Conflict Resolution Mechanisms and Their Influence on Quality Education in Private Secondary Schools in Arusha District Council

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Abstract: The study examined the conflict resolution mechanism and its influence on quality education in private secondary schools in Arusha district council, Tanzania. Objectives were to; examine conflicts and their resolution mechanisms in private secondary schools and the extent to which conflict resolution mechanisms influence quality education in private secondary schools. Conflict Resolution Theory steered the study. Convergent mixed methods design appropriate to collect data through questionnaires and interview guides was adopted. Sample size consisted of 270 respondents; 192 students, 66 teachers selected by simple and stratified random sampling techniques while 8 school heads, 3 WEOs and one DEO were purposively sampled. Validity was established through expert judgment whereas reliability was determined using test-retest technique and reliability index, SQ, r=0.91 and TQ, r=0.83 was reported. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically alongside the research questions and presented in narrative forms while quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS and results were presented in tables of frequencies and percentages. The findings show that financial mismanagement, unfair treatment of students and teachers, frequent fee increments, competition for limited resources, overlapping responsibilities, poor working environments and intimate relationships are conflicts in private secondary schools. In conclusion, by implementing conflict resolution mechanisms, schools can create a well-coordinated, disciplined, and inclusive learning environment that promotes collaboration among stakeholders and ultimately improves the quality of education. The study recommended fair treatment of students and teachers should be promoted through the development of clear policies and guidelines in order to address emerging conflicts.

Keywords: Conflict, Quality, Education, Students, Teachers, Arusha

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1. Introduction

Teaching and learning involve a day-to-day interaction in order to realize educational objectives. When people interact with one another, it is natural for conflicts to occur such that, those conflicts can negatively or positively affect the realization of the intended objectives (Nukus, 2020). Thus, conflict occurs among organizations, within organizations, among the members of an organization and within the personality of everyone because of people's interaction as an everyday reality (Ayelew, 2020). According to Owan (2021) although conflicts are inevitable in day-to-day activities, it is necessary to be solved immediately for quality education among secondary schools. For smooth teaching and learning (t/l) in secondary schools, conflict should be solved at the point of its existence. Conflict resolution therefore entails ending conflict by ways that address the remote cause of the issue(s), with resolutions that are just and acceptable by conflicting groups (Katie, 2022). Thus, conflict resolution strategies stand for internal mechanisms that enable various authorities to get to the root cause to resolve conflict in a manner that is acceptable to the conflicting parties especially in schools for quality education.

In developed countries like United States of America, Limbo (2018) pointed out the existence of several conflicts in schools in the city of California. Tracing the history of the conflicts; the researcher found that racial segregation, discrimination and prejudice in California schools were the main sources of the conflicts. According to Paschal & Mkulu (2020), educational stakeholders in the developed countries have made a number of reforms to address the conflicts in schools for quality teaching and learning but the conflicts have not effectively been addressed. This implies that, since conflicts exist in schools among developed countries, conflicts resolution mechanisms should be put in place for ensuring quality education.

In the context of Africa, Lukman (2021) reported the existence of conflict in some learning institutions in South Africa following increased fees considering the inflation rates due to increased operating costs, increased student enrolment and decreasing real term Government funding. As a result of this and similar circumstances, Halevy & Cohen (2020) also reported the renaissance of conflict in some institutions in South Africa which caused the death of a student and the government provided the police security at some learning institutions in the country. In East Africa, Kilonzo & Ivita (2019) reported the conflicts in some secondary schools in Kenya such that, perceptions, communication problems, authority structures and differences in attitudes are sources of conflicts. Also, the researcher noted that, conflicts in secondary schools were high among the teaching staff and the administration but moderate between the teaching staff and the union.

Tanzania is not exempted from the existence of conflicts in secondary schools such that, while conflicts persist in public secondary schools, in private secondary schools several conflicts have been reported too. For instance, Kaluma (2017) reported conflict in administration in some private secondary schools in Morogoro region which led to the closure of the school as the parties failed to solve the conflict. Also, according to Raymond (2017), in Arusha District, conflict has occurred in some private secondary schools between the teachers and the parents following issue of whether students who are weak academically should repeat classes. This issue has become a bone of contention in most private secondary schools, where parents have been locking horns with teachers, insisting that their children must proceed to the upper classes, irrespective of their academic performance. While many private schools have policies and procedures for addressing conflicts, there is limited research on the effectiveness of these mechanisms and their influence on the overall quality of education. This implies that, conflicts in learning institutions is a threat to achieving quality education but proper utilisation of conflict resolution mechanisms among private secondary schools is yet to be investigated.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

i. Which conflicts occur in private secondary schools and what are their resolution mechanisms?
ii. To what extent does the conflicts resolution mechanism influence quality education in private secondary schools in Arusha district?

2. Literature Review

The study was grounded in Conflict Resolution Theory.

2.1 Conflict Resolution Theory

This study was guided by Conflict Resolution Theory. The theory was propounded by Kurt Lewin in 1940s, put into emphasis by Morton Deutsch in 1970s. According to Adam et al., (2022), conflict resolution as a discipline diverged from power-based conflict theory, which dominated and still dominates political science, and international relations; and converged from psychology

and sociology, which was interested in group dynamics, motivation and relationships between institutional structures. The theory saw conflict as a competitive struggle to be won by one side. In contrast, needs-based conflict resolution theorists developed a cooperative approach to conflict resolution, focusing on fundamental human needs, to encourage win-win solutions. Non-violence, cooperation and the belief in the essential goodness of humanity are basic principles of this approach to conflict resolution. According to Taya-Cohen (2018) the theory of conflict resolution suggests that, if the parties are completely independent or if their interests, outcomes, and goals are completely compatible, then no conflict can exist because, to put it colloquially, there is nothing to fight about. However, conflict can occur in both cooperative and competitive contexts.

2.1.1 Application of the Theory to the Current Study

According to the theory, members of the secondary school system, just like every other organization can engage in conflicting situations either because of their ethnic differences, perception, or in their struggle for power and aspirations. Most often, teachers' conflict amongst themselves, students and their leadership when they are not satisfied with their behaviour. As earlier established, their sudden engagement in conflict with others leads to low morale, hampered harmony and poor work performance, therefore the theory guided this study in highlighting the conflicts in private secondary schools. Consequently, the theory emphasizes that one possible solution to a conflict of this sort would be coordinated alternation that involves working together to find a solution to a common problem.

2.2 Empirical Review

The researcher reviewed empirical studies under the following study objectives: examine conflicts and their resolution mechanisms in private secondary schools and the extent to which conflict resolution mechanisms influence quality education in private secondary schools.

2.2.1 Conflicts and their Resolution Mechanisms in Private Secondary Schools

A study conducted in United States of America by Westmaas (2022) focused on the benefits and challenges of conflict. The results revealed that, conflict can lead to the search for new ideas and new mechanisms as solutions to organizational problems. It can also facilitate employee motivation in cases where employees feel a need to excel and, as a result, push them in order to meet performance objectives. On the other hand, conflicts have negative consequences for both individuals and organizations when people divert energies away from performance and goal attainment and direct them toward resolving the conflict. Conflict in groups can be due to lack of motivation, overlapping responsibilities, social loafing, and other withdrawal behaviours. Continued conflict can make for a toxic work environment and take a heavy toll on our psychological well-being.

In Sweden, a study by Omoeva et al., (2020) focused on the effects of armed conflict on educational attainment and inequality. The results provide evidence that the introduction of any conflict worsens educational attainment and exacerbates pre-existing inequalities thereof. The study also shows that conflict effects are more pronounced when ethnic in nature and that attainment and inequality outcomes worsen as conflicts persist over time. Furthermore, Limbo (2018) also noted that ethnic conflicts are more harmful than non-ethnic ones, and chronic ethnic conflicts are more harmful than temporary conflicts of any sort. Finally, the study found out that the effects of ethnic conflicts on education inequality in fragile countries are more damaging than in countries with a better economic, political, and demographic infrastructure. Therefore, economic empowerment, political stability and provision of infrastructure are conflict resolution mechanism that would improve quality education.

A study conducted in Nigeria by Wami et al., (2021) investigated the influence of marital conflicts on academic performance of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study used snowball and purposive sampling to select its sample size. The study found among others that teachers and students agreed that parental violence, parental socio-economic status, and parental separation contributed to students' poor academic performance to a high extent. The study recommended among others that; parents/guardians who are experiencing conflicts in their families should consider counselling options as soon as possible to avoid negative effects on their children.

A study conducted in Uganda by Farooq (2022) focused on the conflict management in higher education institutions: a case study of Islamic University in Uganda. The study revealed poor motivation and poor-quality service delivery as the impacts of conflicts. It was further established that conflicts can lead to misunderstanding among workers however, to have the infighting settled, reconciliation comes into play whereby, the parties that are at rift are sat down to negotiate and reach an agreement over the issues of divergence whereas, transfer of staff from one working place to another may contribute to intended objective that lead to creation of harmony and

improved working relations among workers within the institution.

In Tanzania, Nguku & Mnjokava (2022) researched on the conflicts among teaching and non-teaching staff and its influence on their work performance in public secondary schools in Arusha. The results show that poor communication, discrimination, limited resources, intimate relationship, difference in opinions, overlapping responsibility and bad working environment are the main causes of conflict among teaching and non-teaching staff. The study recommended mediation, regular meetings, collaboration, seminar and workshops as measures to address conflicts among teaching and non-teaching staff in public secondary schools.

2.2.2 The Extent to which Conflict Resolution Mechanisms Influence Quality Education in Private Secondary Schools

According to Shanka & Thuo (2017), in the context of quality education, conflict resolution mechanisms and quality education are the two sides of the same coin. Conflicts resolution mechanism enhances quality education through building cooperation in workplace, nurtures workers and learners with problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, improve teamwork and collaborative teaching and learning. This is to say that, if the conflicts are not resolved amicably, it can disrupt the school system and may lead to poor quality education (Edet et al., 2017). If the conflict resolution mechanism such as cause identification mechanism, integration mechanism, transparency mechanism and listening mechanism are effectively utilised, quality education is guaranteed as it takes central stage in creating safer and more supportive school learning environments. Raymond (2017) reported that conflict exist between parents and the staff as well as between teachers and watchmen in some private secondary schools in Arusha district. The recommended that conflicting parties should embrace transparency mechanism and listening mechanism as effective means of resolving misunderstanding to realize quality education. If good working condition is guaranteed, it takes central stage in creating safer and more supportive school learning environments. According to the study conducted by Ekpang (2021), the mechanisms used mainly included negotiation. This conflict resolution mechanism was effective and helped to create a positive school climate, improve communication and collaboration, and promote the well-being of students and staff.

In Cameroon, Agbor et al., (2022) researched on the effects of armed conflicts on teaching and learning: perspectives of secondary school teachers. The study revealed that teachers were dissatisfied with working environment, salaries and the teaching process in the classroom and they are more significantly affected by safety issues, problems associated with managing discipline in the classroom, and professional development. The attacks on schools therefore have the potential of increasing disruptive behaviour that can become pervasive among students and hinder the goals of education. Public schools experience greater problems of indiscipline compared to private schools. It is worth noting that all classroom practices identified are interrelated and critical to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, therefore, effects on any would detrimentally affect the others. In South Africa, Lukman (2021) conducted a study on managing conflict at institution/s of higher learning. The findings also underscored integrating conflict management for seeking the truth with fairness approach as the most commendable style for managing conflicts at institutions of higher learning.

3. Methodology

The study adopted convergent mixed methods design. The design allowed the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data and analyze them separately & integrate the results later (Creswel & Creswell, 2018). The target population for this study included 25 private secondary schools, 662 teachers, 1920 form four students, 25 school heads, 10 Ward Education Officer (WEO) and one District Educational Officer (MoEST, 2023). Therefore, the total target population for this study were 2618 individuals from which the researcher drew the sample size of 270 respondents. Gay and Airasian (2009) observed that a sample of 10% to 30% of the target population is representative enough for a research study. The study selected 8 (30% of 25) private secondary schools, 192 students (10% of 1920), 66 teachers (10% of 662) selected using stratified and simple random samplings techniques while 8 school heads (30% of 25), 3 WEOs (30% of 10) were purposively selected. Interview guide and questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents. Gender was considered as the strata in the current study. Therefore, 24 students (12 girls & 12 boys) and teachers (5 females and 4 males from 7 schools each while 2 females and one male from one school) were selected from each private school. Both genders were represented in the study, an indication that there was no bias in capturing the views of respondents based on their gender. This implies that the information obtained about conflict resolution mechanisms and quality education in private secondary schools from these results can easily be generalized. The researcher conducted a pilot study on two secondary schools not included in the actual study. Validity was established through expert judgment

whereas reliability was determined using test-retest technique and reliability index, SQ r=0.91 and TQ r=0.83 was reported. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically alongside the research questions and presented in narrative forms (Braun & Clarke, 2017). While quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS and results were presented in tables of frequencies and percentages. Credibility & dependability

of qualitative data was established through detailed reporting of the research process.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the responses from the respondents on the first objective that investigated the conflicts and their resolution mechanisms in private secondary schools.

Table 1: Quantitative Responses on Conflicts & Resolution Mechanisms in Private Secondary Schools in Arusha District Council

Conflicts & Resolution Mechanisms	Students n=192 f(%)	Teachers n=66 f(%)	Total n=258 f(%)
Financial conflicts; prudent management of financial resources.	183(95)	64(97)	247(96)
Injustice conflicts; fair treatment of students & teachers.	171(89)	58(88)	229(89)
Fee increment conflicts; involve parents before fee increment.	162(84)	61(92)	223(86)
Limited resources conflicts; provision of adequate resources.	149(78)	63(95)	212(82)
Overlapping of duties conflicts; clear division of responsibilities	155(81)	59(89)	214(83)
Poor working environment; conducive working environment.	179(93)	60(91)	239(93)
Lack of ethics; teachers to observe professional ethics.	165(86)	57(86)	222(86)
Exam Cheating; need to respect examination regulations.	159(83)	62(94)	221(86)
Unhealthy competition; Encourage healthy student's competition	180(94)	56(85)	236(91)
Fair allocation of teaching/learning (t/l) resources	169(88)	52(79)	221(86)
Indiscipline; Students should obey school rules and regulations.	157(82)	61(92)	218(84)

f = frequency, % = percentages, values in brackets are percentage of students and teachers who agreed with the statement. Those with contrary opinion to the statement are implied.
Source: Field Data (2023)

The data in table 1 show that, 95% of students and 97% of teachers believed that careful management of financial resources would help to resolve financial conflicts. The respondents said that, this includes transparent budgeting, allocation, and spending of funds to ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently. Since this mechanism involves transparent financial practices, budgeting, and efficient use of funds, it will help to address conflicts related to financial mismanagement, unequal resource allocation, and budgetary disputes. Also, the findings from the study by Tabassi et al., (2018) on the challenges of managing conflict process in selected public organization identified challenges such as insufficient budget for the operation purposes, the deficiency of the skilled and professional personnel, security threats in various parts of the country, lack of technological knowledge in some of the provinces, the political pressures, the lack of executive right, and lack of public awareness. The study recommended the need to increase budget allocation, capacity development of the personnel involved in the process, induction of conflict and dispute resolution experts, awareness level of masses about the existence of conflicts, the executive rights, support from police and other law & order agencies. Therefore, among

others, Agbor et al., (2022) suggested the increase in amount of funds and capacity building in financial management to help to resolve conflict related to financial mismanagement.

In table 1 the data indicated that, 89% of students and 88% of teachers agreed that treating everyone fairly and without discrimination helps prevent and resolve conflicts due to unfairness. The respondents indicated that, this includes equal opportunities for academic and extracurricular activities, as well as fair treatment in disciplinary matters. This mechanism aims to address conflicts arising from favouritism, discrimination, or unfair disciplinary actions. The study by Omoeva et al., (2020) provided evidence that the introduction of any conflict worsens educational attainment and exacerbates pre-existing inequalities thereof. Finally, the study found that the effects of ethnic conflicts on education inequality in fragile countries are more damaging than in countries with a better economic, political, and demographic infrastructure. The study suggested equality, fair distribution of resources as the measures to address the problem. Therefore, by promoting fairness, conflicts related to unfair treatment was found to be mitigated.

According to the data, 84% of students and 92% of teachers believed that involving parents in the decision-making process before increasing school fees would help manage conflicts due to fee increment. The respondents reported that, the school administration should ensure that, parents understand the reasons for the fee increase and have an opportunity to voice their concerns. This could be done during parents' meeting with teachers. Involving parents before fee increments means consulting and seeking parental input before deciding to raise school fees. This mechanism ensures transparency and reduces conflicts between school management and parents regarding fee adjustments. The issue of collaboration is also supported by Wami, et al., (2021) in the study that focused on the influence of marital conflicts on academic performance of secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study found among others that teachers and students agreed that parental violence, parental socio-economic status, and parental separation contributed to students' poor academic performance to a high extent. The study recommended among others that; parents/guardians who are experiencing conflicts in their families should consider counselling options, collaboration with other educational stakeholders in decision-making as soon as possible to avoid negative effects on their children. This implies that, by collaborating or involving education stakeholders in the decision-making process, concerns and grievances can be addressed beforehand.

From the data, 78% of students and 95% of teachers agreed that, providing sufficient resources, such as textbooks, classrooms, and teaching materials will help to prevent conflicts caused by limited resources. This conflict resolution mechanism will ensure that students have the necessary tools to succeed academically and reduce competition for limited resources. Also, it is necessary to ensure that schools have sufficient materials, facilities, and educational resources to meet the needs of students and teachers. This approach will help to address resource deficiencies and the conflicts arising from resource scarcity or inequitable distribution will be minimized. The findings conform to the Conflict Resolution Theory that guided the current study. According to Taya-Cohen (2018) the theory of conflict resolution suggests that, if the parties are completely independent or if their interests such as adequate resources are provided, outcomes, and goals are completely compatible, then no conflict can exist because, to put it colloquially, there is nothing to fight about. In support, the findings by Meyan, et al., (2021) pointed out that different kinds of interpersonal conflicts can be seen in public secondary schools, including those that are effective, substantive, and goal oriented. According to the findings of the study, the challenges that principals of public secondary schools face when attempting to manage interpersonal conflict include the following: the conflict itself; a lack of support, security, and resources; and a lack of knowledge; the environment; communication; and cooperation. Similarly, the study found that heads of school in public secondary schools should resolve interpersonal problems by employing multiple tactics such as meetings, negotiations, communication, collaboration, scolding and warning, mediation, guidance and counselling, instruction and providing sufficient teaching and learning resources. This implies that, the conflict regarding the struggle for resources has been addressed using distribution of teaching and learning resources equitably.

Furthermore, from the data, 88% of students and 79% of teachers agreed that allocating teaching and learning resources fairly helps to prevent conflicts. This includes ensuring that all students have equal access to textbooks, technology, and other resources needed for their education. These findings have been supported by Mwidege & Tangi (2021) who revealed that, school conflicts may be experienced in many issues such as distribution of work among personnel, financial resources, in and out of class teaching activities and practices and distribution of resources. The study recommended the strategies such as ensuring proper allocation of teaching and learning facilities for educational attainment. Therefore, by distributing equitable access to facilities, materials, and opportunities for all students, this helps to minimize conflicts arising from resource disparities.

Additionally, the data in table 1 indicate that, 82% of students and 92% of teachers emphasized that students should follow school rules and regulations to prevent conflicts. This includes adhering to dress codes, attendance policies, and behavioural expectations, which helps maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. This finding is also supported by Agbor, et al., (2022) who researched on the effects of armed conflicts on teaching and learning: perspectives of secondary school teachers in Cameroon. The study revealed that teachers were dissatisfied with the teaching process in the classroom and they are more significantly affected by safety issues, problems associated with managing discipline in the classroom, and professional development. The study recommended professional development for improving management skills to make students obey the school rules and regulations. Therefore, if students following the established guidelines and codes of conduct will help maintain discipline and prevent conflicts within the school environment.

While responding to the theme "Mechanisms for Resolving Conflicts", one ward education officer put forth the argument that:

The mechanisms used to resolve conflicts in private secondary schools include regular staff meetings, negotiations, redress in courts & termination of contract. Additionally, one on one talk, collaboration and instant solution to conflicts are approaches employed to resolve conflict. Furthermore, participatory leadership where all stakeholders are involved in decision making which they eventually own to its implementation stage is another form of conflict resolution (Personal Interview, 5th May 2023).

The response from education officer is in agreement with the findings in qualitative that identified prudent management of financial resources, fair treatment of students & teachers, clear division of responsibilities, participatory leadership and fair allocation of teaching/learning (t/l) resources as some of the mechanisms for resolving conflicts.

The second objective of the study determined the extent to which conflict resolution mechanisms influence quality education in private secondary schools. Data collected from the field are presented in table 2 as follows.

Table 2: Quantitative Results on the Extent to Which Conflicts Resolution Mechanism Influence Quality Education in Private Secondary Schools in Arusha District

Influence of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms on Quality Education	Students n=192 f(%)	Teachers n=66 f(%)	Total n=258 f(%)
Prudent management of financial resources will enhance timely salary payment & acquisition of t/l resources for quality education.	187(97)	61(92)	248(96)
Fair treatment of students and teachers boost their motivation in pursuing common objectives and goals	184(96)	59(89)	243(94)
Involving parents before fee increment will enhance participatory management necessary for quality education	180(94)	14(88)	241(93)
Provision of adequate resources improves teaching & learning hence quality education	190(99)	60(91)	250(97)
Clear division of responsibilities enhances teamwork in achieving educational goals	189(98)	58(89)	247(96)
Conducive working environment promotes job satisfaction hence quality education.	181(94)	63(95)	244(95)
Teachers to observe professional ethics to improve professionalism in the teaching profession.	185(96)	57(86)	242(94)
Observing examination regulations to enhance proper curriculum implementation & evaluation.	179(93)	62(94)	241(93)
Encouraging healthy student's competition and performance inspire students to put more effort in learning	171(89)	59(89)	230(89)
Fair allocation of (t/l) resources reinforce the notion for equity& fairness in school	183(95)	64(97)	247(96)
Students obeying school rules and regulations enhance discipline among students thus effective learning.	187(97)	60(91)	247(96)

f = frequency, % = percentages, values in brackets are percentage of students and teachers who agreed with the statement. Those with contrary opinion to the statement are implied.
Source: Field Data (2023)

The data indicate that 97% of students and 92% of teachers agreed that prudent management of financial resources is among the mechanisms used to resolve conflicts as it enhances timely salary payment and acquisition of teaching and learning resources. When financial resources are managed well, teachers will receive their salaries on time, which helps in maintaining a motivated teaching staff. These are also found in the study by Emidio (2022) on conflict resolution strategies in non-government secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The major findings of the study are unnecessary interferences with the administration of the school, by the

proprietors and arbitrary increase of school fees by the school management, among others, constitute major sources of conflict. Findings on strategies for resolving conflicts include effective management of financial resources, encouraging parties to work together, taking staff and students' comments and suggestions for consideration and involvement of school disciplinary committee and public complaint commission. Therefore, adequate financial resources will allow schools to acquire necessary teaching and learning resources, leading to improved quality education.

From the data 96% of students and 89% of teachers recognized the importance of fair treatment in promoting motivation among students and teachers. When students and teachers are treated fairly, they feel valued and respected, leading to increased motivation to pursue common objectives and goals. This positive motivation contributes to a conducive learning environment and ultimately improves the quality of education. Also, Lukman (2021) conducted a study on managing conflict at institutions of higher learning: a post-positivist perspective. The study finding that were somewhat in agreement with the current findings revealed that, the conflicts often lead to student protests and demonstrations, mostly at the beginning of every academic year due to fee increment, which adversely impact on the smooth running of academic programs. The findings highlighted two major variables that gave rise to conflicts, escalation of strikes and demonstrations at Higher Institutions of learning and recommend a conflict management style suitable for handling the conundrum. The findings also underscored integrating conflict management for seeking the truth with fairness approach as the most commendable style for managing conflicts at institutions of higher learning. This indicates that, fairness brings the conflicting parties together as they feel valued and respected to pursue educational goals.

Regarding involving parents before fee increment, 94% of students and 92% of teachers indicated that involving parents in the decision-making process before fee increments is crucial for participatory management necessary for quality education. When parents are included in fee increment discussions, they have a sense of ownership and are more likely to support the school's initiatives. These findings agree with a study conducted in China by Li, et al., (2021) that focused effects of work/family conflicts on job and life satisfaction among junior high school teachers. The results confirmed that both work-family and family-work conflicts are not significantly related to junior high school teachers' job satisfaction and life satisfaction directly. However, both work-family and family-work conflicts have significantly negatively influence on junior high school teachers' job satisfaction and life satisfaction via psychological capital

and emotional exhaustion. The findings provide new suggestions such as stakeholders' involvements in education to alleviate the conflicts between work and family faced by teachers and further improve their satisfaction about work and family. Therefore, this participatory approach fosters collaboration between parents, teachers, and students, creating an environment conducive for quality education.

On observing professional ethics, 96% of students and 86% of teachers agreed that teachers observing professional ethics are crucial for improving professionalism in the teaching profession. When teachers adhere to professional ethics, they maintain high standards of teaching, professionalism, and integrity. This contributes to the development of a professional teaching workforce and, consequently, quality education. A study on the professional ethics of teachers of secondary schools by Douglas (2020) revealed that, female teachers of secondary schools have comparatively high professional ethics than male counterparts and teachers of government secondary schools have comparatively high professional ethics than female teachers of private secondary schools. The study found that teachers who follow professional ethics are more likely to be respected by their students and colleagues and are better equipped to handle conflicts in the classroom.

The data in table 2 indicated that, 93% students and 94% of teachers recognized the importance of respecting examination regulations in resolving conflicts for proper curriculum implementation and evaluation. When examination regulations are respected, the assessment process becomes fair and accurate, providing valuable feedback on students' progress. This supports effective curriculum implementation and evaluation, thereby enhancing the quality of education. These findings are supported by Alison (2022) who confirms that private schools are no better than public schools. The study reviewed data from over 1,000 students from the University of Virginia. The study compared the academic achievement and other factors of private and public school students. The study found that private school students consistently score higher on standardized tests and college entrance exams. The study also found that private schools often have a reputation for keeping strict examination standards for discipline and respect, which combined with a stronger sense of community and lower staff-to-student ratios that make for a safer school environment. Thus, strict standards for discipline and respect improve the learning environment and academic achievement in private schools.

Moreover, the data in table 2 show that, 89% of students and 89% of teachers acknowledged that, encouraging healthy competition and performance is among the

conflict resolution mechanism which inspires students to put more effort into learning. When students are motivated to compete and perform well academically, they strive to excel, leading to improved learning outcomes and overall quality education. According to the study by Wang & Wu (2020) on the competition from private schools boosts achievement and lowers costs. The results suggest that students in public schools profit nearly as much from increased private school competition. The authors noted that, competition from private schools improves student achievement, and appears to do so for public school as well as private school students. Additionally, it produces these benefits while decreasing the total resources devoted to education, as measured by cumulative educational spending per pupil. Therefore, competition from private schools can boost performance system and improve students' achievement in private school.

Furthermore, the data indicated that, 95% of students and 97% of teachers agreed that fair allocation of teaching and learning resources is among the conflict resolution mechanism which reinforces the notion of equity and fairness in school. When resources are allocated fairly, every student has equal access to necessary materials and opportunities. This equitable distribution supports inclusive education practices and contributes to overall quality education. These findings are in line with Hayes et al., (2022). in the study that found thoughtful community engagement, resource allocation strategies help manage the external politics of resource distribution within schools and ultimately minimised conflicts and materialize support for student learning as measures necessary to improve quality education. Therefore, fair allocation of teaching and learning resources minimizes conflicts and pressures among school communities in private secondary school which in turn improve quality of education.

Additionally, the data revealed that, 97% of students and 91% of teachers indicated that, obedience to school rules and regulations enhance discipline, which is necessary for effective learning. When students follow the established rules and regulations, it creates a structured and disciplined learning environment. This discipline enables teachers to deliver lessons effectively and ensures minimal disruptions, leading to improved quality education. Also, according to the study by Shanka & Thuo, (2017) on conflict management and resolution strategies between teachers and school leaders in primary schools of Wolaita zone, Ethiopia, revealed that major conflict management strategies included building leadership skills, following rules and regulations, embracing change, wise allocation of recourses, involvement in decision making, providing opportunities for training, and understanding individual differences and

roles. In case of disputes, techniques included discussions, punishing, forcing, compromising, avoidance, and ignorance. Therefore, following rules and regulations provide peaceful environment and prevents quarrels, especially between students and teachers.

Similarly, during the interviews on the question that sought to find out the extent to which conflict resolution mechanisms influence quality education in private secondary schools in Arusha district, one school head pointed out that:

Conflict resolution mechanisms reduce absenteeism, enhance problem solving skills, and improve learning environment & living standard of teachers which in turn influence quality education. Similarly, resolution of conflicts will create good working environment among students, teachers and parents thus parents will support school activities. This support will guarantee quality education given to students (Personal Interview,5thMay, 2023).

The majority of the ward education officers in the interview session concurred that conflict among teaching staff and non-teaching staff may result into; high rate of employee's turnover, strikes, low morale. Also, it was revealed that conflicts can be used to balance power and to improve the quality of decision making in schools if they are managed constructively. Through interview done by heads of schools, it was found that majority of the respondents concurred that, conflicts among teaching and non-teaching staffs may lead to several outcomes like low morale, job dissatisfaction, high absenteeism and stress. The school heads appealed to parents to pay fees in time to avoid unnecessary conflicts in sending students home during learning period.

On the same theme that sought to find out the extent to which conflict resolution mechanisms influence quality education in private secondary schools in Arusha district, another school head put forth the following:

All school managements are obliged to provide teachers with working contracts which are signed, empower school working committees & observe teamwork in order to enhance quality education. It should be noted that parental guidance to students, allowing parents to pay school fees in installment and giving teachers their right will contribute towards quality education (Personal Interview,5thMay, 2023).

The respondent informed the researcher that amicable resolution of conflicts in private secondary schools is one of the factors for enhancing quality education. Whenever conflicts are resolved and both aggrieved parties are satisfied that justice has been served, then employees give their best in line of duty.

In addition, during the interviews, one respondent had this to say:

Using guidance and counseling as well as seminars and workshop to handle the conflicts among teaching staff and non-teaching staff will help to present conducive working environment. This will in turn enhance quality education in secondary school for the simple reason that everyone will direct their energies towards achievement of institutional objectives and goals (Personal Interview, 6thMay, 2023).

It is vital to know that conflicts resolved appropriately will in turn help the student to achieve good relationships between their peers and their teachers. In this regard, Ekpang (2021) contend that resolving conflict in a constructive way before it transforms into violence and turning classroom into a safe atmosphere are of utmost importance for the quality of education and instruction in the classroom.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the current study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The result of the study on the first objective revealed that conflicts in private secondary schools in Arusha District occur due to poor financial mismanagement, unfair treatment of students and teachers, frequent fee increments, competition for limited resources, overlapping responsibilities, poor working environments, intimate relationships between teachers and students, examination irregularities, conflicts in student performance, unfair allocation of teaching/learning resources, and conflicts due to student indiscipline. To address these conflicts, the study has highlighted several effective conflict resolution mechanisms, such as prudent financial management, fair treatment practices, transparent fee structures, equitable resource allocation, clear division of responsibilities, conducive working environments, adherence to professional ethics, respecting examination regulations, encouraging healthy competition, and effective disciplinary measures. The study found that these mechanisms will foster a more harmonious and supportive learning environment for both students and teachers.

Furthermore, the study has confirmed that conflict resolution mechanisms significantly influence the quality of education in private secondary schools in Arusha District Council. By implementing these mechanisms, schools can create a well-coordinated discipline among students, and inclusive learning environment that promotes collaboration among stakeholders and ultimately improves the quality of education. Therefore, it is essential for private secondary schools in Arusha district to prioritize these conflict resolution mechanisms to ensure a positive and productive educational experience for all students and staff.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the study findings the following recommendations were made:

1. School board members should prioritize financial management by implementing effective financial oversight mechanisms and ensure transparency in financial operations.
2. The government should provide policies and enforce regulations to ensure fair treatment of both students and teachers, promoting a positive and conducive environment for private schools to operate. Additionally, the proprietors/administrators should encourage transparency in fee structures and involve parents in decisions regarding fee increments.
3. Furthermore, there is a need for equitable resource allocation and the establishment of effective disciplinary measures. By addressing these issues, the stakeholders in private secondary schools will enhance conflicts resolution hence quality of education in private secondary schools in Arusha District.
4. It is recommended that teachers should adhere to professional ethics and regulations, ensuring fairness and integrity in their interactions with students and colleagues. Teachers should encourage healthy competition and provide support to students in their academic pursuits. Collaboration with colleagues and administrators in resource allocation and division of responsibilities can help prevent conflicts. Upholding school rules and regulations is essential, and teachers should actively participate in conflict resolution efforts by reporting issues promptly and working collaboratively to find solutions. By acting as role models and fostering a positive learning environment, teachers will contribute to the overall quality of education.
5. Students should obey school rules and regulations; demonstrate respect for authority and their peers. In addition, students should engage in healthy competition, respect examination regulations, and focus on their academic performance. Students should communicate their concerns to teachers or administrators when conflicts arise and actively

participate in resolving conflicts in a constructive manner. By promoting a culture of respect and cooperation, students will contribute to the overall quality of education and create a harmonious school environment.

6. For parents, the study recommends that they should actively engage in their children's education by attending meetings, participating in parent-teacher associations, and providing feedback to school administrators. They should familiarize themselves with the school's fee structure and attend meetings that discuss fee increments when invited. Similarly, they should encourage their children to adhere to school rules and regulations and promote ethical behaviour that foster a positive learning environment. Parents should also communicate with teachers and administrators to address any concerns and work collaboratively towards conflict resolution. By being actively involved, parents will contribute to the overall quality of education and the well-being of their children.

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