Roles of Social Media Platforms in Managing Teacher Conflicts in Public Primary Schools

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Abstract. *The study explored the role of social media platforms by administrators in managing teachers' conflicts in public primary schools. The study used The Human Relations Theory which was developed by Elton Mayo in 1930 and the contingency theory which was developed by Fred Fiedler in 1960s. The study adopted convergent parallel design under mixed method research approach. The sample size of the study was 100 respondents from a target population of 1174. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used for selecting heads of school and teachers respectively. Instruments for data collection were questionnaires and interview. quantitative data were analysed using descriptive while qualitative data were analysed thematically supported by verbatim quotes. The study found that social media was the most important in managing teachers' conflicts on improving collaboration, sharing information and enhancing transparency among teachers in the school. Also, the study concluded that social media is the best channel of solving teachers' conflict in public primary school because majority of the teachers agreed that social media simplifies information sharing which leads to improved collaboration and transparency. The study recommended that Itilima District education officers should introduce workshops and training programs on using social media to help in managing teacher's conflicts.*

Keywords: Administrators, channels, conflicts, Communication, teachers

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1. Introduction

Itilima district was established in 2012 from Bariadi district. The current study was conducted in this district in order to examine whether social media such as WhatsApp groups, telephone conversation, and internal newsletters, internets are used effectively in managing teacher's conflicts to both administrators and teachers. Several teachers' conflicts have been reported by the heads of school such as refusing to implement school activities, not attending school on time and competition for resources to teachers. In 2022-2023 the TSC office received 27 cases of conflicts which were reported by school heads and

registered by TSC officer and found conflict resolution on how to deal with them. However, many cases of teacher's conflicts have been piling up and end up disrupting collaboration as well as academic performance. Mageni and Tangi (2022) note that teachers' conflicts are brought by opposing views among teachers, motivation, interests and personal goals, unfair task and resource distribution, lack of transparency as well as teachers breaking school rules and regulations. Consequently, frequent teacher conflicts, lack of clear ways of managing conflicts, poor teachers' morale together with low level of collaboration among teachers with school administrators are key issues that still exist in Itilima district. There remains a question

of how beneficial social media like WhatsApp groups, cell phone conversation, and internal newsletters are to schools' administrators in managing teachers' conflicts. This made the researcher to undertake a study focusing on whether social media are used effectively to manage teachers' conflict in public primary schools. In Europe, teachers themselves get conflicts as the result of ineffective communication channels administrators and apply effective conflict resolution strategies to solve conflicts (Erturk, 2022). In Asia, several organizations use social media as the two-way of communication between educators and students that support more active and interactive learning environment which increases students understanding. Development of educator's digital competencies are the factors that assist the success of using communication channel effectiveness in the school (Indah, 2024). In South America, Government officers use communication channels to address conflict directly and openly (Mendes 2024). In Nigeria, effective communication, negotiation, and counselling have been used as strategies which support and enhance teacher's effective service delivery in public schools. In additional Principals arrange regular staff meetings and workshops which facilitate exchange of information through communication channels in organizations (Dorcas, 2024). Teachers in the school are the representatives in conflict management; however, they lack trainings to handle effective communication during crises (Martin et al., 2024).

In Tanzania, social media has become a powerful communication channel that is now used to address various issues in public primary schools in Itilima. It helps reduce costs that often lead to conflicts, thereby improving academic performance and enhancing good relationships among workers in the workplace. Social media as a communication channel is like a means by which messages are carried from one person to another and may take the form of mediated system as telephone conversation, internal letters, memos, and internal newsletters internet (Machange & Fujo 2021). In 2023, the government of Tanzania introduced the policy for communication matters which was aimed to streamline communication channels by addressing conflicts and ensuring transparency in information sharing by avoiding misinterpretation, escalate issues and promote development of ICT (MICT Policy., 2023). The ICT policy was also meant to secure cyber space environment that builds confidence and trust to the leaders so as to eradicate misunderstandings and confusion that always exist in public institutions and these social media are like the adequate and proper flow of information within and outside of the organization through various channels such social media as the medium to achieve its goals (Taiwo, 2022).

conflicts arise due to individual differences and interests among educators within the workplace. It is an unrealistic expectation to envision a conflict-free environment. Nevertheless, if disputes remain unresolved, they can lead to disorder and organizational chaos (Mageni &Tangi, 2022). In practical work scenarios, communication channels serve as the fundamental prerequisite for managing conflicts in both public and private organizations (Gift et al., 2020). Conflicts among educators are characterized by disagreements that emerge between two or more individuals within the educational institutions, invariably involving teachers. In public primary schools, conflicts manifest amongst teachers themselves, between teachers and students, as well as between teachers and school administrators. In Tanzania, these conflicts stem from inadequate communication, discrimination, resource scarcity, intimate relationships, divergent opinions, overlapping responsibilities, and a harmful working environment (Anwaar et al., 2022). Regular meetings, seminars, and workshops are convened to address conflicts among both teaching and non-teaching staff (Nguku, 2022). this interested the researcher to investigate on the roles of social media platforms in the resolution of teacher conflicts within public primary schools apart from meetings and workshops.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical frame of the study

The study was guided by two theories which are human relations theory developed by Elton Mayo in 1930 and contingency theory developed by Fred Fiedler in 1960s. The human relations theory shows the importance of interpersonal relationships on employee morale at workplace. Also, it emphasizes the importance of communication in resolving conflicts. This theory is related to the study due to the emphasis on communication among workers to increase production in comparison to this study social media can be used in schools to emphasize communication among teachers which can avoid unnecessary conflicts. Regarding Contingency theory which emphasize on situational leadership is relevant to this study where heads of schools can use social medias to teachers who can use digital tools to achieve communication process.

2.2 Roles of Social Media Platforms in Managing Teachers Conflicts

Social media platforms are important channels for managing teachers conflicts within schools and allow dissemination of information to all workers simultaneously. Ahmad (2023) conducted a study in Indonesia whereby the findings showed that, social medias

are used to secure information as they maintain privacy at work place as they avoid unnecessary conflict which occur as a result linking of important information to inappropriate people in the organization. In educational institutions, social media facilitates development of clear policies, selection of secure technologies, collaboration with people from other organizations, monitoring safe learning atmosphere and streamlining communication in solving conflict in the school environment.

Francis and Kasongo (2021) conducted a study in South Africa and found that social media is very important tool that facilitates in managing conflicts which occur in the organization as administrators improve communication to their subordinates through social media platforms due to advancement of information technology. Also, social media enhances collaboration, sharing knowledge and save time in educational organizations. The study highlights the importance of social media in sharing information among workers in educational organization. Ndwandwe (2023) insists that social media reduces conflict at work place because they promote messages of peace and conflict management within organizations as well as team work.

Park (2022) conducted a study in Kenya and the findings revealed that social media plays a role in enhancing public relationship among workers through facilitating team work and omitting challenges that arise regularly as well as avoiding misinformation in the organization. Social media serves as a channel for information dissemination, allowing administrators to convey messages directly to subordinates (Austin & Liu, 2018). These studies highlight the roles of social media in managing organizations through communication by facilitating the rapid distribution of news, updates, and announcements of organization

Manyerere (2021) conducted a study in Dar es Salaam and discovered that social media serves as both a catalyst for peace and a trigger for conflict; this duality arises from the rapid dissemination of misinformation, which can engender mistrust between subordinates and their leaders. Moreover, social media facilitates the swift transmission of pertinent information that fosters positive unity and solidarity among employees within the organization.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a convergent parallel design under mixed method research approach which focuses on qualitative and quantitative data at equal weight (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data to get comprehensive

understanding on how social medias are used in primary schools for managing conflicts among teachers.

3.2 Sampling Procedures and Techniques

Sampling techniques is a technique used to select a subset of unit from a population (Haute, 2021). Sampling is categorized into two types; namely probability and non-probability sampling (Bhardwaj, 2019). In probability sampling, all people have equal chance to be included respondents and in non-probability sampling, not every individual has equal chance to be included as the respondent (Hossan et al., 2023). This study employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling.

3.2.1 Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling is where each member of the mother population has an equal chance of being selected (Mugyenyi & Mokoro, 2022). The study used simple random sampling in selection of ten public primary schools and teachers as respondents in the study. In each selected school, the researcher obtained a paper with a list of teachers' names and sampled ten teachers from each school

3.2.2 Purposive Sampling

According to Mugyenyi and Mokoro (2022), in purposive sampling, a researcher selects participants based on their own discernments. Purposive sampling was employed to identify school heads who were tasked with providing insights on the utilization of social media in conflict management within the educational environment. The researcher consulted other teachers regarding the location of the head of school's office, subsequently arranging a meeting with the head and establishing a timetable for data collection.

3.2.3 Sample

According to Bhardwaj (2019), sample is a group of people, objects, or items taken from a large population as representative of a whole population to obtain a manageable individual in data collection processes in order to get accurate data. Out of the 107 schools located in Itilima District, the researcher selected 10 schools where from each school 10 respondents were sampled making a total of 100 respondents, including heads of schools and teachers.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Data collection tools are the tools that enable the researcher to find answers from respondents or instruments which are used to collect data aiming to gain insights regarding

research topic (Taherdoost, 2021). The researcher collected data by using Questionnaires and Interview Guide.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is the device which is used to collect information or instrument which includes a set of questions and secure answers that respondents fill to give the researcher information needed for study. (Taherdoost, 2021), The researcher used questionnaire for teachers as they were large in number as the researcher aimed to save time for data collection process. The researcher distributed questionnaire to 90 teachers and collected after a duration of one week.

3.3.2 Interview

Interview is a method of data collection that involves two or more people exchanging information through a series of question and answers between the interviewee and interviewer (Sahoo, 2021). The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with heads of schools as they were few in number as each school consisted of one head of school. The researcher aimed to gain details on how they use social media in distribution of duties and conflict management.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher procured a letter of authorization from Tumaini University Makumira addressed to the District Executive Director of Itilima for the purpose of soliciting a research permit for data collection. Subsequent to obtaining the necessary research permit, the researcher visited various schools to confer with the heads of these institutions regarding the scheduling of data collection. During these interactions, the researcher distributed questionnaires and informed consent forms to the teachers and meticulously planned the interview timetable for each

head of school. The researcher then conducted face-to-face interviews with each head of school, with the data being systematically recorded in notebooks.

3.5 Data Analysis

Dawit (2020), states that data analysis involves breaking down existing complex factors into simpler parts and putting the parts together in new arrangements for the purpose of interpretation. Data were analysed thematically and statistically with the aid of SPSS version 23 and presented using frequencies, percentages, and means.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

According to Kobayashi (2020), research ethics are the norms and guidelines that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptance behaviour in the field of conducting research. Ethics were considered by obtaining permits from the institution and district leadership which allowed the researcher to collect data of the study. Also in addition, the researcher insured confidentiality to respondents by not exposing their names, and furthermore the researcher avoided deceptive practices, minimized the risk of harm of respondents and treated the respondents with respect regardless of gender and economic status.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents results and discussion on the study which explored the role of social media in Managing Teachers Conflicts in Public Primary Schools. The data were collected using questionnaires which were distributed to 90 teachers and interview guide was used to collect data from ten heads of schools. data were analysed thematically and statistically.

4.1 Demographic Information of the Participants

Table 1: Demographic Information of the participants

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	66	66
Female	34	34
Total	100	100
Education level		
Certificate	57	57
Diploma	23	23
Bachelor degree	20	20
Total	100	100
Working experiences		
1-5 years	16	16
6-12 years	21	21
13 and above	63	63
Total	100	100

Source: (Field Data 2025

The table1 shows that the researcher used 100 participants in the study where 66 (66%) were male and 34 (34%) were female. Among of the participants of the study who had been selected, 66(66%) had certificate level of education. This implies that majority of teachers had the minimum requirements for teaching in primary schools. 23(23%) had diploma, 10 (10%) had bachelor degree. Another, 21(21%) had working experiences of 6-12 years 16(16%) had 1-5 years working experiences. Therefore, the data indicate that 63(63%) of teachers had working experiences of 13 years and above. This implies that majority of teachers had more experience in the teaching professional and wide knowledge of solving conflicts which occur among teachers compared to others who had below thirteen years of working experience in the teaching profession.

Table 2: Role of Social Media Platforms in Managing Teachers' Conflicts. n=90

Aspects	Strongly Agree f (%)	Agree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Strongly disagree f (%)	Mean	Interpretation of mean
Solves misunderstandings	25(27.8%)	31(34.4%)	11(12.2)	23(25.6)		2.36	High
Brings collaboration	35(38.9%)	45(50%)	6(6.7%)	2(2.2%)	2(2.2%)	1.79	very high
Share information	41(45.6%)	43(47.8%)	4(4.4%)	2(2.2%)		1.63	very high
Improves communication	42(46.7%)	42(46.7%)	3(3.3%)	3(3.3%)		1.63	very high
Enhance transparent	30(33.3%)	46(51.1%)	8(8.9%)	5(5.6%)	1(1.1%)	1.90	High
Builds unity	32(35.6%)	41(45.6%)	9(10%)	8(8.9%)		1.92.	High
solve conflicts	25(27.8%)	35(38.9%	13(14.4)	15(16.7)	2(2.2%)	2.27	High
Overall Mean X̄						1.93	

Source: (Field Data 2025)

Data presented in Table 2 elucidates that social media plays an indispensable role in resolving misunderstandings, with a significant majority of respondents concurring at a mean score of 2.36. This suggests that social media platforms substantially enhance the resolution of misunderstandings among educators by facilitating the discreet dissemination of information from administrators to teachers within the school environment.

In addition, during an interview with one head of school, it was articulated that "*when conflict arises within the school environment, information is disseminated via telephone to various teachers and members of the school board in order to devise an appropriate resolution by considering the diverse perspectives of stakeholders*" (Interview with HoS C on March 10, 2025). Another head of school remarked that "*WhatsApp groups are employed to convey sensitive information pertinent to administrative matters. This facilitates the simultaneous dissemination of news related to school guidelines to a substantial number of teachers*" (interview with HoS H on March 10, 2025). The interview data elucidates that social media proves to be invaluable in mitigating misunderstandings among teachers in primary schools. This aligns with Ndwandwe (2023), who discovered that social media aids in delivering clear messages to the appropriate individuals, thereby preventing unnecessary conflict within the organization. In contrast, human relations theory posits that individuals can effectively resolve emerging conflicts through collaborative teamwork.

Furthermore, the mean of1.79 table 2 shows that respondents strongly agreed that social media brings collaboration. This implies that social medias facilitate collaboration very high among teachers at work place as they interact through WhatsApp, phone calls and messaging. This helps in receiving opinions on how to solve conflict even from people who are far from the school environment. From the interview, one head of school said that "*teachers interact through social medias where they discuss various issues regarding school development where teachers are reminded on their duties*" (interview with HoS D in March 12, 2025). Interview data highlight the importance of social medias in strengthening collaboration among teachers. This goes hand in hand with Fransis and Kasongo (2021) who found that social medias enhance collaboration among people as provides space for individuals to interact each other. In addition, human relation theory emphasizes workers to interact each other in solving problems where all people can share their views towards the existing conflict.

Table 2 shows the mean of 1.63 on sharing information which indicates that the research participants strongly agreed. This implies that social media platforms are very high used to share information in the school as majority of people receive information in a short period of time. From the interview with the head of school S said that "*there is a WhatsApp group of heads of school where they receive information on how to operate the school especially in distribution of tasks to the subordinates*" (interview with HoS J in March 12, 2025). The current findings are in agreement with Park (2022) who revealed that social medias simplify dissemination of information to the public when they are used in proper way as they enhance

teamwork in the organization. Moreover, contingency theory emphasizes on situational leadership where heads of schools can use social medias by considering the nature of teachers who are being managed. This implies that head of schools are required to use social medias in dissemination of information to teachers who are aware on the usage of social medias

Table 2 indicates the mean of 1.63 on improving communication revealing that majority of respondents strongly agreed. This implies that social medias improve communication very high in school environment as many teachers use social media as a channel of exchanging some ideas and information through online communication. Furthermore, the interview that carried out to the head of school, the participant said that "*WhatsApp groups to help teachers to communicate more efficiently online. Clear guidelines are provided to ensure these groups are used effectively and in respectfully manner*" (Interview with HoS in March 14, 2025).

The findings of the current study are in line with Francis and Kasongo (2021) who found that social medias improve communication through time saving and easily sharing of information. On the other hand, human relation theory insists managers to allow communication among workers at work where they can discuss various challenges which affect the organization.

The mean of 1.90 in table 2 indicates that majority of respondents agreed the role of social media in enhancing transparent in the school because most of teachers become aware of what is going on as members access information easily which are related to school operation. During the interview with one of the head of school said that "there *are both positive and negative impacts of sharing information using social medias as every individual has access to information. on the other hand, when informations are accessed by in appropriate people lead to misunderstanding as they can provide solutions which are not functional*" (interview with HoS H in March 10, 2025)

The mean of 1.92 in table 2 indicates that respondents agreed on the role of social media in promoting unity. This implies that when teachers collaborate each other through social media the develop interpersonal skills and sense of togetherness. From the interview with the head of school A said that "*through establishing some rules and having clear guideline to all teachers which abide them while using social media and strengthen unity and sense of solidarity*" (interview with HoS A in March 4, 2025).

The mean of 2.27 in table 2 shows that majority of respondents agreed on use of social medias in solving conflicts. This implies that social medias are highly used in solving conflicts which occur in school environment.

teachers discuss solutions of different challenges which affects the educational organization via social medias. From the interview with one of the heads of school said that "*social media such as WhatsApp and e-mails are important tools for resolving conflicts as they store and share important information related to teachers' duties for referring when they fail to accomplish their responsibilities*" (HoS H I in March 10, 2025). The findings of the current study go hand in hand with the findings of Ahmed (2023) who revealed that social medias are used in managing conflicts in educational organization as they assist in developing clear guidelines and selection of secure technologies. The study highlights the importance of social medias in solving misunderstanding which are likely to occur in school environment.

The overall mean of 1.93 in table 2 implies that majority of teachers agreed on the use of social medias in managing conflict in primary schools.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The key findings have been discussed in relation to the study which focused on the roles of social media for managing teacher's conflicts in public primary schools. The study found that social media is the best channel in solving conflicts in public primary school which school administrators and teachers tend to use to manage teachers' conflicts. In addition to that social media such as WhatsApp groups, phone calls with messaging in the management of teachers conflicts in public primary schools is much enhanced in sharing information, improving collaboration and improving transparency

because majority of the teachers agreed that social media simplifies information sharing which leads to improved collaboration and transparency among teachers in the schools

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendation for Heads of Schools

Heads of schools should use social medias effectively in managing teacher conflicts so as to enhance supportive and collaborative communication at workplace which enable to reduce unnecessary conflicts

5.2.2 Recommendations for District Educational Officers

District education officer's ought to implement workshops and training programs focused on the utilization of social media for the resolution of teacher conflicts, particularly for those who possess limited proficiency in electronic communication devices, including telephones and computers. This initiative aims to mitigate the costs associated with extensive travel required to access vital information.

5.2.3 Recommendation for Further Research Studies

There exists a pressing necessity for further investigation into the complexities associated with the utilization of social media in the management of conflicts by school administrators and district education officers within primary educational institutions.

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