211	56.7
	Confessional	69	18.5
	Lay Private	92	24.7
	Total	372	100

Sex

Out of the 372 teachers participated in the study, 215 (57.8%) were male and 157 (42.2%) of them were female.

Age range

Describing the teachers by age range, 115 (30.9%) of them were within the age range of 21-30, 176 (47.3%) of them were within the age range of 31-40, 69 (18.5%) of them were within the age range of 41-50 and 12 (3.2%) of them were more than 51 years of age.

Years of working experience

Describing the teachers by years of working experience, 149 (40.1%) of them have taught for 1-5 years, 110 (29.6%) of them have taught for 6-10 years, 57 (15.3%) of them have taught for 11-15 years, 37 (9.9%) of them have taught for 16-20 years and 19 (5.1%) of them have taught for more than 21 years.

Highest teaching qualification

Furthermore, describing the teachers by highest teaching qualification, 24 (6.5%) of them were holders of GCE 'A' level, 145 (39.0%) of them had Bachelor's Degree, 42 (11.3%) of them had Master's Degree, 47 (12.6%) of them were holders of DIPES I, 112 (30.1%) of them were holders of DIPES II and 2 (0.5%) of them had Ph.D.

School setting type

Furthermore, describing the teachers by school setting, 105 (28.2%) of them were teaching in schools in rural areas while 267 (71.8%) of them were teaching in schools located in urban areas.

School type

Finally, describing the teachers by school type, 211 (56.7%) of them were from Public schools, 69 (18.5%) of them were from Confessional schools and 92 (24.7%) of them were from Lay Private schools.

Instruments for data collection

Questionnaire and interviewed guide were the instruments adopted for the study. The questionnaire was designed for teachers and interview guide for the principals. The questionnaire for teachers consisted of both close and few open ended questions. For communication skills, 10 close ended items were formulated and 1 open ended questions. Team building skills had 7 close ended items and an open ended question. Coaching skill had 6 close ended items and an open ended question with goal setting skill and motivation skills having 6 close ended items each with an open ended question. Also, the teachers' questionnaire consisted of two additional questions with one finding out teachers' involvement in conflict with colleagues and their satisfaction of the approach used by their principal in resolving the conflict. In total, the questionnaire consisted of 37 items.

On the other hand, the interview guide for principals consisted of 14 open ended questions which assesses the occurrence of conflict among staff, the causes of conflict among the staff, the effect of conflict among the staff, how principal handle conflict in their school, their perception of the relevance of communication skills, motivation skills, team building skills, coaching skills and goal setting skills to conflict resolution among teachers. Finally, the interview guide also consisted of different conflict resolution mechanisms which demanded the principals to tick those ones they use in their school during conflict resolution.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In this study, the measures were adopted to ensure that the instruments are valid and reliable of the study. In doing this, the test items were designed by making use of the theories and concept reviewed in the literature. After that, the instruments were pretested on some teachers and their and the consistency of their responses was measured using the Cronbach Alpha test which yield a coefficient value of 0.873.

Method of data collection: The data for the study was collected using the direct delivery technique that is face-to-face by the researcher.

Method of data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive statistical tools used were frequency count, percentages and multiple responses set which aimed at calculating the summary of findings for each variable where applicable. The hypotheses of study were tested using a non-parametric Spearman's Rho test. This test was used because the data for the variables were not approximately normally distributed as revealed by the Shapiro-Wilk test and the Komogorov test of significance with P-values all less than 0.05.

On the other, the qualitative data derived from open ended questions and semi-structured interview guide were analysed using the thematic analysis approach with the aid of themes, groundings/frequency and quotations. Themes are umbrella words which capture the main idea of the participants' statements. On the other hand, groundings also call frequency represent the number of time that a particular theme/concept surface from the direct statements of the participants.

Finally, findings were presented using frequency distribution tables and thematic tables with all inferential statistics presented at 95% level of confidence interval with alpha set at 0.05 levels, accepting 5% margin of error.

Findings

Table 3: Conflict resolution mechanisms used by principals

Items	Used	Do not used	N
Accommodation	23(57.5%)	17(42.5%)	40
Adjudication	3(7.5%)	37(92.5%)	40
Arbitration	11(27.5%)	29(72.5%)	40
Avoiding	7(17.5%)	33(82.5%)	40
Coercion	6(15.0%)	34(85.0%)	40
Collaborative	30(75.0%)	10(25.0%)	40
Compromising	17(42.5%)	23(57.5%)	40
Cooperative	26(65.0%)	14(35.0%)	40
Mediation	20(50.0%)	20(50.0%)	40
Negotiation	18(45.0%)	22(55.0%)	40
Dialogue	40(100%)	0(0.0%)	40

Findings show that all the principals 40 (100%) used dialogue during conflict resolution, followed by a majority of them 30 (75.0%) who accepted to use collaborative and cooperative approaches 26 (65.0%). Findings also show that 23 (57.5%) of the principals used accommodation approach during conflict resolution. Also, 20 (50.0%) and 17 (42.5%) of the principals, respectively used mediation and compromising approaches. 18 (45.0%) of the principals used negotiation, 11 (27.5%) of them also used Arbitration while only a few of the principals that is 7 (17.5%) do used avoiding, coercion 6 (15.0%) and finally adjudication 3 (7.5%). The figure below presents the conflict resolution approaches from most used to least used by principals.

Table 4: Teachers' perception of principals' communication skills

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
The principal effectively shares information with teachers through the notice board.	151 (40.8%)	182 (49.2%)	34 (9.2%)	3 (0.8%)	333 (90.0%)	37 (10.0%)
Poor communication skills from school principals cause conflicts.	120 (32.4%)	185 (50.0%)	42 (11.4%)	23 (6.2%)	305 (82.4%)	65 (17.6%)
The principal use open channel of communication, and open door policy when conflict occurs.	51 (13.9%)	215 (58.4%)	95 (25.8%)	7 (1.9%)	266 (72.3%)	102 (27.7%)

The principal communicates with teachers through the staff hand book.	45 (12.6%)	154 (43.1%)	123 (34.5%)	35 (9.8%)	199 (55.7%)	158 (44.3%)
Communication is an effective means of resolving conflict.	223 (60.4%)	114 (30.9%)	19 (5.1%)	12 (3.3%)	337 (91.3%)	31 (8.4%)
Conflicts among teachers frequently occur in my school because of the principals' poor communication skills.	40 (10.8%)	99 (26.6%)	142 (38.2%)	91 (24.5%)	139 (37.4%)	233 (62.9%)
The principal is transparent in his approach via communication when resolving conflict among teachers.	93 (25.0%)	231 (62.1%)	42 (11.3%)	6 (1.6%)	324 (87.1%)	48 (12.9%)
The principal uses appropriate body language words and expression when resolving conflict.	73 (19.7%)	231 (62.4%)	51 (13.8%)	15 (4.1%)	304 (82.2%)	66 (17.8%)
During conflict management among teachers, the principal encourages freedom to talk.	111 (30.0%)	215 (58.1%)	38 (10.3%)	6 (1.6%)	326 (88.1%)	44 (11.9%)
The principal communicates with teachers through staff welfare committee.	62 (16.9%)	191 (52.0%)	96 (26.2%)	18 (4.9%)	253 (68.9%)	114 (31.1%)
Multiple response set	969 (26.3%)	1817 (49.3%)	682 (18.5%)	216 (5.9%)	2786 (75.6%)	898 (24.4%)

Findings show that a majority of the teachers 333 (90.0%) accepted that the principal effectively shares information with teachers through the notice board with 305 (82.4%) of them also accepted that poor communication skills from school principals cause conflicts. Findings also showed that a majority of the teachers 266 (72.3%) accepted that the principal use open channel of communication, and open door policy when conflict occurs with 337 (91.3%) of them also accepted that communication is an effective means of resolving conflict.

Also, a majority of the teachers 324 (87.1%) accepted that their principal is transparent in his approach via communication when resolving conflict among teachers. Findings also show that a majority of the teachers 304 (82.2%) accepted that their principal uses appropriate body language, words and expression when resolving conflict with 326 (88.1%) of the teachers also accepted that during conflict management among teachers, the principal encourages freedom to talk.

In overall, findings show that 75.6% of the teachers indicated that their principal have good communication skills while 24.4% of the teachers did not see their principal to have good communication skills.

Table 6: Principals' perception of communication skills

Principals can effectively resolve conflict when communication skill is poor	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	30.0
No	28	70.0
Total	40	100

Findings show that a majority of the principals 28 (70.0%) accepted that principals cannot effectively resolve conflict when their communication skill is poor while 12 (30.0%) of them did not see communication skills as relevant in conflict resolution among teachers.

Table 7: Principals’ description of communication skills to conflict resolution among teachers

Themes	Frequency	Quotations
Proper handling of conflict	18	<p>“Because communication is the only means the principal can use to resolve conflict so lack of it or poor communication can pose a big problem”.</p> <p>“A principal with good communication skill is capable of effectively handling conflict than those without”.</p> <p>“Communication skills are very essential in conflict resolution”.</p> <p>“Conflict cannot be resolve without proper communication skill”.</p> <p>“Poor communication skill to a principal is already a weakness in handling conflict”.</p> <p>“Without proper communication skill, one can not resolve conflict”.</p> <p>“Principal with poor communication skills instead helps to generate more conflict among the staff”.</p> <p>“When the communication skill between the principal and teacher is poor, the principal finds it difficult to bring the parties together”.</p>
Better understanding of teachers’ feeling	12	<p>“If a principal do not communicate freely with teachers, he would not understand the feelings of the teachers”.</p> <p>“This will help the principal to better understand the teachers’ feelings and problems better”.</p> <p>“Communication promotes understanding and help teachers to understand better. Poor communication implies poor management”.</p>
Prevent misunderstanding	2	<p>“Communication entails talking and requires that persons get together and open up to each other”.</p> <p>“There will be a lot of miss understanding”.</p>
Effective dialoguing	1	<p>“Conflict can never be resolve without using communication (dialogue)”.</p>
Guarantees the use of proper approaches	1	<p>“With poor communication skill, the principal might use wrong approach to resolve the conflict”.</p>

Based on principals’ perception of the relevance of communication skills to conflict resolution, findings show that many of them said communication skills lead to proper handling of conflict and better understanding of teachers’ feelings. Prevention of misunderstanding, supporting effective dialoguing, and guarantees the use of proper approaches were other relevance of principals’ communication skills to conflict resolutions.

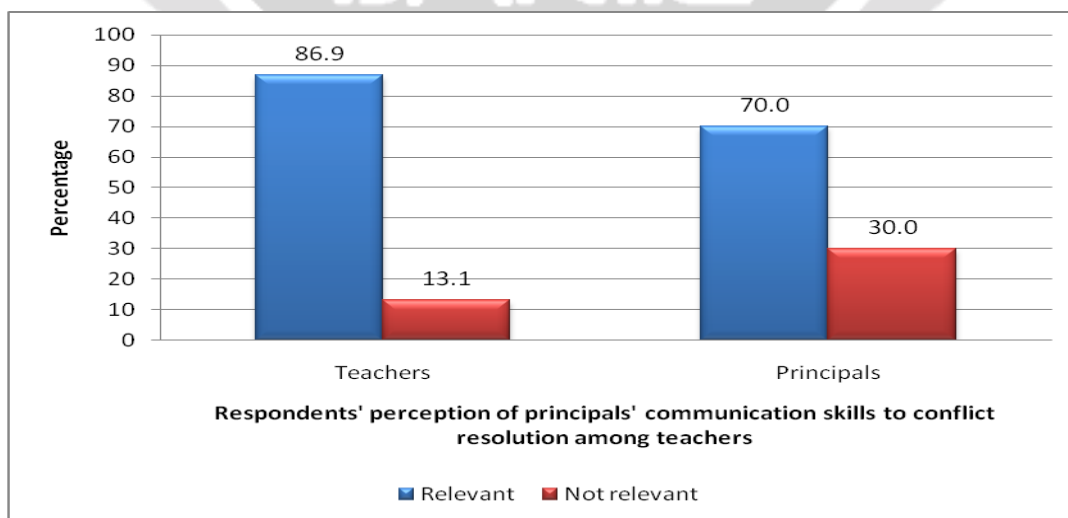


Figure 1: Respondents' perception of principals' communication skills to conflict resolution among teachers

Comparatively, findings show that a majority of the teachers 86.9% and principals 70.0% indicated that principals' communication skill is relevant in conflict resolution among teachers.

Testing of hypothesis one (Ho): There is no significant effect between principals' communication skills and conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools.

Table 8: The effect of principals' communication skills to conflict resolution

Test	Statistical parameters	Communication skills	Conflict resolution among teachers
Spearman's rho test	R-value	1.000	.199**
	P-value		.021
	N	372	372

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistically, findings show that principals' communication skills significant and positively affect conflict resolution ($P=0.021, <0.05$). The positive sign of the correlation value ($R= 0.199^*$) implies that principals are more likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they portray good communication skills and less likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they lack good communication skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis stated above was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states there is a significant effect between principals' communication skills and conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools was accepted.

Table 9: Teachers' perception of principals' coaching skills

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
The principal provide support and guidance to teachers.	83 (22.6%)	236 (64.3%)	47 (12.8%)	1 (0.3%)	319 (86.9%)	48 (13.1%)
The principal empowers teachers in decision making.	55 (15.1%)	220 (60.3%)	85 (23.3%)	5 (1.4%)	275 (75.3%)	90 (24.7%)
Principal coaching skills strongly influence conflict resolution.	68 (18.5%)	240 (65.4%)	44 (12.0%)	15 (4.1%)	308 (83.9%)	59 (16.1%)
The principal ensured teachers engage constructively in conflict resolution.	58 (15.8%)	252 (68.7%)	54 (14.7%)	3 (0.8%)	310 (84.5%)	57 (15.5%)
The principal work one to one with teachers involve in conflict.	78 (21.4%)	219 (60.0%)	63 (17.3%)	5 (1.4%)	297 (81.4%)	68 (18.6%)
The principal resolve conflict among teachers in the presence of other teachers.	29 (8.0%)	88 (24.3%)	195 (53.9%)	50 (13.8%)	117 (32.3%)	245 (67.7%)
Multiple response set	371 (16.9%)	1255 (57.2%)	488 (22.3%)	79 (3.6%)	1626 (74.1%)	567 (25.9%)

Findings show that a majority of the teachers 319 (86.9%) and 275 (75.3%), respectively, strongly agreed and agreed that their principal provide support and guidance to teachers and empower them in decision making. Furthermore, a majority of the teachers 308 (83.9%) accepted that principals' coaching skills strongly influence

conflict resolution with 310 (84.5%) of the teachers also accepted that their principal ensured that teachers engage constructively in conflict resolution.

Findings also show that a majority of the teachers 297 (81.4%) accepted that their principal work one to one with teachers involve in conflict with 245 (67.7%) of the teachers denied that their principal resolve conflict among teachers in the presence of other teachers.

In overall, findings show that 74.1% of the teachers perceived their principal to have coaching skills while 25.9% of the teachers do not see their principal to have coaching skills.

Table 10: Principals' perception of goals skills

Principals can effectively resolve conflict when they lack coaching skills.	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	7.5
No	37	92.5
Total	40	100

Findings show that a majority of the principals 37 (92.5%) accepted that principals cannot effectively resolve conflict when they lack coaching skill while 3 (7.5 %) of them did not see coaching skills as relevant to conflict resolution among teachers.

Table 11: Principals' description of coaching skills to conflict resolution among staff

Themes	Groundings	Quotations
Proper guiding of teachers	22	<p>“If a principal cannot guide the teachers properly, he/she will not be able to resolve their conflict”.</p> <p>“Experience is the best teacher. He needs to know how to guide so as to able to resolve conflict”.</p> <p>“A principal with proper caching skills will be capable of effectively guiding his/her teachers”.</p> <p>“In resolving problems, you should be a good example and you cam not be a good example without coaching skills”.</p> <p>“With proper coaching skill, the principal can tell the teachers what is good and bad thus helping the teachers to work as a family”.</p> <p>“Working as a team promotes social cohesion among the teachers. A principal without this skill will create poor working environment for the teachers”.</p>
Ensure proper respect for principal during conflict	10	<p>“A principal will be able to solve the teachers' problem effectively when the teachers see him as a good coach thus; they are bound to listen to the principal”.</p> <p>“When teachers see their principal as a coach, they will listen to him/her thus ease the process of conflict resolution”.</p> <p>“If a principal is unable to guide his teachers, the teachers will not listen to him when conflict arises”.</p> <p>“A principal must be a good coach to proper resolve conflict among the staff”.</p>
Effectively resolving conflict	2	<p>“A principal with good caching skills will always be capable of addressing teachers' conflict”.</p> <p>“Coaching is an essential aspect of preparation of teachers and opens up communication between teachers and principal”.</p>
Boast confidence	1	<p>“A principal with good coaching skills will be confident in him/herself in managing conflict among the staff members”.</p>

Guarantees the use of proper approaches	1	“Lack of coaching skill will lead to poor approach in resolving conflict”.
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Findings show that many of the principals said the principals’ coaching skills is relevant in conflict resolution by helping them to properly guide their teachers with many of the principals also saying that during conflict resolution, teachers turn to respect the principal when they have good coaching skills. Effective resolution of conflict among teachers, boasting the principals’ confidence in handling conflict and guaranteeing the use of appropriate conflict resolution approaches by principals were other relevance of the principals’ coaching skills to conflict resolution.

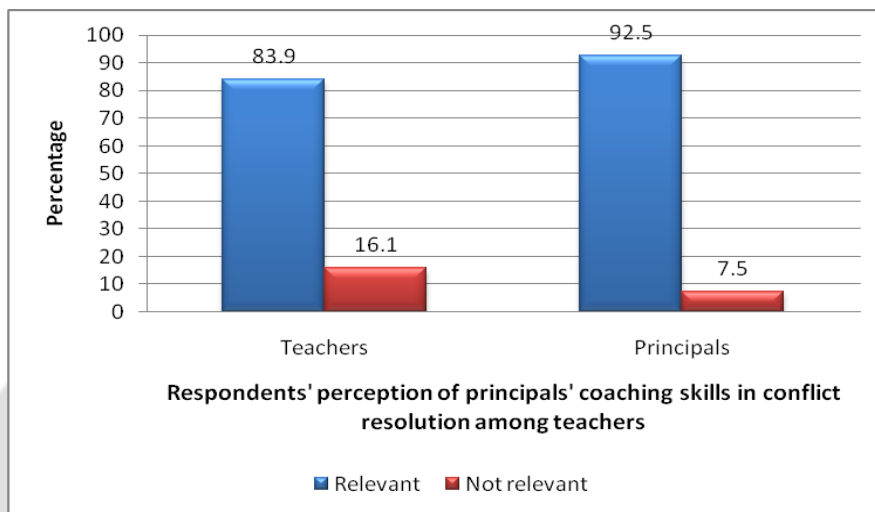


Figure 2: Respondents' perception of principals' coaching skills to conflict resolution among teachers

Comparatively, findings show that a majority of the teachers 83.9% and principals 92.5% indicated that principals’ coaching skill is relevant in conflict resolution among teachers.

Testing of hypothesis five (H05): There is no significant effect between principals’ coaching skills and conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools.

Table 48: The effect of principals’ coaching skills to conflict resolution

Test	Statistical parameters	Coaching skills	Conflict resolution among teachers
Spearman’s rho test	R-value	1.000	.261**
	P-value		.002
	N	372	372

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistically, findings show that principals’ coaching skills significant and positively affect conflict resolution (P=0.002, far <0.05). The positive sign of the correlation value (R= 0.261**) implies that principals are more likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they have good coaching skills and are less likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they lack good coaching skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis stated above was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states there is a significant effect between principals’ coaching skills and conflict resolution among teachers in secondary schools was accepted.

Discussion of findings

Findings have shown that principals’ communication skills significant and positively affect conflict resolution among teachers. The positive nature of the effect show that principals are more likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they portray good communication skills and less likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they

lack good communication skills. To support this, in a study carried out by Wairimu (2016) on the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution between administrations and teaching staff in public secondary schools in Gatanga Sub County, Murang'a County, Kenya, findings showed that communication plays a major role in causing, escalating and deescalating conflict. Fonkeng and Tamanjong (2009) stated that the communication processes verbal, nonverbal and para verbal component is designed to mediate students and teacher behaviour. Also, according to the Republic of Rwanda Public Service Commission's (2014), communication problems from leaders cause conflicts.

On the other hand, the principals' coaching skills was equally found to have a significant and positive affect on conflict resolution which implies that principals are more likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they have good coaching skills and are less likely to resolved conflict among teachers when they lack good coaching skills. Amadei (2010) said that conflict resolution coaching is a voluntary process to assist an individual to more effectively cope emotionally and mentally with a specific conflict, and address the conflict in a constructive manner. Amadei (2010) further said that conflict resolution coaching provides the support and guidance that the individual needs to understand the conflict, and empowers the individual to maintain control of the decisions about their situation as well as provide the skills necessary to better handle the conflict. Thus, this implies that coaching skills has a significant implication of conflict resolution.

Conclusion and Implications

In conclusion, findings have shown that principals' communication and coaching skills has a vital role to play in conflict resolution among teachers. In fact to support this, many of the principals interviewed for the study said that communication skills lead to proper handling of conflict and better understanding of teachers' feelings, prevent misunderstanding, support effective dialoguing, and guarantees the use of proper approaches. Similarly, the principals also said with good coaching skills, they can properly guide their teachers with many of the principals also saying that during conflict resolution, teachers turn to respect the principal when they have good coaching skills. Effective resolution of conflict among teachers, boasting the principals' confidence in handling conflict and guaranteeing the use of appropriate conflict resolution approaches by principals were other relevance of the principals' coaching skills to conflict resolution.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that principals should be trained. That is they need to undergo formal training and that they need to possess good communication and coaching skills to effectively run the day to day activities of their schools and to better managed their teachers most importantly in times of conflict.

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