Comparative Study on the Effectiveness of School Management Teams' Strategies on Conflict Resolution in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Arusha District, Tanzania

Kennedy Omondi Otieno
St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT), Arusha.
Email: omondiken2016@gmail.com

Firmina Humri
Ilkiding'a Secondary School, Arusha.
Email: firminasarme@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study investigated the effectiveness of School Management Teams'(SMTs') strategies on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools. Distributive Leadership Theory guided the study and Sequential Explanatory Design was employed to collect data in a sequential manner in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in phases. Correlational research design was also adopted and hypotheses were tested using Chi-square. Teachers were selected by stratified random sampling whiles MTs and school heads were conveniently and purposively selected from a population of 312 SMTs and 662 teachers from 39 publicand120 SMTs and 346 teachers from 15 private secondary schools. Questionnaire and structured interview were used to collect data. Cronbach coefficient alpha was employed to test for reliability of instruments; TQP= 0.737 & TQPr=0.721. Credibility of qualitative data was established through detailed reporting of the research process. Chi-square test for hypotheses was conducted using SPSS version 23. The study revealed that there is no significant difference on the strategies used by SMTs in conflict resolution between public and private secondary schools $\{H_{01;}\ \chi^2\ (4) = 5.028, p=0.284\}$. Similarly, there is no significant difference on the effectiveness of the SMTs' strategies in conflict resolution between public and private secondary schools $\{H_{02;}\ \chi^2\ (2) = 3.611, p=0.164\}$. In conclusion, since $p>0.05$the null hypotheses are not rejected. This study recommends that school administrators and SMTs should receive continuous training and preparation on issues of leadership and conflict management upon appointment.*

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Management, Schools, Conflict, Resolution*

1. Introduction

In public and private secondary schools, School Management Teams (SMTs) refer to groups of individuals responsible for overseeing the administration and operations of the school (Jonas & Mkulu, 2022). According to Don and Raman (2019) in public secondary schools, SMTs are typically composed of the school head, deputy, and other administrative staff. In private secondary schools, SMTs may include the school owner, school head, and other administrative staff. SMTs in public and private

secondary schools are responsible for various duties, such as procuring teaching and learning resources, updating physical facilities, and coordinating community support for funding (Klinck et al., 2023).

In public schools, SMTs are typically involved in securing funding from the government and utilizing communication channels to support inclusive learning (Basson and Mestry, 2019). On the other hand, in private schools, SMTs are often governed and subsidized by a religious body, corporate entity, or non-profit organization, which can influence important decisions related to funding, hiring, curriculum, mission, and accountability (Luhalima and Mulovhedzi, 2021). In public secondary schools, SMTs may focus on tasks that align with government funding and support for inclusive learning, while in private secondary schools, SMTs are often influenced by religious bodies or non-profit organizations, which can impact on their decision-making processes (Mensah et al., 2021). For example, public school SMTs may prioritize securing government funding and community support. In contrast, private school SMTs are more focused on upholding the mission and values of the religious body or non-profit organization that governs them (Kabelele and Machumu, 2022).

Conflict is inevitable both in work and life in general. According to Valente et al., (2022), conflict is the disagreement between individuals or groups regarding different ideas, interests, principles and values within the school community. Conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools involves addressing various types of conflicts, including those between teachers, between teachers and administration, and between students (Malingumu, 2022). In public schools, conflict resolution is influenced by the need to manage disputes within the framework of government funding and policies. In contrast, private schools are shaped by the values and mission of the religious body or non-profit organization that governs the school (Sintapertiwi et al., 2023). For example, conflict resolution in private schools is guided by the religious or organizational principles that underpin the school's mission and values, whereas in public schools, it is more closely tied to government regulations and policies (Mlay and Otieno, 2023).

Globally, in the United States, Fernández et al., (2023) found that SMTs in public schools tend to have larger and more diverse teams compared to their private counterparts. However, despite this disparity, private schools often exhibit more cohesive and streamlined decision-making processes within their SMTs. Conversely, in a study by Larsen et al., (2023) in Australia, it was revealed that public schools often face bureaucratic hurdles that can impede the effectiveness of their SMTs in resolving conflicts, while private schools' benefit from more flexibility and autonomy in decision-making. Therefore, while both public and private schools recognize the importance of SMTs in conflict resolution, their structures and operational dynamics vary significantly, influencing their effectiveness in addressing conflicts.

In Tanzania, Mwamatandala and Muneja (2020) found that teachers' commitment to government secondary schools is influenced by the effectiveness of school management. School management teams comprise hierarchical management structures, while private schools have more autonomy to management teams (Jonas and Mkulu, 2022). However, public SMTs face resource constraints, impacting on conflict resolution capabilities, whereas most private schools have more resources. In conflict resolution, SMTs in public schools focus on administrative directives, while private schools prioritize collaborative approaches (Tieng'o, 2020). Therefore, there is an evidenced variation of school management teams in resolving conflicts between public and private institutions. Similarly, the effectiveness of SMTs in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools is a subject of the study. From the on-going, there was a need to carry out the study to provide a detailed comparison of the SMTs and their effectiveness in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district council.

1.1 Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the study:
H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference between the strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district.
H_{02}: There is no statistically significant difference between the effectiveness of the strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha District.

2. Literature Review

The theory that guided this study is Distributed Leadership Theory by Spillane et al. (2020). This theory was reviewed to address significant difference on the extent SMTs' strategies are effective in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district.

2.1 Distributed Leadership Theory

The theory originated from the work of Edwin Hutchins in the 1990s and developed by James Spillane, Peter Gronn, Naftali Bennett and their colleagues in the 2000s (Zamora, 2023). Distributed leadership focuses on sharing leadership tasks across different people and organizational structures

to meet the challenges facing contemporary schools and improve school effectiveness (Rani, 2021). This approach can be implemented through formal ways, such as team structures and other organizational arrangements, or informally through collaboration and shared decision-making. According to Goos and Martin (2019) distributed leadership theory can be used to create strong school management teams and establish clear roles and responsibilities for team members, fostering a culture of collaboration and trust, and providing opportunities for professional development and growth. Additionally, school management teams can engage in regular communication and feedback sessions to ensure that the distributed leadership approach is effectively addressing the needs of the school and contributing to conflict resolution.

2.1.1 Strengths of Distributed Leadership Theory

The pedagogic device theory provides a model for analysing the process by which expert knowledge on formal curriculum is converted into the classroom teaching-learning process. Therefore, the theory allows a researcher to go beyond the question of how faithfully the official curriculum message is interpreted and implemented to describing in real sense ways in which post students apply the skills acquired. In the theory Bernstein (2000) discusses, for instance, different rules and fields involved in the process of transforming knowledge into pedagogic communication, such as production, re-contextualizing and reproduction. In the transformation of knowledge, the key process is re-contextualization, whereby knowledge produced on one site, that is, the production field, is selectively transferred to sites of reproduction, such as teachers' colleges and schools.

2.1.2 Application of Distributed Leadership Theory to the Current Study

By recognizing that leadership is not confined to the heads' office but rather distributed across a range of stakeholders in the school, distributed leadership theory guided this study to investigate how SMTs work collaboratively with teachers, students, parents and other supporting staff to identify and addressstrategies for effective conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools.Effective conflict resolution enhances teachers' performance, and how their collective efforts impact academic outcomes.

2.2 Empirical Review

The review of empirical studies is organized in themes drawn from the research hypotheses, as presented in subsequent paragraphs.

2.2.1 Difference between the Strategies used by SMTs on Conflict Resolution in Public and Private Secondary Schools

The study conducted in China by Li et al., (2021) focused on playing roles in work and family: effects of work/family conflicts on job and life satisfaction among junior high school teachers. The study adopted handy sample method. 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.

In Turkey, Ertürk (2021) conducted a study on Conflict in Schools: A Qualitative Study. The study revealed that, the causes of conflicts arising from interpersonal relationships are determined as negative communication, groupings, not recognizing the newcomers, the ambition of success in teachers, not welcoming criticism, jealousy of success and qualifications of others, the desire of individuals to be at the forefront all the time, gossip and rumour, having different ideas, misunderstanding, false and incriminating accusations of individuals, not being respectful to others' opinions, avoiding work and the presence of teachers with professional inexperience. As for the administrative factors, conflicts were found to be intensified by poor leadership abilities, a lack of expertise in educational administration, favouritism, the desire to be obeyed at all costs, domineering behaviour, refusing to accept intervention, ignoring the teachers' opinions, adopting an autocratic and abstentions management style, failing to fulfil duties and responsibilities, and a tendency to advocate for some teachers individually.

In Cameroon, Agbor et al., (2022) researched on the Effects of armed conflicts on teaching and learning: Perspectives of secondary school teachers in Cameroon. Data were collected through interviews and focus group discussion. The teachers perceived six key indicators (classroom attendance, content delivery, safety, classroom discipline, professional development, and classroom assessment) as being significantly hampered in the

continuation of schooling during the on-going armed conflict. Teachers were dissatisfied with working environment, salaries and the teaching process in the classroom and 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: A Post-Positivist Perspective. The data was analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that, the conflicts are often leading to student protests and demonstrations, mostly at the beginning of every academic year due to fee increment, which adversely impact the smooth running of academic programmes. The findings highlighted two major variables that gave rise to conflicts; poor communication before fee increment that escalate strikes and inadequate basics necessities (water and electricity) leading to demonstrations at Higher Institutions of learning and recommend openness as a conflict management style in 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.

In Kenya, Mutandi (2021) conducted a study on the Challenges Facing the Board of Managers in the Management of Public Secondary Schools; in Kamwangi District, Kenya. A survey design was used. A total of 13 schools out of 26 were selected comprising 9 mixed secondary schools, 2 boys' schools, and 2 girls' secondary schools. Stratified random sampling techniques and purposive sampling were employed to identify the study sample. A questionnaire and interview guides were used for data collection. Mixed methods techniques were employed for data analysis. The study revealed the inadequate staff personnel; inadequate school finances; misappropriations of funds, insufficient physical facilities; poor performance in national examinations; lack of support from the local community; and interference in the running of school by the local communities. In conclusion, urgent measures should be put in place to minimize the hindrances.

The study conducted in Tanzania by Meyan et al., (2021) focused on the existing conflicts among staff members in selected public secondary schools in Tanzania. The study used random selection to provide questionnaires to 110 study participants. The study revealed that, conflicts vary from one school to another but the most experienced type of conflict in public secondary schools were interpersonal conflicts which include conflict between staff members and heads of schools, staff members themselves, teachers and students' parents as well as members of school committee or village leaders. Furthermore, conflicts in public secondary schools were caused by difference in individuals' attitudes, inadequate resources, friends' influence, indiscipline on the part of schools' staff members and administrators, favouritism by the school administrators, administrative incompetence and the misuse of funds. Mlaya & Otieono (2023) conducted a study on the 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. 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.

Khalid and Qian (2024) Examined Conflict Management Strategies Used in Tanzania's Secondary Schools: A Case in Biharamulo District, Tanzania. Employing qualitative methodology, the study utilizes in-depth interviews, group discussions, and document reviews to collect data. Findings reveal the persistence of conflicts, notably attributed to the lack of a universally accepted resolution framework. Ad hoc methods are employed, lacking consistency and alignment with specific conflict natures, resulting in profound consequences such as student dropout, prolonged conflicts, fear, resentment, and hindered academic progress. The study recommends government intervention in training teachers, rigorous evaluation of school administrators' qualifications, and improvements in teacher welfare coupled with strict punitive measures for teachers' inappropriate behaviour.

2.2.2 Effectiveness of SMTs in Conflict Resolution

In Sweden, a study by Omoeva et al., (2020) focused on the Effects of Armed Conflict on Educational Attainment

and Inequality. The study used qualitative approach where documentary review was used to collect data. 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, the results show 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.

In Indonesia, Rini, et al., (2019) conducted a study on School-Based Management (SBM) in Indonesia: Decision-Making, Problems, and Problem-Solving Strategy. The study used pure literature review and text edit analysis. The study revealed that, SBM can facilitate practitioners in terms of school committee involvement in strategic decision-making, listening in terms of school missions, vision, objectives, repairmen of building, funds, new classrooms, programs and teaching and learning process, facilities preservation, student conduct policies, canteen management, governing of fund income, choosing educator, choosing teachers, choosing principals, choosing administrative staff, choosing textbooks, curriculum development.

The study by Foghang and Fon (2022) explored the interpersonal conflicts between teachers: causes and effects in teacher training colleges, North West region, Cameroon. Using the qualitative research design, data were collected from 16 school administrators and 158 teachers using questionnaires and focus group discussion that were analysed using the technique of content analysis. The causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in the teacher training colleges were diverse and were categorized under teachers', school and leadership-related causes. From the findings, interpersonal conflicts between teachers does not only hurt individual teachers' level of commitment, productivity and effectiveness but equally, impacts the school climate, students' achievements and school effectiveness in general. The diverse causes negative effects of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in the teacher training colleges of the North West if left unchecked has the potential of negatively impacting even the smooth functioning of these institutions.

In Zambia, Sakamba and Sichiko (2021) conducted a study on the role of school leadership in learner performance in secondary schools in Zambia. The study correctly used the mixed methods triangulation design and employed the following tools/instruments during the data collection:

Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, it used the document analysis and observation sheet to collect more information. The study was both quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. The study demonstrated that there was a strong relationship between school leadership and learner performance, conflict resolution and worker motivation.

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 was qualitative used thirteen semi-structured interview questions. 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 for several reasons as mentioned before, 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.

Messanga and Mkulu (2022) researched on Management Strategies on Reducing Interpersonal Conflict in Public Secondary Schools in Tarime Urban, Mara, Tanzania. Mixed research methods and convergent parallel research designs were used. In the course of the research, a total of both probability and non-probability sampling methods were utilized, and the sample size ended up being 150 participants. According to the findings of the study, 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, and instruction.

In Tanzania, Shang'wet (2020) focused on School Management and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Iringa Region, Tanzania. The study used a literature review approach. The results of the findings reported that school management strategies are not effective. There were also inconsistencies in instructional supervision by the school head and uncoordinated guidance and counselling practices in the school. Although guidance and counselling were in place in the school, they were not well run due to a lack of specialist teachers in the area of guidance and counselling. The recommendations of this study suggest improvements in these areas. However, the use of the literature review approach is only useful in identifying gaps, trends, and insights. To make the study more effective, it would be better to employ both primary data

and a literature review to provide more complete coverage of the research questions.

3. Methodology

The study adopted Sequential Explanatory Design to collect data in a sequential manner in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in phases (Wium and Louw, 2018). Quantitative phase was carried out first where data was obtained from teachers using questionnaires, while the second phase, involved qualitative data collection where the SMTs and school heads were interviewed. The quantitative and qualitative results were later integrated. This study also employed a correlational research design using chi-square test analysis to test hypotheses. According to Price et al. (2020) correlational design is the type of non-experimental design in which the researcher measures two variables and assesses the statistical difference between them. Correlational research design was used in this study to establish if there was a significant difference between the effectiveness of SMTs in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools. A correlational research design enabled the researcher to employ statistical tests such as chi-square test analysis to evaluate the statistical difference among variables. The results from chi-square test were measured against $p > 0.05$ in order to reject the hypothesis meaning there is no significant difference and for $p < 0.05$ then the hypothesis is accepted meaning there is a significant difference between variables. This design enabled this study to compare and contrast the effectiveness of SMTs in conflict resolution between public and private secondary schools.

The target population were 312 SMTs and 662 teachers from 39 publicand120 SMTs and 346 teachers from 15 private secondary schools (37 teachers each from public & private schools were selected by stratified random sampling while5 SMTs and5 school heads were conveniently and purposively selected). Questionnaire and structured interview were used to collect data. Cronbach coefficient alpha was employed to test for reliability of instruments; TQP= 0.737 & TQPr=0.721. Credibility of qualitative data was established through detailed reporting of the research process. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics& presented in tables of frequencies & mean scores while Chi-square test for hypotheses was conducted in the SPSS version 23. According to George and Malley (2023), the instruments were found to be fairly reliable for the study. Questionnaires were then issued to the respondents and collected after one day while personal interview was conducted the same day of visit (Braun and Clarke, 2016).

The researcher audio recorded the conversation for later transcription with the consent of the interviewee. All ethical issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, correct citation and acknowledgement of borrowed or cited works concerning this research were adhered to.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings were discussed according to themes derived from research hypotheses

4.1 Difference between the Strategies used by SMTs on Conflict Resolution in Public and Private Secondary Schools

The study determined the difference in strategies used by SMTs in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district. To fulfil this objective, the study prepared items 1 – 15 in the questionnaire guide for teachers. Similarly, question 3 in the interview guide for heads of schools and SMTs investigated the strategies used. During data collection, teachers in both public and private secondary schools were asked to indicate their level of agreement on strategies used by SMTs in conflict resolution based on a five-point Likert scale of5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree. Data collected from teachers in public and private secondary schools were analyzed using descriptive statistics in order to produce mean rating. The mean score were presented in table 1for further analysis inferentially.

Inferential Analysis

The hypothesis was tested inferentially using Chi-square statistics in the SPSS version 23 in order to ascertain the extent of difference between the strategies used by school management teams in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools.

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated and tested using Chi-square test analysis.

Null Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference between the strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district.

The mean score obtained after conducting descriptive statistics analysis for the strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools was ranked based on how frequently these strategies were used using a 5-point Likert scale of Never=1, Rarely=2, Occasionally=3, Usually=4, and always=5. The responses were presented as shown in table 1

Table 1: Responses on how Frequently these Strategies are Used in Private and Public Secondary Schools in Arusha district (n=74)

Private Secondary School	Mean	Points	Public Secondary School	Mean	Points
Mediation	4.6	4	Mediation	4.4	4
Dialogue	4.5	4	Dialogue	3.5	3
Cooperation	4.8	4	Cooperation	4.7	4
Consensus-building	4.8	4	Consensus-building	3.7	3
Setting policies and procedures	4.9	4	Setting policies and procedures	3.8	3
Restorative Justice Practices (restoring relationships)	4.5	4	Restorative Justice Practices (restoring relationships)	4.1	4
Peer Counselling Programmes	4.4	4	Peer Counselling Programmes	4.5	4
Conflict Resolution Workshops	4.5	4	Conflict Resolution Workshops	4.7	4
Listening	4.5	4	Listening	4.3	4
Parent-Teacher Conferences	3.4	3	Parent-Teacher Conferences	4.4	4
Collaboration with stakeholders	4.1	4	Collaboration with stakeholders	4.5	4
Involve students' representatives	4.3	4	Involve students' representatives	4.4	4
School Leadership Involvement	4.3	4	School Leadership Involvement	4.3	4
Training and re-training	4.1	4	Training and re-training	4.0	4
Counseling and Guidance Services	3.9	3	Counseling and Guidance Services	3.4	3

Source: Field Data (2024)

In table 1, the mean score for the strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution were allocated points with regard to the following scale: mean score between 1.0-1.9=1 point, mean score between 2.0- 2.9=2 points, mean score between 3.0-3.9=3 points, mean score between 4.0- 4.9 = 4 points and mean score of 5.0=5 points.

Results from Hypotheses Testing

In order to find the difference between the strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools, the data in table 1 on the frequency of strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools were run through Chi-square test analysis.

Chi-square Test Analysis

Chi-square test analysis was employed in order to ascertain the extent of difference between strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district. The results of hypothesis testing were presented in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.028[a]	4	.284
Likelihood Ratio	6.189	4	.185
Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	.977
N of Valid Cases	15		

a. 9 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .53.

Data in table 2 indicates that $\chi^2(4) = 5.028$, p=0.284. Since the p-value (0.284) is greater than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between the strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district. This implies that SMTs apply similar strategies in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools. Perhaps what may create the difference in strategies employed is enforcement of the professional ethics, strict management, and follow-up on resolutions made. This implies that, the bureaucratic nature of public institutions requires more structured approaches in resolving conflicts. Likewise, in public schools, conflict resolution is influenced by the need to manage disputes within the framework of government funding and policies. In contrast, private schools are shaped by the values and mission of the religious body or non-profit organization that governs the school (Sintapertiwi et al., 2023). For example, conflict resolution in private schools is guided by the religious or organizational principles that underpin the school's mission and values, whereas in public schools, it is more closely tied to government regulations and policies (Mlay and Otieno, 2023). This shows that, the hierarchical structure of public schools requires SMTs to use the policies and procedures in resolving conflicts while private schools are guided by the principles within their school.

Therefore, conflict resolution strategies in public and private schools show no significant difference. In private schools, solving the conflict within the school is efficient but it sometimes compromises fairness due to favouritism. The emphasis on school policies and the business-oriented nature of private schools influences the resolution process, but it may lead to biased outcomes. On the other hand, public schools' benefit from a more structured and transparent approach, involving various stakeholders and ensuring that decisions are fair and equitable. Despite the delays caused by bureaucratic processes, public schools' conflict resolution strategies are perceived to be more effective in maintaining fairness and avoiding negative consequences. The study by Alex and Mukadi (2022) strengthens these findings by observing that conflict resolution strategies have positive impact on the effectiveness management by ensuring peace and harmony, high job performance, high academic performance, the spirit of teamwork, high retention of teachers and problem-solving. The findings show that the school administrator should involve teachers in conflict management methods to allow for the creation of good and constructive relationships.

During the interviews on strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha, District, one school head from private school remarked that;

> *We as private school we emphasize on counseling and cooperation. This is due to our mission and vision that is meant to bring everyone on the same page. Therefore, we put strong emphasis on counseling and teamwork among the SMTs and teachers. This strategy involves one-on-one interactions and collaborative efforts to resolve conflicts, often informally and within the school premises* (Personal Interview, 29th April, 2024).

Another school head from public school pointed out that;

> *To my side I will explain in the context of public schools, that, conflict resolution strategies often involve formal meetings and the inclusion of school boards and ethics committees. These meetings ensure adherence to school rules and regulations, ensuring a structured approach. In terms of similarities both public and private schools use suspension and involve parents in conflict resolution. These strategies ensure that serious issues are addressed with the support and awareness of the family* (Personal Interview, 29th April, 2024).

From the responses during the interviews, these differences suggest varying levels of emphasis on cooperative efforts

in conflict resolution across both types of schools. The use of counseling and consensus building are significant strategies applied. The results indicate that public schools are achieving consensus to resolve conflicts, which reflects their structural practices in conflict resolution. In supporting these findings, Charles and Mkulu (2020) revealed that among the management challenges facing school administrators is poor cooperation with education stakeholders. This implies that without cooperation there is ineffective management of schools including conflict resolution.

4.4 Quantitative Findings on the Effectiveness of Strategies used by SMTs in Conflict Resolution in Public and Private Secondary Schools Arusha District

Research Hypothesis

This study was set to examine the extent to which Strategies by SMTs are effective in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha District. To fulfil this theme, the study prepared items 17 – 29 in the questionnaire guide for teachers. Similarly, question 4 in the interview guide for school heads and SMTs in appendix III and IV respectively investigated the strategies used.

During data collection, teachers in both public and private secondary schools were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the extent to which Strategies by SMTs are effective in conflict resolution based on a five-point Likert scale of 5=Very High Extent (VHE), 4=High Extent (HE), 3=Sometimes, 2= Low Extent (LE) and 1= Very Low Extent (VLE). Data collected from teachers in secondary schools were presented for descriptive analysis in table 3 as follows.

The following hypothesis was formulated and tested using Chi-square test analysis.

Null Hypothesis:

H_{02}: There is no statistically significant difference between the effectiveness of the strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha District.

The researcher conducted descriptive statistics analysis in order to obtain the mean score for the effectiveness of the strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools. In addition, how frequently these strategies are used was ranked based on a 5-point Likert scale of Never=1, Rarely=2, Occasionally=3, Usually=4, &Always=5. The data collected from teachers in private secondary schools were presented as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Responses on Effectiveness of the Strategies Used by SMTs in Conflict Resolution in Public Secondary Schools in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Arusha district (n=74)

Private Secondary School	Mean	Points	Public Secondary School	Mean	Points
Mediation	4.6	4	Mediation	4.4	4
Dialogue	4.5	4	Dialogue	3.5	3
Cooperation	4.8	4	Cooperation	4.7	4
Consensus-building	4.8	4	Consensus-building	3.7	3
Setting policies and procedures	4.9	4	Setting policies and procedures	3.8	3
Restorative Justice Practices (restoring relationships)	4.5	4	Restorative Justice Practices (restoring relationships)	4.1	4
Peer Counselling Programmes	4.4	4	Peer Counselling Programmes	4.5	4
Conflict Resolution Workshops	4.5	4	Conflict Resolution Workshops	4.7	4
Listening	4.5	4	Listening	4.3	4
Parent-Teacher Conferences	3.4	3	Parent-Teacher Conferences	4.4	4
Collaboration with stakeholders	4.1	4	Collaboration with stakeholders	4.5	4
Involve students' representatives	4.3	4	Involve students' representatives	4.4	4
School Leadership Involvement	4.3	4	School Leadership Involvement	4.3	4
Training and re-training	4.1	4	Training and re-training	4.0	4
Counseling and Guidance Services	3.9	3	Counseling and Guidance Services	3.4	3
Grand mean score	4.5	4	Grand mean score	4.2	4

Source: Field Data (2024)

In table 3, the mean score for the effectiveness of the strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools were allocated points with regard to the following scale: mean score between 1.0-1.9=1 point, mean score between 2.0-2.9=2 points, mean score between 3.0-3.9=3 points, mean score between 4.0- 4.9 = 4 points &mean score of 5.0=5 points.

Results from Hypotheses Testing

In order to find the effectiveness between the strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools, the data in table 3 on the effectiveness of strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools were also run through Chi-square test analysis.

Chi-square Test Analysis

Chi-square test analysis was employed in order to ascertain the extent of difference between strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools Arusha district. The results of hypothesis testing were presented in table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.611[a]	2	.164
Likelihood Ratio	3.232	2	.199
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.521	1	.112
N of Valid Cases	13		

a. 5 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

Data in table 4 indicates that $\chi^2(2) = 3.611$, p=0. 164. Since the p-value (0. 164) is greater than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between the effectiveness of the strategies used by school management teams on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district. This implies that the strategies on conflict resolution applied by SMTs are effective in public and private secondary schools. Consequently, SMTs both in public and private secondary schools should adopt other ways of making these strategies more effective. Also, effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies does not differ significantly between public and private schools.

Public schools involve multiple stakeholders and ensure that conflicts are resolved fairly. Although it is time-consuming, minimizes the risk of favouritism and ensures that all parties are treated equitably. In contrast, private schools resolve conflicts more efficiently due to their shorter decision-making chains and lack of bureaucratic procedures. However, this efficiency can sometimes come at the cost of fairness, as the business-oriented nature of private schools may lead to biased resolutions. Basically, both public and private schools' conflict resolution strategies are perceived to be effective in resolving conflicts and providing justice to both parties. Furthermore, the study by Agbor et al. (2022) 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 both public and 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.

Similarities in Conflict Resolution Strategies

The findings show that public and private secondary schools in Arusha district employ similar conflict resolution strategies, such as cooperation, mediation, and dialogue, with no significant differences in their usage as seen in mean score. This aligns with Distributive Leadership Theory as it emphasizes the importance of inspiring and motivating stakeholders to work together towards common goals (Shrestha, 2020). The agreement on cooperation and mediation reflects the transformational leader's ability to foster a culture of collaboration and shared purpose, which are key components in resolving conflicts effectively. Similarly, the context of Distributive Leadership Theory, the findings align with the theory's emphasis on shared decision-making and collaboration among various stakeholders (Robert, 2019). The use of cooperation and mediation across both types of schools indicates that leadership responsibilities in conflict resolution are not confined to the school head alone but are distributed among SMT members. This shared approach helps ensure that conflict resolution strategies are consistently applied across the schools, promoting a collaborative environment.

Differences in Emphasis on Listening and Formalization

The little differences observed in the emphasis on active listening and formalization of conflict resolution strategies between public and private schools is also understood through Transformational Leadership Theory and Distributed Leadership Theory.

Public schools, with their bureaucratic nature, emphasize formalizing conflict resolution strategies and stakeholder collaboration. This reflects the Distributed Leadership Theory as the structured approach to conflict resolution may involve multiple stakeholders in decision-making, ensuring that the process is transparent and inclusive (Fontein, 2022). The small difference in the emphasis on listening is attributed to the fact that transformational leadership in private schools place a higher value on personalized attention and relationship-building, leading to a stronger focus on active listening.

Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Strategies

The findings show that both public and private schools agree on the effectiveness of strategies like enhancing teachers' morale through incentives, improving the working environment, and preventing conflict escalation. This agreement is consistent with Distributive Leadership Theory, which emphasizes motivating and inspiring staff (Slade & Alyssa Gallagher, 2021). The focus on morale-boosting strategies aligns with the theory's principle of providing individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation to enhance job satisfaction and organizational performance. The use of training and retraining in private schools can be linked to Transformational Leadership Theory, as it reflects the continuous professional development that transformational leaders advocate (Khan et al., 2020). Public schools' emphasis on active listening and leadership involvement also aligns with transformational leadership principles, which prioritize open communication and strong leadership engagement in resolving conflicts.

From the perspective of Distributed Leadership Theory, the effectiveness of these strategies across both school types suggests that leadership responsibilities are well-distributed, allowing for collective problem-solving and continuous improvement (Rani, 2021). The agreement on the involvement of students' representatives indicates that both public and private schools recognize the value of including all stakeholders in the conflict resolution process, a key tenet of distributed leadership.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between the strategies and their effectiveness in public and private schools, supporting the application of similar conflict resolution strategies across both contexts. That is to say for H_{01}; χ^2 (4) = 5.028, p=0.284, since p>0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted. For H_{02}; χ^2 (2) = 3.611, p=0.164, since p>0.05 the null hypothesis is also accepted.

This finding aligns with Distributed Leadership Theory, as it indicates that leadership tasks related to conflict resolution are likely shared across various stakeholders in both public and private schools, leading to similar outcomes (Goos and Martin, 2019). The consistency in effectiveness also suggests that the collective efforts of the SMTs, supported by transformational and distributed leadership practices, are successfully addressing conflicts in both types of schools.

The acceptance of the null hypotheses implies that while the context (public verses. private) may differ, the leadership styles and strategies employed by SMTs are effective across both settings. This supports

Transformational Leadership Theory's idea that inspiring and motivating stakeholders can lead to similar positive outcomes, regardless of the school type. Distributed Leadership Theory both provide valuable frameworks for understanding the role of SMTs in conflict resolution. The transformational leadership approach is reflected in the strategies that focus on motivation, collaboration, and shared goals, while distributed leadership is evident in the emphasis on shared decision-making and stakeholder involvement.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the current study, the following conclusions were drawn:
The results of testing hypothesis one indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the strategies used by SMTs on conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district. For instance, with regard to various strategies employed by SMTs in public and private secondary schools in Arusha district both types of schools largely agree on cooperation, mediation with no significant differences, indicating these strategies are accepted across the surveyed schools. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that SMTs apply similar strategies in conflict resolution in public and private secondary schools.

Also, in hypothesis two; concerning the effectiveness of strategies used by SMTs in conflict resolution, the study established that both types of schools largely agree their strategies are effective. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of strategies used by SMTs in conflict resolution between public and private secondary schools in Arusha district. Subsequently, the null hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, SMTs both public and private secondary schools should adopt other ways of making these strategies more effective such as; Provision of regular training for teachers, administrators, and students on conflict resolution techniques, negotiation skills, and emotional intelligence and develop and communicate clear conflict resolution policies and procedures that are consistently applied across the school.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study conclusions the following recommendations were made:

1. SMTs in both public and private secondary schools should share the strategies used in conflict resolution to ensure that there is consistency in resolving conflict across both types of schools.

2. Also, it is important to encourage student participation in conflict resolution processes through student councils or representative bodies in both public and private schools. This involvement will increase a sense of responsibilities, critical thinking and inclusion among students. Encourage peer mediation programmes where students are trained to help mediate conflicts among their peers and engaging parents and community members in conflict resolution efforts through workshops, meetings, and collaborative initiatives.

3. School administrators should involve senior teachers in conflict management methods to allow for the creation of good and constructive relationships. Similarly, they should foster a school culture that emphasizes respect, inclusivity, and open communication.

4. School administrators and SMTs should receive continuous training and preparation on issues of leadership and conflict management upon appointment. This training should be provided by Human Resource department from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST).

References

Agbor, M.N., Etta, M.A. and Etonde, H.M. (2022). *Effects of Armed Conflicts on Teaching and Learning: Perspectives of Secondary School Teachers in Cameroon*. University of Buea: Faculty of Education.

Alex, A. and Mukadi, M. (2022). Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Strategies in a Public Secondary Schools' Management in Morogoro Municipality in Tanzania. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, *32*(2), 1-8.

Basson, P., and Mestry, R. (2019). Collaboration between school management teams and governing bodies in effectively managing public primary school finances. *South African Journal of Education*, *39*(2)*,* 34-45. *https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n2a1688*.

Charles, A. and Mkulu, D.G. (2020). Management Challenges Facing School Administrators and Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Sengerema District Mwanza, Tanzania. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development,Vol-2,* (3), 20-40.

Don, Y., and Raman, A. (2019). School Management and Leadership: Teamwork in Schools. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Instruction*, *1*(2), 112-218.

Ertürk, R. (2021). Conflict in Schools: A Qualitative Study. *Participatory Educational Research*, 9(1), 251-270.

Farooq, M (2022). Conflict Management in Higher Education Institutions: A Case Study of Islamic University in Uganda. *International Journal of Leadership Studies: Theory and Practice*, *5*(3), 196-211.

Fernández, B. B., León Guerrero, M. J., Fernández-Martín, F. D., Arco Tirado, J. L., and Arrebola, R. M. (2023). What do school management teams do to make their schools inclusive? *School Leadership and Management*, *43*(1*),* 233-244.

Foghang, V.M. &Fon, T.P. (2022). Interpersonal Conflicts between Teachers: Causes and Effects in Teacher Training Colleges, North West Region, Cameroon. *Journal of Education and Teaching Methods, 1, (2),* 118 – 129.

Fontein, D. (2022). *Your Guide to Transformational Leadership in Education*. Canada & United States: Fulcrum Management Solutions Ltd.

George, D. and Mallery, P. (2023). SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A sample guided reference 11.0 update. (4th ed). Boston: Allyn& Bacon.

Goos, N. and Martin, B.N. (2019). What Role Does Distributed Leadership Play in Implementing Professional Learning Communities? *Journal of Education and Culture Studies*, *Vol. 3, No. 2,* 20-29.

Jonas, M., and Mkulu, D. G. (2022). The Role of School Management Team in Managing Students' Academic Performance in Community Secondary Schools in Tabora Municipality-Tanzania. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, *4*(1), 45-61

Kabelele, E.P. and Machumu, H.J. (2022). Determinants of School Management Teams Effectiveness in Managing Capitation Grants in Tanzania Community Secondary Schools. *Journal of Adult Education*, *Vol. 24, 2022.*

Khalid, H. and Qian, X. (2024). Examining Conflict Management Strategies Used in Tanzania's Secondary Schools: A Case in Biharamulo

District, Tanzania. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, *50(5):*583-599.

Khan, H., Rehmat, M., Butt, T.H. (2020). Impact of Transformational Leadership on Work Performance, Burnout and Social Loafing: A Mediation Model. *Future Business Journal*, *Vol. 6,* 40, 20-30.

Klinck, K., Thutulwa, N., and Pelser, AM. (2023). Creating a high-performing school management team: bringing talent to the table for effective service delivery.*Frontiers in Education*, *8.* *https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1228181*.

Larsen, S.A., Forbes, A.Q., Little, C.W., Alaba, S.H., & Coventry, W.L. (2023). The public–private debate: school sector differences in academic achievement from Year 3 to Year 9? *Australian Educational Researcher*, *50*(2), 43-51

Li, X., Lin, X., Zhang, Z.F. and Tian, Y. (2021). Playing Roles in Work and Family: Effects of Work/Family Conflicts on Job and Life Satisfaction among Junior High School Teachers. *Front Psychology Journal*, *Vol. 12, 1*29-141.

Luhalima, T. R., and Mulovhedzi, S. A. (2021). *The Role of School Management Teams in Managing Curriculum Delivery During and After COVID-19*. https://doi.org/ 10.4018/978-1-7998-7168-2.ch002.

Lukman, Y. (2021). *Managing Conflict at Institution/s of Higher Learning: A Post-Positivist Perspective*. South Africa: Walter Sisulu University.

Mensah, J. F., Boateng, S., and Boateng, A. (2021). *Reimagining the Role of School Management Teams in Curriculum Delivery in the COVID-19 Pandemic*. *https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-7168-2.ch012*.

Messanga, A. and Mkulu, D.G. (2022). Management Strategies on Reducing Interpersonal Conflict in Public Secondary Schools in Tarime Urban, Mara, Tanzania. *Direct Research Journal of Education and Vocational Studies,* 4(5), 165-173.

Meyan, Z.E., Chaula, E. Kasumba, F. (2021). Existing Conflicts Among Staff Members in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Tanzania. *European Journal of Education Studies*, *Vol. 8, Issue, 12, 2021.*

Mlay, G. and Otieno, K.O. (2023). Conflict resolution mechanisms and their influence on quality education in private secondary schools in Arusha District Council. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, *7*(3), 201 – 212.

Mutandi, K.P. (2021). *Challenges Facing Board of Managers in Management of Public Secondary Schools in Kamwangi District*. Kenya: Kenyatta University.

Mwamatandala, A., and S. Muneja, M. (2020). Effect of School Management on Teachers' Commitment: A Case of Government Secondary Schools in Arusha City, Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, *1*(3), 87–96.

Omoeva, C., Hatch, R. and Moussa, W. (2020). *The Effects of Armed Conflict on Educational Attainment and Inequality*. Washington, DC: Education Policy and Data Centre.

Price, P.C., Jhangiani, R., Chiang, I.A., Leighton, &Cullter, C. (2020). *Research Methods in Psychology: Correlational Research.* Montreal: Press books.

Rani, J. (2021). *What is Distributed Leadership*? Palo Alto, CA: Open-Growth Publishers.

Rini, R., Ridwan, R., Sukamto, I. and Hariri, H. (2019). *School-Based Management in Indonesia: Decision-Making, Problems, and Problem-Solving Strategy*. Indonesia: Antantis Press.

Robert, C. (2019). *Principles of the Distributed Leadership Theory.* California, U.S: Leaf Group Ltd.

Malingumu, W.S. (2022). Conflicts and Conflict Management Styles in Secondary Schools in Tanzania: Perceptions of Employees. *InJIPE(Vol. 14, Issue 2)*.

Sakamba, R. and Chishiko, S. (2021). *The Role of School Leadership in Learner Performance in Secondary Schools in Zambia*. University- Lusaka Zambia: Post-Graduate Department.

Spillane, M.G., Lukashenko, D.V., Kunitsyna, M.L., &Abdula-Zade, K.Z. (2020). Pedagogical management of resolving conflict situations in educational institutions. *Revista Tempos e EspaçosEmEducação*, *14(33), e16558.*

Shang'wet, P. (2020). *School Management and Students'*

Academic Performance in Secondary Schools. A Case of Selected Secondary School in Iringa Region, Tanzania. Munich: GRIN Verlag.

Shrestha, M. (2020). Transformational Leadership and Its Dimensions: Contributions in Organizational Change among Schools. *BSSS Journal of Management,Vol. 11(1), 2020.*

Sintapertiwi, D., Ali, A. I., and Andika, M. (2023). Examining Effective Management and Leadership Strategies in Conflict Resolution: A Case Study of Conflict Management in Private Secondary Schools. In *Examining Effective Management and Leadership… (Vol. 2, Issue 1). https://journal.uiii.ac.id/index.php/mer*.

Slade, S. and Gallagher, A. (2021). *Transformational vs. Instructional Leadership. Which is Better?* Washington, DC: Editorial Projects in Education.

Tieng'o, E. W. (2020). Perception of School Management Committees on Community Participation in Education among Primary Schools in Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, *1(2). https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2020v01i02.0028*.

Valente, S., Afonso Lourenço, A., and Németh, Z. (2022). *School Conflicts: Causes and Management Strategies in Classroom Relationships*. Intech-Open.

Wium, A-M.,and Louw, B. (2018). Mixed-methods research: A tutorial for speech-language therapists and audiologists in South Africa. *South African Journal of Communication Disorders, 65*(1), a573. https://doi.org/10.4102/ sajcd.v65i1.573

Zamora, R. (2023). *Origins of Distributed Leadership*. Washington, DC: NCSL Publishing Office.