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Original Research Article

Influence of Negotiation Conflict Management Strategy on Teachers' Productivity in Secondary Schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Conflicts are a common phenomenon in any given organization including the school system where there is human interaction. There has been persistent public concern on declining teachers' productivity in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. This is partly attributable to conflicts. The aim of this paper was to determine the influence of negotiation conflict management strategy on teachers' productivity in public secondary schools in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya. The study adopted correlational research design and targeted 156 principals and 1783 teachers from 156 public secondary schools. Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula was used to attain a sample size of 427 respondents. The study employed purposive sampling, stratified and simple random sampling approaches. Data was collected using questionnaires. The study used mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages and Pearson Correlation Analysis to analyze data which was presented in tables. The study found out that there was a significant positive correlation between negotiation and teachers' productivity (r = .525; p = .000) in secondary schools in Uasin-Gishu County. The paper concluded that there was a significant positive correlation between negotiation as a conflict management strategy and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin-Gishu County showing that negotiation conflict management strategy positively enhances teachers' productivity in secondary schools. The paper recommends that principals of secondary schools need to adopt conflict management approaches that strongly advocate for negotiation of all arising issues to ensure that compromise is easily reachable. This could be helpful in guiding management decisions and choices as to the most effective conflict management strategies to apply to resolve existing workplace conflicts.

Keywords: Negotiation, Conflict Management, Teachers' Productivity, Secondary Schools.

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Introduction

Conflict management strategies are futuristic, comprehensive approaches aimed at securing long-term gains for disputing parties. Negotiation (or collective bargaining), mediation or third-party interventions, leadership, brainstorming, and communication are some of these techniques. Importantly, conflict management approaches are based on the idea that while disputes cannot always be resolved, they may be managed via appropriate activities such as collaboration, accommodation, compromise, avoidance, confrontation. According to Sammy (2016), there was a link between conflict management strategies and employee productivity, and the most popular strategies were integrating, avoiding strategy, obliging strategy, and integrating strategy.

Conflicts are almost inevitable in human life. They are common in organizations as well as in learning institutions (Owan, 2018). Throughout history, humans have always detested conflicts and found numerous strategies to resolve them, such as mediation, negotiation, collaboration and avoidance. Negotiations have been used to reach agreements regarding issues of contention between opposing nations or individuals. Conflicts have gained many connotations because of their universality, which has left many managers confused about how best to deal with them. Conflicts build a stressful, disruptive, and uncomfortable working climate which affects employees' productivity

The success of a teacher is measured by their performance on the job. According to Aperribai, Cortabarria, Aguirre, Emilio, and Borges (2020), the

effectiveness of a teacher's work is based on three factors: quality, quantity, and time. They contend that fulfilling one's commitments and duties, as well as any additional duties, constitutes performing one's job as a teacher. The physical contacts between teachers and learners are a significant factor in determining how good teachers are at their jobs. By this interaction, a teacher can determine each student's academic proficiency in the areas being covered and the anticipated knowledge gaps that need to be filled in the upcoming classes. Teachers' job effectiveness is the ability of teachers to organize their job processes and professionalism in a manner that enables them to perform more work and adequately produce expected results in terms of classroom teaching, maintenance of classroom discipline and supervision of students' academic activities (Eric, 2019).

In order to improve performance and effectiveness an organization, conflict within management requires putting into place particular methods to lessen the bad parts of conflict while boosting the positive components of conflict. Proper and efficient conflict management techniques in schools decrease absenteeism and discontent among teachers while boosting output, originality, and creativity, all of which increase teachers' effectiveness. Constructive conflict management techniques, according to Johnson and Johnson (2017), provide solutions that are acceptable to all parties in dispute, enhance relationships, and increase their capacity to resolve future problems constructively.

The goal of conflict management research in schools is to enhance learning and group outcomes, such as organizational performance or effectiveness (Mongezi, 2018). In particular in Europe and North America, many intellectual luminaries of the late eighteenth century discussed how to resolve disputes through negotiation and the application of rewards. For instance, Jane Adams spearheaded several reformist and non-Marxist initiatives in the US to advance justice and stop war-making. According to a study by Dawson (2018), disputes between home and school have a negative impact on students' academic achievement and sense of well-being in the USA. Work-family conflict is found to have a detrimental impact on job performance among Pakistan's front-line Islamic bank employees (Riaz, Jamal, & Latif, 2019). According to a study by Göksoy and Argon (2016) in the Bolu Central District of Turkey, teachers who have experienced conflicts may despise their professions, have low morale and motivation, and perform less well. They may also feel disappointed, insensitive, tense, and uncomfortable.

The aim of conflict management will be to put an end to conflict by addressing the root causes of the problem(s) at hand and coming up with fair solutions that all sides can agree on (Edet, Benson & Williams, 2020). Conflict resolution is facilitated by the strategies used by principals to manage conflicts. They make it possible for school administrators to resolve conflicts by involving teachers who have been impacted by them so that they can alter their perspectives, benefit from the conflict, and perform their jobs effectively in terms of communication in the classroom, upholding classroom discipline, and monitoring students' academic activities.

Nyakundi and Orodho (2020) claim that conflicts at secondary schools in Kisii County have had a negative impact on teachers' job performance, with only 5% of instructors in the county doing well on the job. Conflicts therefore serve as a blatant warning sign that something is amiss inside the company and that sound principles are not being used in the resolution of the conflict. In order to boost performance, school principals, who are the top executives, must effectively handle these conflicts. This poses a question about which conflict management strategies might be used to improve teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Therefore, this paper sought to determine the influence of negotiation conflict management strategy on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of managing conflict includes the explicit interplay of knowledge types, attitudes, and abilities that aims at productivity in organizational operations, as well as encouragement by the management of the organization (Majola, 2017). In an effort to discover answers to the issues affecting organizations, managing conflicts necessitates conversations between the opposing groups with conflicting viewpoints. The main goal of conflict management approaches is to completely prevent the escalation of negative or destructive linked conflict and to do so at all costs. A social process that includes all stakeholders must articulate competent and effective conflict management systems for this to be carried out successfully (Aja, 2018).

According to Anashie and Kulo (2018), postprimary education should be administered without crisis or conflict if education is to be managed productively for long-term peace and economic development in countries. Each and every school administrator needs to use conflict management techniques (Saka, 2020). There are numerous methods for resolving disputes in educational settings. Among them are dominance, compromise, synergy, culture of civility, win-lose strategy, lose-lose strategy, and win-win strategy (Anashie & Kulo, 2018); integration, obligorization, smoothing, avoidance, and mediation; dialogue, arbitration, conciliation, and diplomacy (Crossfield & Bourne, 2018); negotiation, effective communication, and accommodating (Saka, 2020). Hence, secondary school principals are open to using a variety of dispute resolution techniques in their institutions. There is not a single optimum conflict management technique that can be applied to all types of conflict. Depending on the nature of the dispute or the people involved, different conflicts may demand different methods.

Schools are complex, dynamic organizations, and opportunities for conflict abound. With the main focus being placed on accountability and performance, there are chances of an increase in circumstances of conflict between either administrators and teachers or even teachers and students. Poor management of conflict in school administration may result in deficiencies in the performance of the students in terms of discipline and academic performance. The fact is that if teachers or students are able enough to understand the nature of conflict then it is very easy for them to manage any type of conflict in a constructive way (Ghaffar, Amir, & Naz, 2017).

Sompa (2019) aimed to identify the conflictresolution techniques employed by teachers and school administrators in a sample of secondary schools in Lusaka, Zambia. Interviews, focus groups, and document reviews were used in the study's descriptive survey research design to gather information from a sample of 107 participants in seven public secondary schools. According to the research, teachers and principals were able to handle conflicts by using a variety of conflict resolution techniques, including confrontation, avoidance, dialogue, upholding government policy by providing teachers with copies of their working conditions, imposing fees on the offending teacher, mediation, communication, and reprimanding the offending teacher.

According to Hambuda (2017), a worker's performance is maintained when their level of stress is minimal. The worker's performance truly improves when he or she is not under stress while carrying out their job. Less stress, according to Werang and Agung (2017), encourages employees and gives them the drive to perform better. In other words, stress might be responsible for initiative, creativity and inventiveness. Conversely, when stress levels are high, undesirable impacts including weariness, dissatisfaction, absences, and even quitting will manifest. Noori (2018) adds that antagonistic behavior, such as vandalism and sabotage, will also manifest. As a result, the relationship between performance and achievement and stress is inverse. To give beneficial stimulations, the stress level should be at least somewhat high (Ahlam et al., 2017).

Employee productivity may be affected favorably or unfavorably by how subordinates interpret a supervisor's actions. According to Jafari and Bidarian (2012), non-verbal messages play a critical role in interpersonal interactions with respect to impression, formation, deception, attraction, social influence, and emotional expression. Communication behavior such as facial expression, eye contact, vocal expression, and body movement are crucial to supervisor-subordinate

relationships. It is possible that the linguistic content of supervisors' communications with their employees is less significant than the way they say it. Those who detest and have negative thoughts about their supervisor are less likely to communicate or be motivated to work, whereas people who like and have positive thoughts about their supervisor are more likely to communicate and be happy with their job and workplace.

influence of negotiation conflict The management strategy on teachers' productivity has been the subject of several recent studies. Adeniji and Adeogun, (2021) investigated the influence of negotiation strategy on teachers' productivity in selected public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria and found out that negotiation strategy significantly influenced teachers' productivity, with the collaborative strategy being the most effective. Fang, Li and Li, (2020)in their study on effect of conflict management strategies on job performance, with negotiation being one of the strategies examined revealed that negotiation had a positive effect on job performance, and this effect was mediated by psychological empowerment. The study suggests that negotiation is an effective conflict management strategy that can improve performance. The current study was carried out in Kenyan context to determine the influence of negotiation conflict management strategy on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

METHODOLOGY

The study employed quantitative approach encompassing the use of correlational research design. Quantitative research as a structured, objective, systematic process for defining and testing relationships and for analyzing interactions between variables as to cause and effect. Correlational research design was chosen owing to it effectiveness in determining the relationships that exists between variables. It was employed in the definition, estimation, forecasting, and analysis of synergistic associations (Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018). This study was undertaken in Uasin Gishu County targeting principals and teachers from 156 public secondary schools. According to County Director of Education (2022), there were 1783 teachers and 156 principals. The sample size for this study was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula where 316 respondents was used as the sample size.

The schools and individual participants were sampled using a combination of stratified random sampling technique, simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling technique. Teachers from selected schools were selected through simple random sampling technique while principals if each selected school were purposively sampled to participate in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data in this study. The Content Validity Index (CVI) for the

questionnaires was obtained in order to confirm the validity of the study's tools while reliability was determined through pilot study and calculation of Cronbach Alpha. The Quantitative data collected were analyzed using quantitative analysis to provide descriptive statistics (Creswell, 2014). Descriptive statistics were used to better comprehend and assess the study's outcomes, as well as to identify patterns, tendencies, and connections. Frequencies and percentages were utilized to examine data trends in the descriptive statistics study. Pearson Correlation Analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of association between negation conflict management strategy and teachers' productivity.

RESULTS

The aim of this paper was to determine how negotiation as a conflict management strategy influenced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. To achieve this objective, the study participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on statements which covered the influence of negotiation as a conflict management strategy on teachers' productivity. The participants rated their response on a five-point Likert scale questions as; on a scale of 1-5, as Strongly Disagree (SD=1) Disagree(D=2) Neutral (N=3) Agree (A=4) and Strongly Agree (SA=5). Their responses were tabulated and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses on Influence of Negotiation as A Conflict Management Strategy on Teachers' Productivity

Statement		SD		D		UD		A		SA		Std
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		Dev.
Negotiations provide a quick, inexpensive and flexible approach to conflict resolution	37	10.2	45	12.4	47	12.9	160	44.1	74	20.4	4.13	0.650
Negotiations help enhance communication among conflicting parties which preserves their relationships	25	6.9	51	14.0	69	19.0	131	36.1	87	24.0	3.93	0.595
Negotiations are usually risk-free since communication is prejudice- free and when the parties can't come to an agreement, they are free to seek other	40	11.0	59	16.3	62	17.1	130	35.8	72	19.8	3.65	0.854
Negotiations can help clarify and narrow down issues and encouraging an agreement on the best decision is not achieved	38	10.5	54	14.9	80	22.0	81	22.3	110	30.3	3.57	0.628
Negotiations may lead to enhanced satisfaction and adherence to settlements when parties are made part of the decision making and the coming up with agreements	30	8.3	75	20.7	30	8.3	110	30.3	118	32.4	4.06	0.589

Table 1 shows that 160(44.1%) respondents agreed with the statement that negotiations provide a quick, inexpensive and flexible approach to conflict resolution, 74(20.4%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 47(12.9%) respondents were undecided on the statement and 45(12.4%) respondents disagreed with the statement while 37(10.2%) respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. From the responses, a mean of 4.13 with a standard deviation of 0.650 was obtained on the statement showing that a majority (64.5%) of the teachers in public secondary schools believed that negotiations provided a quick, inexpensive and flexible approach to conflict resolution in their schools. This was in line with the findings of Oni-Ojo et al. (2014), who similarly named bargaining as one of the principal conflict-resolution tactics that produced fruitful results. The study promoted the idea that negotiations were a practical method for resolving disputes that might assist businesses in controlling

workplace disputes and, as a result, help them achieve their objectives. Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016) and Olang (2017) observed the same thing, observing that negotiation, as a conflict resolution tactic, allowed parties in conflict to foster a climate of openness, cooperation, and understanding, leading to quicker resolution of disputes and subsequently improving staff performance. Awan and Saeed (2015) concurred, noting that discussions strengthen bonds between combatants and raise the possibility that the parties will adhere to solutions reached by mutual consent.

In addition, 131(36.1%) respondents agreed with the assertion that negotiations help enhance communication among conflicting parties which preserves their relationships, 87(24.0%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 69(19.0%) respondents were neutral on the statement and 51(14.0%) respondents disagreed with the statement

while only 25(6.9%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. A mean of 3.93 with a standard deviation of 0.595 was obtained on the statement showing that a majority (60.1%) of the study participants acknowledged that negotiations helped in enhancing communication among conflicting parties which preserves their relationships. This was found to be in agreement with the findings of Awan and Saeed (2015) who noted in their study that negotiations enhanced relationships between warring parties and increase the likelihood of the parties' compliance with mutually agreed settlements to the conflict.

Similarly, 130(35.8%) respondents agreed with the statement that negotiations are usually risk-free since communication is prejudice-free and when the parties cannot come to an agreement, they are free to seek other means of conflict resolution, 72(19.8%) respondents strongly agreed with the assertion, 62(17.1%) were neutral and 59(16.3%) respondents disagreed with the statement while 40(11.0%) respondents were strongly in disagreement with the statement. From the responses, a mean of 3.65 with a standard deviation of 0.854 was obtained on the statement showing that a majority (55.6%) of the respondents believed that negotiations are usually riskfree since communication is prejudice-free and when the parties cannot come to an agreement, they are free to seek other avenues of conflict resolution. Iravo (2017) maintains that since school is an entity which composes of different people with different generational ages and that negotiation must be identified as the best strategies for eliminating conflicts and thus in this study, use of negotiation enhances warring parties to come to a common ground in their conflicts.

Furthermore, 110(30.3%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement that negotiations can help clarify and narrow down issues and encouraging an agreement when the best decision is not achieved, 81(22.3%) respondents agreed with the statement, 80(22.0%) respondents were neutral on the statement and 54(14.9%) respondents were in disagreement with the assertion while 38(10.5%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. A mean of 3.57 with a standard deviation of 0.628 was obtained on the statement showing that a majority (52.6%) of the respondents acknowledged that negotiations can help clarify and narrow down issues and encouraging an agreement on the best decision is not achieved. According to Ahmed, and Aijaz, (2021), Individual differences between negotiators and their importance in understanding people's emotions can be changed when faced with contrary situations when negotiation is used as a conflict management strategy. Furthermore, Dildar and Amjad, (2017) noted that negotiations usually lead to effective decision-making during conflict resolution.

Similarly, 118(32.4%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement that negotiations may lead to

enhanced satisfaction and adherence to settlements when parties are made part of the decision making and the coming up with agreements, 110(30.3%) respondents agreed with the statement, 75(20.7%) respondents disagreed with the statement and 30(8.3%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement while another 30(8.3%) respondents were neutral with the statement. From the responses, a mean of 4.06 with a standard deviation of 0.589 was obtained on the statement implying that majority (62.7%) respondents believed that negotiations may lead to enhanced satisfaction and adherence to settlements when parties are made part of the decision making and the coming up with agreements. In the same manner, a study by Okoth (2014) on conflict resolution techniques used in secondary schools in Kisumu, Kenya found out that conflict resolution strategies of negotiation utilized in secondary schools were beneficial in enhancing performance.

As a result, bargaining was essential to the success of the company since it helped to reach a consensus in conflict resolution by ensuring that everyone was aware of the justifications for the concessions made by individual members. Hence, it is important to recognize that the results of negotiations greatly influence whether the opposing teams will come to an understanding and collaborate to achieve organizational objectives and boost performance. This is due to the fact that the conclusion of any negotiating exercise will either encourage group cohesion or cause friction to rise. There are three possible outcomes: winwin, win-lose, and lose-lose. Yet, the win-win negotiating outcome is applicable in a variety of circumstances, such as contract negotiations and dispute resolution. Due to the adoption of win-win and win-lose strategies that allow employees to amicably resolve their concerns to their satisfaction, negotiations have a substantial impact on secondary school teachers' productivity. In other words, it offers an examination of potential means of resolving disputes, making it harder for any aggrieved party to feel marginalized or biased against. Hence, if a dispute is addressed in a way that makes everyone concerned happy, their participation at work increases, which enhances their overall performance.

Correlation between Negotiation and Teachers' Productivity

The hypothesis of this study stated that;

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between Negotiation as a conflict management strategy on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson correlation at 95% confidence level. Table 2 provides the Pearson correlation coefficient between negotiation as a conflict management strategy on teachers'

productivity in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu

County.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient between Negotiation and Teachers' Productivity

		Productivity
Negotiation	Pearson Correlation	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	363

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 shows that there was a significant positive correlation between negotiation as a conflict management strategy and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin-Gishu County (r = .525; p = .000). This means that at 95% confidence level the r value for negotiation as a conflict management strategy was .525 showing a strong correlation with teachers' productivity. However, the r value was positive implying a positive correlation which means use of negotiation as a conflict management strategy positively improves teacher productivity in public secondary schools. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted showing that there was a significant relationship between Negotiation as a conflict management strategy on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. This concurs with the findings of Ampomah et al., (2022) who found a positive effect of negotiation as conflict management strategies on school performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper concluded that there was a significant positive correlation between negotiation as a conflict management strategy and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Uasin-Gishu County showing that negotiation conflict management strategy positively enhances teachers' productivity in secondary schools. The paper recommends that principals of secondary schools need to adopt conflict management approaches that strongly advocate for negotiation of all arising issues to ensure that compromise is easily reachable.

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