Influence Of Principals' Age On Conflict Management Styles In Secondary Schools In Kisumu County, Kenya

Janet Wagude

Abstract: Conflict management skills are a fundamental aspect of leadership effectiveness and likeability of principals has become of greater importance. If an individual is perceived to manage conflict in an appropriate and effective manner within an organizational setting, that individual is also perceived to be more competent in general. The purpose of this study was to investigate influence of principals' age on conflict management styles. The study adopted a descriptive survey methodology. The Thomas Kilmann conflict management instrument was used to collect data. The study found that there is no particular age that most frequently use a particular style although up to age 45, principals use avoiding more, and between age 46-56 they tend to use compromising. The recommendation for policy makers was that there is a need to have in service training so as to empower principals on conflict management styles. The study suggested possible areas for further research.

Key words: Conflict management, Principal's conflict management styles, Kisumu County

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1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict management skills are a fundamental and critical aspect of leadership effectiveness. Leaders who are perceived to manage conflicts in a more appropriate and effective manner are also perceived to be more competent (Kurabik, Baril & Watson,1993; Gross & Gurerro, 2000). Lack of a proficiency conflict management style tends to have a persistent detrimental impact on productivity (Mayer, 2009). Conflict resolution, in this paper, adopts a definition advanced by Sweeney and Carruthers (1996) who thought it as a process by which parties in a dispute resolve their differences and reach an agreement. Conflict management gained popularity from the two-dimensional theory "The Leadership Grid" developed by Blake and Mouton (1964). Blake and Mouton contended that individuals can be rated on a scale of one to nine according to their concern for production or concern for people. Concern for production depicts an individual's desire to achieve personal goals whereas concern for people indicates an individual's desire to maintain personal relationships. The two-dimensional managerial grid has five discrete conflict resolution styles: smoothing (high concern for people and low concern for production); withdrawing (low concern for both people and production); compromising (medium concern for production and people) problem-solving (high concern for production and people); and forcing (high concern for production and low concern for people). Fourie (1999) asserts that conflict is necessary for interpersonal relationship in a work place and managers must ensure that interpersonal relationship is maintained.

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D'oosterling & Broekact (2003) contends that managing conflict constructively and developing its effective conflict resolutions procedures encourages the development of value, attitude, knowledge and civic standards in the institutions. Since conflict has both positive as well as negative consequences it must be analyzed and managed carefully. The conflict handling style of a manager also determines how conflict is managed (Bhusan, 2007). Conflicts will always be present within our schools, whether we like it or not. Educators must find ways to legitimize, critique and control controversy within organization life (Uline, 2003). Hen ken et al (2000) view management as communicational behavior which includes understanding of the source and type of conflict as well as the impact they have upon organization. It inherently occurs in life and must be constructively managed. Thomas and Kilmann (1974) developed a model for handling conflict that utilizes five styles, competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. According to Bass and Stodgily (1990) the competence of a manager in any organization depends on the manager's ability to resolve conflict in their organizations. In today's complex and ever changing world conflict is a fact of life (Whitefield, 2010) .From the United Kingdom context, "The Buston school strike was at the centre of the longest running strike in British history, between 1914 and 1939, which was as a result of the sacking of the school principal. The Sudbury school strike in 1989 in UK also had a negative effect. The deleterious effect of strike on students has often been decried in the heated course of community conflict. Within the South Africa context conflicts in school management has recently attracted the attention of social scientists from a wide variety of academic discipline. In Uganda, striking of secondary school students as a means of seeking attention is rampant. On August 25th, the day before schools officially break off for term two holidays, Kisubi High school students went on rampage destroying property worth millions of shillings, computers with their accessories stolen and destroyed and petrol was used to blaze down school administration block known as "White House" and so was at Kyambogo college and Nabumali high school. In Kenya, incidences of conflict in academic settings are a daily occurrence because a consensus of opinion concerning

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rules governing the school seldom exists among the participants, particularly between the principal and students who see one another as adversaries. These conflicts have led to striking moment in secondary schools, Universities and other institutions. With good conflict management styles of a conflicting situation the impact of conflict can always be minimized so as to avoid the Bombolulu and St. Kizito school conflicts. Experience has shown that there are different conflict management styles that are being used when a conflict occurs. Conflict can result into a crisis in an organization and there is no other best approach to mitigating conflicts than the application of threat rigidity in the management of conflicts in an organization (Kilmann, 1994). It is for this reason that the paper has sought to determine the influence of principal's age on conflict management styles in secondary schools in Kisumu County.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Barash and Webell (2002) define conflict from a Latin word configure which means to strike together. Conflict must be viewed as disequilibrium, a disturbance and a problem. Huggets (2005) asserts that conflict occurs when the needs is at odds. Barash and Webell (2008) point out that rivals or competitors are those who are seeking to obtain supply such as food, water, or status. Conflict presently continues to be a factor in academic life. Schools frequently appear to be centers of tensions. On occasion, they are, perhaps, a manifestation of problems in the community (Nebgen, 2009). It is obviously necessary for administration to be able to recognize conflict, to view its constructive as well as destructive potential, and to learn how to manage conflict and to apply conflict management styles in a practical way. Conflict management in any secondary school should be a priority of any school manager who engenders to have good performance .Success of any institution depends on how well their conflicts is managed for the common good of everyone within the organization however, striking of secondary students as a means of seeking attention in Kenyan schools is rampant. Hardly a term passes without a school striking and the pattern is becoming bizarre with school property being destroyed by students. This kind of intergroup conflict in most of Kenyan secondary schools is eventually characterized by poor Kenya certificate of secondary examination results, strikes, burning of secondary schools and other anti-social behaviors in the learning institutions Saddler (2010). These problems have contributed to prevalent conflicts like student-student conflict, teacher-teacher conflict and teacher-student conflict, (Kuye et al, 2009).These conflicts eventually lead to some students being expelled from school as was the case in St. Kizito and Bombululu secondary schools. When students go on strike, the burn down dormitories cause serious losses to parents both physically and financially and they have to meet fresh costs of putting up new buildings as well as buying new personal effects to their children. According to Achoka (2011) age and conflict management style may also cause conflict. The study sought to determine the influence of principal's age on conflict management style in secondary schools. Particularly, the study investigated the influence of principals' age on conflict management style in secondary schools in Kisumu County.

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship in principals age and conflict management styles.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kurabik, Baril and Watson (2010), conflict management skills are a fundamental aspect of leadership effectiveness and likeability of supervisors has become of greater importance and if an individual is perceived to manage conflict in an appropriate and effective manner within a school setting, that individual is also perceived to be more competent in general (Gross & Gurerro, 2011). Thomas and Kilmann (1974) developed a model for handling conflict that utilizes five styles, competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. Conflict management styles of the principals show how they interact with their employees (Pirkhaefi, 2009). Each principal manages conflict in a way that might have differences with other principals. These consistent types of conflict style that principals apply with others at work are called conflict management styles (Farahani et al, 2010).When communicating and working with the follower, the leaders' communication is a mixture of attributes, skills and behaviors collectively called conflict management style (Kannz et al, 2010). Thomas Kilman introduced five conflict management styles based on his extensive research on conflicts. Research has shown that principals' conflict management style is related to effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of educational institutions. Efficiency involves doing things correctly in the organization, that is, decisions are made to reduce costs, increase production and improve product quality (Taheri, 2009). Ziaee (2011) in a research entitled: "investigation about the relationship of conflict management style with the efficiency of teachers in primary school in Gorgan concluded that applying accommodative style in educational centers had the most efficiency and competing style had the least efficiency, and applying collaborating and compromising styles in management of training institutes are remarkably efficient. Raad (2011), observed that accommodative management style has been dominant in view of principals and the staff in the research sample. In a study performed on 90 High school principals, Sterman (2010) concluded that collaborating style usually creates better spirit and leads to better product quality. While the competing style, usually harms the spirit and performance of people. Adeyemi (2011) likewise reported accommodating style as the most common conflict style at schools in Nigeria, followed by compromising style. Rajabi (2012), examined the relationship between principals' conflict management styles with school performance of Tabriz. The findings indicated that the principal's used collaboration style less and applied more accommodating and compromising conflict styles. Another finding was that avoiding style is in positive association with the success of the principals of age between 50 -57. Kumar (2012), in a study titled "Principals' conflict management style and their performance and effectiveness in schools of Dubai" concluded that conflict management style of principals has a direct relationship with their efficiency and effectiveness influencing their effectiveness, although the conflict management style of principals are different in terms of school level, sex and age. Ibrahim and Shakya, (2013), in their study examined the relationship between principals'

age and conflict management style on job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Dubai concluding that the school principals in secondary schools use compromising style more while using less competing style as a result boost favorable performance of the teachers. Considering that the principals have important and essential roles in leading expert and efficient human force in all fields and consequently, education as a subset plays an important role in training effective and efficient human resources, the category of conflict management style for school administrators is considered an effective factor in department of education.

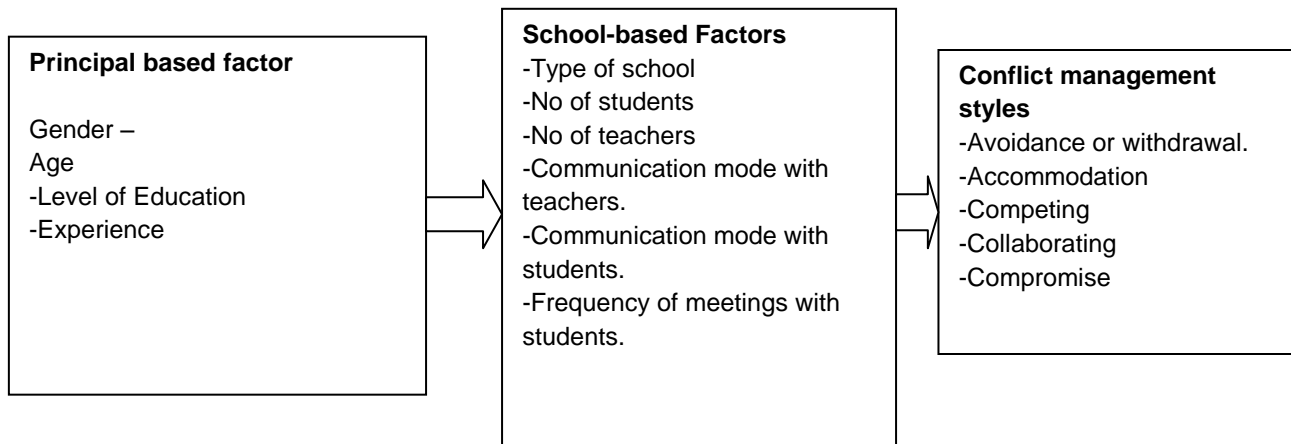## 2.1. The theoretical perspective of conflict management

The study operates under the theory of social role, and human and violence theory. Human violence theory views conflict as a power struggle between more opposing parties. The study focuses on the social role theory since it is interested in the conflict management styles of male and female principals. Eagly (2008) explains social role theory as the concept that men and women behave differently in social situations and adopt different roles, due to societal expectations of how they should behave in various situations. Social role theory is often seen as a form of social determinism whereby individuals are trapped into stereotypes which people then choose to maintain as customs (Claes, 2009). Social determinism is explained further by Eagly (2008) who maintains that this social role theory of sex and age differences in social behavior

suggests that people are expected to behave in ways that are consistent with these gender roles and age. Therefore women and men will strive to fulfill these expectations, or social roles in various facets of social interactions. Eagly (2008) additionally asserts that although society possesses expectations regarding how women and men should behave these expectations are more than beliefs about the attributes of women and men. Many of these expectations describe qualities or behavioral tendencies believed to be desirable. When individuals act in ways that are consistent with their prescribed roles, they are generally viewed favorably, however, when individuals act in ways that violate what is considered acceptable behavior for their gender and age they are likely to be viewed negatively (Eagly, 2008).

2.2. Conceptual Framework

Definition of Variables as Perceived by the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the principals' age and conflict management styles used by the principals. Independent variables that influence the way principals resolve conflict include age and experience. The principals have five conflict management approaches to use in resolving school conflict. These are avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising and collaboration. The study will be guided by the following perceived conceptual framework.

Principal based factor

Gender –
Age
-Level of Education
-Experience

School-based Factors
-Type of school
-No of students
-No of teachers
-Communication mode with teachers.
-Communication mode with students.
-Frequency of meetings with students.

Conflict management styles
-Avoidance or withdrawal.
-Accommodation
-Competing
-Collaborating
-Compromise

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey as a method of collecting information by using a standardized forced choice personality questionnaire. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative methods because the study required analysis on the method of conflict management styles and quantifying the row data in terms of how many would employ certain styles to manage conflict vis a vis the other. The study was carried out in Kisumu district of Nyanza province in the secondary schools run by male and female principals. The population of this study comprised a total of 141 secondary schools in the district headed by male and female principals, of which 104 were headed by males principals while 37 were headed by their female

counterparts. The sample of the study comprised 37 schools run by the female principals and 104 schools headed by male principals. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling (Kornbo and Tromp, 2006). The study used the Thomas Kilmann mode Instrument (TKI) for quantitative data on conflict resolution approaches. It consists of 30 forced-choice questions from which the respondent chooses between two paired statements, each describing one of the five conflicts styles included in the managerial grid. Using the score sheet with columns labeled: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating the participant's response that corresponds to their answer on the questionnaire are circled. The five styles are: (a) accommodating (b) avoiding

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(c) collaborating (d) competing (e) compromising (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Thomas, 1976). Structured Interview provided in-depth data that is not possible to get using a questionnaire. The researcher pre-tested the instrument in five secondary schools run by male and four run by female principals respectively that were conveniently selected as part of establishing reliability and validity. These pilot schools did not form part of the study sample. Structured interviews and Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument were used to collect primary data. Secondary data were collected from the Ministry of Education Kisumu District Education Office. Upon completion of data collection, all data were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 (Nie et al, 2000). The questionnaire were scored and data edited, coded and then analyzed. A code sheet was used to synthesize the data. The synthesized data was analyzed quantitatively since all data involved in the study could be reduced to numerical values. Quantitative analysis involved getting the total scores of each subject of the study and the presentation of statistical data in form of frequency distribution tables and graphs whose explanation were mainly based on descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypothesis was tested using chi-square at 95% level of confidence to determine if there are any relationships between the study variables. Tabulation was done for each questionnaire depending on the responses elicited by the respondents. The results from the respondents were discussed and recommendation elicited by the tabulation and descriptions there in.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Influence of age on the way male and female principals handle conflict.
Age was considered pertinent in that it could influence on a subject view of conflict as needing to be either resolved or managed. In view of this principals who took part in the study were required to state their age and the mode of conflict they prefer. Out of 132 respondents of age bracket 37-40 years used competing 10 (52.6%), collaborating 2 (10.5%), 0(0.0%) compromising 1 (5.3%) avoiding, 6 (31.6%) accommodating. Respondents of age bracket 41-

45years 10 (31.3%) competing, 6 (18.8%) collaborating, 14 (2.5%) compromising, 1 (3.1 %) avoiding, 11 (34.4%) accommodating. Age bracket 46-50, 26 (53.1%) competing, 2 (4.7%) collaborating, 0 (0.0%) compromising, 6 (12.2%) avoiding, 15 (30.6%) accommodating. Age bracket 50-56, 10 (55.6%) competing, 0 (0.0%) collaborating, 3 (16.7%) compromising, 2(11.1%) avoiding, 3 (16.7%) accommodating. Therefore the respondents between the ages between 37-40 years. 10(52.6%), between 46-50 years 26 (53.1%) and 50-57 years 10 (55.6%) least use competing mode to solve conflicts. For the respondents between the ages 41-45 years 11(34.4%), accommodating mode is the least used by a majority to solve conflicts. This is as illustrated on Table 4.1. This is significant to the study because it will enable the policy makers to identify what conflict management styles are not applicable with particular age groups.

4.2. Most frequently used Mode of conflict management style as per Age group.
The most frequently used mode was reported by the respondents in the following order out of 132 respondents age bracket 37-40 years 1(5.3%) competing, 2 (10.5%) collaborating, 6(31.6%) compromising, 10(52,6) avoiding, 0(0.0%) accommodating. Age bracket 41-45 years 2 (6.7%) competing, 5 (16%) collaborating, 8(26.7%) compromising, 13 (43.3%) avoiding 2(6.7%) accommodating. Age bracket 46-50 years 4(9.5%) competing, 4(9.5%) collaborating, 18(42.9%) compromising, 11 (26%) avoiding 5 (11.9%) accommodating. Age bracket 50-57 years 0(0.0%) competing, 4 (9.5%) collaborating, 18 (42.9%) compromising, 11 (26.2%) avoiding, 3 (16.7%) accommodating. Age bracket 50-56 years 0(0.0%) competing, 4 (22.2%) collaborating, 9 (50%) compromising, 2 (11.1%) avoiding, 3 (16.7%) accommodating, For the respondents between the ages 46-50 years and above 50 years, compromising mode is the most frequently used mode to solve conflicts by 18 (42.9%) and 9(50%) respectively. However, for the respondents aged below 40 years and those between 41-45 years, avoiding mode is the most frequently used mode of conflict resolution.

Table 4.1: *Most frequently used mode within Age*

Age (Years)	Conflict Resolution Mode				
	Competing	Collaborating	Compromising	Avoiding	Accommodating
37-40	1(5.3%)	2(10.5%)	6(31.6%)	10(52.6%)	0(0.0%)
41-45	2(6.7%)	5(16.7%)	8(26.7%)	13(43.3%)	2(6.7%)
46-50	4(9.5%)	4(9.5%)	18(42.9%)	11(26.2%)	5(11.9%)
50-56	0(0.0%)	4(22.2%)	9(50%)	2(11.1%)	3(16.7%)

This is significant to the study because it is revealing a finding that there is no particular age that most frequently use a particular style although age 40 years use avoiding more, age 41-45 years use avoiding, 46-50 years use compromising, and 50-56 years use compromising more.

Table 4.2. *Least frequently used mode within Age*

Age (Years)	Least frequently used mode				
	Competing	Collaborating	Compromising	Avoiding	Accommodating
37-40	10(52.6%)	2(10.5%)	0(0.0%)	1(5.3%)	6(31.6%)
41-45	10(31.3%)	6(18.8%)	14(2.5%)	1(3.1%)	11(34.4%)
46-50	26(53.1%)	2(4.7%)	0(0.0%)	6(12.2%)	15(30.6%)
50-56	10(55.6%)	0(0.0%)	3(16.7%)	2(11.1%)	3(16.7%)

This is significant to the study because it will enable the policy makers to identify what conflict management styles are not applicable with particular age groups.

4.3. Rate of use of Different Conflict Management Styles within Age Group

Efforts were also made to establish the rate of use of the different conflict management styles within age group. Out of the 132 respondents 'age group 37-40 years, 14 (66.7%) low, 7 (7.33%) medium, (0.0%) high. Age group 40-45 years, 14 (44.4%) low, 20 (55.60%) medium, 0 (0.0%) high. Age group 46-50 years 56 (69.2) low. 11 (21.2%) medium, 5 (9.6%) high. Age group 50-56 years, 12 (63.2%) low, 7 (36.8%) medium, 0 (0.0%) high all use competing, Age group 37-40 years 4 (19.0%) low, 15(71.4%) medium. 2(9.5%) high. Age group 40-45 years, 13 (36.1%) low, 18(50.0%) medium, 5 (13.9%) high. Age group, 46-50 7 (13.5%) low, 42 (80.8%) medium, 3(5.8%) high. Age group, 50-56 3(15.8%) low, 13 (68.4%) medium, 3 (15.8%) high, all use collaborating. Age group, 37-40 0 (0.0%) low, 16 (76.2%) medium, 5 (23.8%) high, Age group 40-45 5 (13.9%) low, 24 (66.7%) medium, 7 (19.4%) high, Age group, 46-50 4 (7.7%) low, 28 (53.8%) medium, 20 (38.5%) high Age group. 50-56 3 (15.8%) low, 15 (78.9%) medium, 1 (5.3%) high all use compromising. Age group, 37-40,2 (9.5%) low, 8 (38.1%) medium, 11 (52.4%) high. Age group 40-45, 2 (5.6%) low, 23 (63.9%) medium, 11 (30.6%) high Age group 46-50, 10 (19.2%) low, 30 (57.7) medium, 12 (23.1 %) high. Age group, 50-56, 3 (15.8%) low, 15 (78.9%) medium, 1 (5.3%) high, all use avoiding. Age group, 37-40, 14 (66.7%) low, 7 (33.3%) medium, 0 (0.0%) high. Age group, *40/45,* 22 (61.1 %) low, 13 (36.1 %) medium, 1 (2.8%) high. Age group *46/50,* 22 (42.3%) low, 0 (50.0%) medium, 4 (7.7%) high. Age group, 50-56 5 (26.3%) low, 12 (63.2%) respondents with the age below 40 years, 20 (52.4%) fall in the upper quota in the use of avoiding mode in conflict resolution. However for the other age groups, majority, above 50% fall in the middle quota in the use of this mode of conflict resolution. For the competing mode, it is only the respondents with the age between 40-45 years whose majority fall in the middle quota in the use of this conflict resolution mode to resolve conflicts. Otherwise the other age groups fall in the lower quota in the use of this mode in conflict resolution. For the collaboration mode as a way of conflict management resolution, age is not a factor to be considered because all the ages have over 50% in the middle quota, 37- 40 years, 15 (71.4%),40-45 years, 18 (50%), 46-50 years 42 (80.8%) and over 50-56 years 13 (68.4%). All the age categories have the compromising style as their best way of resolving conflicts at the medium quota. Except for the age of over *50* years, 12 (63.2%), all the ages embrace avoiding as a means of conflict management resolution. They have the highest percentage at the lower quota.

4.4. Testing of null hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study stated that there is no significant relationship between conflict management styles of principals and their age. Table 4.3 shows that competing mode and avoiding mode registered a P value that was less than the alpha probability of 0.05. This led to rejection of null hypothesis of the two modes therefore the study adopted alternate hypothesis that read there is a significant relationship between conflict management styles of the principal and age concerning the two modes.

Table 4.3. *The rate of use of the different conflict management styles within age group*

Conflict Reso	Rate of use	Age (yrs) 37-40	41-45	46-50	50-56	p-value	Remarks
Competing	Low	14(66.7%)	16(44.4%)	36(69.2%)	12(63.2%)		
	Med	7(33.3%)	20(55.6%)	11(21.2%)	7(36.8%)	0.01	Reject
	High	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(9.6%)	0(0.0%)		
Collaborating	Low	4(19.0%)	13(36.1%)	7(13.5%)	3(15.8%)		fail to reject
	Med	15(71.4%)	18(50.0%)	42(80.8%)	13(68.4%)		
	High	2(9.5%)	5(13.9%)	3(5.8%)	3(15.8%)		
Compromising	Low	0(0.0%)	5(13.9%)	4(7.7%)	3(15.8%)		
	Med	16(76.2%)	24(66.7%)	28(53.8%)	8(42.1%)		fail to reject
	High	5(23.8%)	7(19.4%)	20(38.5%)	8(42.1%)		
Avoiding	Low 2(9.5%)	2(5.6%)	10(19.2%)	3(15.8%)			
	Med	8(38.1%)	23(63.9%)	30(57.7%)	15(78.9%)		Reject
	High	11(52.4%)	11(30.6%)	12(23.1%)	1(5.3%)		
Accommo dating	Low 14(66.7%)	22(61.1%)	22(42.3%)	5(26.3%)			
	Med	7(33.3%)	13(36.1%)	50.0%)	12(63.2%)		fail to reject
	High	0(0.0%)	1(2.8%)	4(7.7%)	2(10.5%)		

Significant at P< 0.05

On the other hand, the P value registered on collaborating, compromising and accommodation was greater than the alpha value which led to acceptance of the null hypothesis of these and their modes that state there is no significant relationship in conflict management styles of principals and their age.

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Table 4.4. Suggestion on the best ways to solve conflict within age group

Suggested mode of Conflict resolution	36-40 yrs	Age of the respondents 41-45yrs	46-50yrs	50-56yrs	
Diplomacy	0(0.0%)	1(3.1%)	1 (2.9%)	1(7.1%)	3 (3.1%)
Guidance and counseling	1(6.7%)	5(15.6%)	1 (2.9%)	0(0.0%)	7 (7.3%)
Dialogue and reconciliation	2(13.3%)	5(15.6%)	2(5.7%)	4(28.6%)	13(13.5%)
Discussion and negotiation	4(26.7%)	14(43.8%)	13(34.3%)	6(42.9%)	37(37.5%)
Agreement	2(13.3%)	1(3.1%)	1(2.9%)	0(0.0%)	4(4.2%)
Problem solving	0(0.0%)	1(3.1%)	2(5.7%)	0(0.0%)	3(3.1%)
In service training on conflict Management	3(20.0%)	2(6.3%)	4(11.4%)	1(7.1%)	10(10.4%)
Mediation	2(13.3%)	3(9.4%)	7(20.0%)	1(7.1%)	13(13.5%)
Avoidance	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(2.9%)	1(7.1%)	2(2.1%)
Accommodation and Compromising	1(6.7%)	0(0.0%)	4(11.4%)	0(0.0%)	5(5.2%)
TOTALS	15(100%)	32(100%)	36(100%)	8(100%)	99(100%)

Table 4.4 shows that competing mode and avoiding mode registered a P value that was less than the alpha probability of 0.05. This led to rejection of null hypothesis of the two modes therefore the study adopted alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between conflict management styles of the principal and age concerning the two modes. On the other hand, the P value registered on collaborating, compromising and accommodation was greater than the alpha value which led to failing to reject the null hypothesis of these and their modes that state there is no significant relationship in conflict management styles of principals and their age. When principals were asked to give personal suggestions on the best way to solve conflicts, out of all respondents Age group 37-40 years 0 (0.0%) suggested Diplomacy, I (6.7%) guidance and counseling, 2 (13.3%) dialogue and reconciliation, 4 (26.7%) discussion and negotiations, 2 (13.3%) agreement, 0 (0.0%) problem solving, 3 (20.0%) in service training on conflict management, 2 (13.3%) mediation, 0 (0.0%). avoidance, 1 (6.7%) accommodation and compromising. Age group 41-45, 1 (3.1%) diplomacy, 5 (15.6%) guidance and counseling, 5 (15.6%) dialogue and reconciliation, 14 (43.8%) discussion and negotiation, 1 (3.1%) agreement, 1 (3.1%) problem solving, 2 (6.3%) in service training on conflict management, 3 (9.4%) mediation, 0 (0.0%) avoidance, 0 (0.0%) accommodation and compromising. Age group 46-50 1 (2.9%) diplomacy, 1 (2.9%) guidance and counseling, 2(5.7%) dialogue and reconciliation, 13 (34.3%) discussion and negotiation, 1 (2.9%) agreement, 2 (5.7%) problem solving, 4 (11.4%) in services training on conflict management 7 (20.0%) mediation, 1 (2.9%) avoidance, 4 (11.4%) accommodation and compromising Age group 50-56 1 (7.1%) diplomacy, 0 (0.0%) guidance and counseling, 4 (28.6%) dialogue and reconciliation, 6 (42.9%) discussion and negotiations, 0 (0.0%) agreement, 0 (0.0%) problem solving, 1 (7.1 %) in service training on conflict management, 1 (7.1%) mediation, 1 (7.1 %) avoidance, 0 (0.0%) accommodation and compromising. Generally, discussion and negotiation was suggested as the best mode of solving conflicts by (37) 37.5% as shown in Table 4.4. This was followed by mediation and dialogue and reconciliation that were suggested by 13 (13.5%) of the respondents. Diplomacy

was suggested by the lowest number of respondents 0 (0.0 %). With respect to age, discussion was the best preferred across all age groups. (3) 20% of the respondents below the age 40 years suggested that the school community should be trained on how to handle conflicts and this will be the best way of resolving the conflicts. (4) 28.6% of the principals above 50 years suggested dialogue and reconciliation as the best way of solving conflicts. However, age is not significant at 95% confidence interval with Pearson value of 0.383.

5. Summary of the Findings
There is no relationship between age of principals and their conflict management styles among the respondents between the ages less than 40 years, between 46-50 years and above 50 years. For the respondents between the ages 41-45 years, accommodating mode is the least used by a majority to solve conflicts .Asked about the effects of conflict in school progress, principals indicated that conflicts demotivate, demoralize, and retard progress. A majority of the respondents reported that conflicts in school have a great effect in the school daily management. Conflict is inevitable and it simply has the potential of improving or impairing the organizational performance depending on the conflict management style used.

5.1 Conclusion
In view of lack of training on conflict management styles, it is clear from the findings, that conflict remains rife in the schools. It is, therefore, proposed that the recommendations be implemented and stakeholders be involved in the management of conflict.

5.2 Recommendations
With regards to the findings from the literature review, analysis and interpretations of the data, the following recommendations are offered. Both the Kenyan Government and the education stakeholders should design a way of empowering the entire school community, principals, teachers, support staff, students and other stakeholders on the need to be equipped with several ways of conflict management styles so as not to affect the daily running of the school community. Thus, in-service training

can be used to address conflict management styles and resolutions and help male and female principals develop viable approaches of managing conflict. Principals should have a conflict management protocol in schools. Conflict needs to be managed rather than to be avoided. It is important for principals to note that conflict management requires particular management skills. The principals should design proper plans and follow correct procedures in managing conflicts in their schools. Government should offer bursaries to improve principals academic qualifications. Monthly returns for schools to the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission should capture the number of teachers and principals trained on conflict management so that the government can ensure that all teachers are trained. Schools should partner with non-governmental organizations that deal with conflicts. Lastly, conflict management should be part of the school curriculum although non-examinable.

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