

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES BY HEADTEACHERS
ON TEAMWORK IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
MURANG'A SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated conflict management strategies by headteachers on teamwork. The study was based on the fact that despite the importance of managing conflicts there are more cases of teacher's turnover rates, poor coverage of syllabus and absenteeism in schools which affects teamwork. The objectives of this study were to establish the extent to which teachers' intra- individual conflicts affect teamwork, find out the awareness level of headteachers *strategies used in management of conflicts*, identify the strategies used by *headteachers and teachers to manage intra-individual conflict amongst teachers and to determine the effectiveness of the conflicts management strategies used by headteachers on teamwork amongst teachers*. The study was modeled in the theory of schools as open systems. The study applied mixed research methodology which utilized concurrent triangulation design. The target population was composed of 70 public primary schools in Makuyu Division, Murang'a County. Probability sampling was used to select 21 public primary schools. Purposive sampling was used to select all the 21 headteachers in the sampled schools as respondents of the study so as to select typical and useful cases only. Stratified random sampling was used to determine 230 teachers studied. The rationale for doing so was to ensure equitable representation of the population in the sample. The research instruments for data collection were questionnaires for teachers and head teachers also interview schedule for headteachers helped in gathering information over a large sample given that the sample size for the study was quite large (251) and time constrains. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was coded and analyze through spss system. Descriptive statistics indices such as tables, graphs, frequencies and percentages were used to represent the data. The study established that teachers' intra-individual conflicts are as a result of engaging in off-duty activities such as; family commitments, commercial farming, transport industry, running hotels and managing private schools. Conflict management strategies utilized by headteachers are compromise, competition and accommodation. The study also revealed that a number of headteachers are aware of conflict management strategies although not sufficiently equipped since the duration of time they took for the course was inadequate. Teachers manage off-duty activities and official duties through; make-up lessons, giving assignments in advance and combining classes. The study also revealed that generally there was no teamwork in schools. It is therefore important that head teachers use the appropriate conflict management strategy basing on its impact to team building and sustenance. The study recommends that teachers and headteachers be equipped with skills and knowledge on how to manage intra-individual conflicts so as to avoid compromising teamwork, more teachers be employed to ease the burden of headteachers and to better remuneration for teachers to motivate them to be fully engaged in official duties and avoid intra-individual conflicts as a result of engaging in off-duty activities.