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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Applicability of Collaborative Strategies in Handling Teachers' Conflicts in Public Secondary Schools in Mara Region, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Conflicts among teachers in public secondary schools remain a persistent challenge that can undermine professional relationships, instructional quality, and school effectiveness, particularly in resource-constrained contexts such as the Mara Region of Tanzania. This paper examines the applicability of collaborative conflict-management strategies in addressing interpersonal and organizational conflicts among teachers in public secondary schools. The study will rely on two objectives such as to examine common causes of teachers' conflicts in public secondary schools and explore collaborative strategies are most applicable and effective in managing teachers' conflicts. The study will use 5 education administrators and 15 teachers as respondents in the study so the total informants in the study will be 20 participants. Using a systematic literature review of scholarly studies on collaborative leadership, collegiality, and school-based conflict resolution, the paper synthesizes evidence on practices such as structured dialogue, peer mediation, shared decision-making, and professional learning communities. Researchers identifies the causes of conflicts such as interpersonal differences and personality clashes, differences in teaching methods and professional philosophy, workload distribution and role ambiguity, communication Breakdowns, leadership and management Practices. The review demonstrates that collaborative approaches nurture trust, mutual respect, and collective responsibility, enabling schools to transform conflicts into opportunities for professional learning and institutional cohesion. Evidence further indicates that when school leaders promote participatory cultures and strengthen teachers' communication and problem-solving competencies, collaborative strategies can reduce tensions, enhance teamwork, and improve school climate. The paper concludes that context-responsive collaborative frameworks are both applicable and beneficial for managing teachers' conflicts in Tanzanian public secondary schools, provided that supportive leadership and sustained professional development are ensured. The study encourages in service training to teachers, school heads and education administrators concern conflict resolution supervision strategies, rule and regulation must enforce to resolve conflict in secondary schools and government policy in education must insist on conflict management.

Keywords: collaborative strategies; teachers' conflicts; public secondary schools; school leadership; Tanzania

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of organizational life, and schools are no exception. Educational institutions bring together individuals with diverse personalities, values,

goals, and expectations, making disagreements over resource allocation, pedagogy, or administrative practices common. If not addressed effectively, such conflicts can undermine teacher morale, collegiality,

and overall productivity. However, if managed constructively, conflict can be an opportunity for growth, collaboration, and professional learning (Rahim, 2021). The study reveal that informants reported positive outcomes when these methods remained useful, such as improved collaboration, improved student commitment, and a more harmonious educational environment. The study provides valuable perceptions for educational practitioners and administrators seeking to foster productive and general learning environments. By employing effective organization approaches, collaborating can manage conflicts in education institution, in the organization education administrators prefer to promote collaboration in conflict management, and enhance total educational outcomes. (Chaudhary, 2023).

The study in Mara Region, postulates that school heads manage disagreements fairly, listen to all parties, encourage dialogue, avoid disruptions, and nurture collaboration, contributing to a positive school climate and enhanced academic outcomes. Though, students' responses indicate discrepancies in conflict supervision, advising gaps in responsiveness, fairness, and inclusivity. General, strong conflict resolution by school leaders foster trust, cooperation, and a respectful environment, which is critical for maintaining order, reducing misunderstandings, and ensuring the school's operational efficiency. It is suggested that school heads implement structured conflict resolve approaches that actively involve both students and staff, ensuring fairness, transparency, and timely action. Regular training in mediation, active listening, and inclusive participatory decision-making should be provided to strengthen interpersonal skills. (Nditiyi, Ogar & Onyango, 2026).

Conflicts among teachers in public secondary schools are a common phenomenon that can negatively affect professional relationships, instructional quality, and overall school performance. Teachers work in close collaboration daily, engaging in lesson planning, assessment, curriculum delivery, and administrative tasks. These interactions, although necessary, often create situations where disagreements arise, especially when roles, responsibilities, or expectations are unclear (Rosa et al., 2025). In resource-constrained contexts such as Mara Region, Tanzania, teacher conflicts are intensified by large class sizes, inadequate teaching materials, and limited administrative support (Nyaibuli & Mwila, 2024). Teacher conflicts may arise from multiple sources, including differences in teaching philosophy,

workload distribution, communication breakdowns, and interpersonal disagreements. When these conflicts are unresolved, they can escalate, leading to reduced cooperation, low morale, absenteeism, and even teacher turnover (Zhao & Wang, 2023). Traditional top-down management approaches, such as issuing directives or enforcing rules without consultation, often fail to address the root causes of conflict and may exacerbate tensions (Urick et al., 2022).

In response, contemporary educational research emphasizes the need for collaborative strategies, which focus on joint problem-solving, dialogue, and shared decision-making. Collaborative approaches recognize conflict as a natural part of organizational life and seek to transform disagreements into opportunities for professional growth and learning (Arar et al., 2026). In Tanzania, where public schools often face structural and resource challenges, collaboration among teachers and school leaders is particularly important for sustaining instructional quality and improving overall school climate (George et al., 2024). The issues of resource allocation in public secondary schools become unequal between rural schools and urban schools in Mara region forex ample human resource such teachers and financial resource for fund of teaching and learning resource.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict has long been recognized as a natural occurrence in human organizations, and schools are no exception. In educational institutions, conflict arises from the interaction of diverse stakeholders' teachers, administrators, students, parents, and policymakers each with differing goals, expectations, and values. The manner in which such conflict is handled often determines whether it becomes a constructive force that strengthens relationships and productivity, or a destructive one that weakens morale and effectiveness. It is crucial for education administrators to focus effectively on conflict when it is arising at school context utilize constructively way in managing it. Although conflict in working place it is unavoidable matters because of teachers, students and heads of school much staying together during a day.

Objective

The general objective for this study is how can collaborative conflict-management strategies be applied effectively to address teachers' conflicts in public secondary schools in Mara Region, Tanzania?

Specific Objectives

1. To examine common causes of teachers' conflicts in public secondary schools in Mara Region?
2. To explore collaborative strategies are most applicable and effective in managing teachers' conflicts?

Significance of the Study

The rationale for this study stems from the high prevalence of teacher conflicts in public secondary schools and the limited empirical research on effective conflict management strategies within the Tanzanian context. While global research highlights the benefits of collaborative approaches in reducing workplace tension and enhancing team performance, evidence from resource-limited settings, such as Mara Region, remains scarce. This creates a knowledge gap in understanding which strategies are feasible and effective for improving teacher relationships and school performance in such environments. Collaborative strategies involve practices such as structured dialogue, where teachers communicate openly about issues; peer mediation, where trained colleagues facilitate conflict resolution; shared decision-making, where teachers participate in school governance; and professional learning communities (PLCs), which promote continuous collaboration and professional development. These strategies not only resolve conflicts but also foster mutual respect, trust, and collective responsibility among teachers. This study is significant for several reasons. First, it provides school leaders with evidence-based recommendations for managing teacher conflicts constructively, reducing the reliance on punitive or authoritarian approaches. Second, it contributes to educational research by analyzing the applicability of collaborative strategies in a specific Tanzanian regional context. Finally, the study emphasizes how participatory school cultures and teacher professional development can transform conflicts into opportunities for learning, enhancing both teacher well-being and student outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Interdependence Theory

The first theoretical framework guiding this study is social interdependence theory. This theory, developed from Johnson and Johnson's work, emphasizes that individuals' outcomes depend on their interactions with others. In schools, teachers' performance is influenced not only by individual effort but also through collaboration

with colleagues. When teachers understand that their work and students' learning outcomes are connected, they are more likely to cooperate and resolve conflicts constructively (Johnson & Johnson, 2020). Social interdependence theory identifies three types of interdependence: positive (cooperative), negative (competitive), and no interdependence (independent). Positive interdependence occurs when teachers understand that success is shared, which encourages trust, mutual support, and collective responsibility. Competitive environments increase tension and escalate conflict. Applied to Mara Region public secondary schools, collaborative strategies such as structured dialogue and shared decision-making create positive interdependence, helping teachers work together despite disagreements (Rarieya et al., 2024). Research evidence shows that cooperative structures enhance relationships and organizational outcomes. Schools implementing professional learning communities (PLCs) demonstrate stronger teacher collaboration, reduced interpersonal tension, and improved instructional quality (Arar et al., 2026). Social Interdependence Theory emphasizes the importance of designing school practices that promote collective goals and shared accountability, rather than competition or isolation, for effective conflict management.

Rahim's Conflict Management Model

The second theoretical lens is Rahim's Conflict Management Model, which identifies five conflict-handling styles: integrating (collaborating), obliging (accommodating), dominating (competing), avoiding, and compromising (Rahim, 2022). Among these, the integrating or collaborative style is most relevant for educational settings, as it seeks solutions that satisfy all parties. Collaboration encourages joint problem-solving, dialogue, and mutual understanding rather than emphasizing authority or winning. In Tanzanian public secondary schools, teachers face both interpersonal and organizational conflicts requiring approaches that address underlying issues rather than superficial symptoms. Collaborative strategies such as peer mediation, shared decision-making, and professional learning communities promote integration through involvement of all relevant stakeholders in resolving disagreements (Urick et al., 2022). Structured dialogue allows teachers to express concerns openly, while mediation provides a neutral space for resolving disputes before escalation. Effectiveness depends on context, relationships, and the importance of the issue. School

leaders must consider teacher readiness, leadership support, and institutional culture when implementing collaborative strategies. Studies show that when participatory decision-making is encouraged, trust improves, conflicts are resolved constructively, and overall school climate strengthens (George et al., 2024; Blimpo et al., 2026).

Combining Social Interdependence Theory and Rahim's Conflict Management Model provides a dual theoretical lens explaining both why collaboration works and how it can function in practice. This framework supports the examination of the applicability of collaborative strategies in Mara Region public secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research design to explore the applicability of collaborative strategies in handling teachers' conflicts in public secondary schools in Mara Region, Tanzania. Qualitative research is suitable because it enables in-depth understanding of human behaviors, perceptions, and experiences, which quantitative approaches may not capture effectively (Creswell & Poth, 2021). The focus is on understanding how collaborative strategies such as structured dialogue, peer mediation, shared decision-making, and professional learning communities are applied in real school contexts and how teachers perceive their effectiveness.

A systematic literature review complements field-based data to provide a comprehensive understanding of collaborative conflict management practices. This involves reviewing recent studies published between 2020 & 2026 that focus on school-based conflict resolution, teacher collaboration, and participatory leadership. The combination of literature analysis and qualitative data collection allows triangulation, improving the validity and reliability of findings (Rarieya et al., 2024). The research design is guided by a constructivist approach, recognizing that teachers' experiences and perceptions are shaped by their social and institutional contexts. This approach ensures that the study captures the complexity of conflict dynamics within schools while identifying strategies that are feasible and culturally appropriate for Mara Region public secondary schools (George et al., 2024).

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection involves semi-structured interviews with teachers and school leaders from selected public secondary schools in Mara Region. Semi-structured

interviews allow participants to describe their experiences and provide detailed insights into how conflicts occur, how they are managed, and how collaborative strategies function in practice (Urick et al., 2022). Observations of staff meetings and professional learning community sessions provide additional context for understanding teacher interactions and conflict resolution processes. Purposive sampling is used to select participants who have experience with teacher conflicts and have been involved in collaborative problem-solving initiatives. This includes teachers with different levels of experience and school administrators responsible for conflict management. The sample ensures a diversity of perspectives and allows exploration of contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of collaborative strategies (Rosa et al., 2025). Data analysis follows a thematic approach, identifying patterns and categories related to the causes of conflict, the strategies used, and their outcomes. Coding is guided by the theoretical frameworks of Social Interdependence Theory and Rahim's Conflict Management Model, enabling interpretation of data in line with established principles of collaboration and conflict resolution (Johnson & Johnson, 2020; Rahim, 2022).

Ethical considerations include informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Participants are assured that their identities will remain anonymous and that their responses will be used solely for academic purposes. These measures ensure adherence to research ethics and strengthen trust between researchers and participants (Blimpo et al., 2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Common Causes of Teachers' Conflict in Public Secondary Schools in Mara Region Interpersonal Differences and Personality Clashes

Interpersonal differences, including personality clashes, remain a central cause of conflicts among teachers. Teachers in Mara Region often come from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, which shapes their professional behaviors and expectations. Differences in communication styles, work ethics, and attitudes toward collaboration can create tension in daily interactions. For example, some teachers prefer direct, assertive communication, while others favor a more passive or indirect style. These differences can lead to misunderstandings during planning sessions, staff meetings, or collaborative tasks such as lesson coordination and assessment marking (Zhao & Wang,

2023). Personality clashes also arise when teachers have contrasting professional values or philosophies of teaching. For instance, one teacher may prioritize traditional lecture methods while another prefers student-centered approaches. When these differences are not discussed openly, they can escalate into persistent disputes, impacting teamwork and classroom management. Empirical studies in African school contexts indicate that personality-driven conflicts are often underestimated by school leaders but contribute significantly to workplace tension and reduced teacher collaboration (Arar et al., 2026). In the working place workers differs due to personality perception concerning various issues such conflicts management within the education institution, teachers and school heads to quarrel because they are staying much during a day. Structured approaches to conflict resolution, such as structured dialogue or mediation, are necessary to address these interpersonal issues effectively. They create opportunities for teachers to share perspectives, clarify misunderstandings, and develop mutual respect. Without such interventions, unresolved interpersonal conflicts can undermine professional relationships and negatively affect school performance (Urick et al., 2022).

Differences in Teaching Methods and Professional Philosophy

Conflicts often stem from differences in teaching methods, curriculum interpretation, and professional philosophy. Teachers in Mara Region schools may vary in their instructional approaches, assessment strategies, and interpretation of syllabus requirements. For example, a teacher emphasizing rote learning may clash with colleagues advocating problem-solving or inquiry-based methods. Such disagreements can create tension when lesson planning or collaborative teaching responsibilities are assigned (Abdullah et al., 2025). The world is changing due to science and technology even the methods of teaching are differing traditional methods of teaching are outdated teaching compare to modern teaching. Differences in pedagogical approaches are particularly pronounced in resource-constrained schools, where innovative teaching strategies may conflict with limited materials and large class sizes.

Teachers may blame each other for low student performance or perceived inefficiencies, further escalating tension. Studies in Tanzanian secondary schools show that professional disagreements about teaching styles are a major source of conflict, often compounded by the lack of continuous professional

development and structured platforms for sharing best practices (Rarieya et al., 2024). Collaborative strategies, such as peer observation, joint lesson planning, and PLCs, can bridge these differences. They allow teachers to observe each other's methods, share feedback, and gradually align practices to improve both teaching quality and workplace relationships (George et al., 2024).

Workload Distribution and Role Ambiguity

Unequal workload distribution is a critical organizational factor causing teacher conflicts. Teachers in public secondary schools in Mara Region often manage large classes, multiple subjects, and administrative responsibilities simultaneously. When tasks are assigned without transparency or consultation, perceptions of favoritism or unfairness arise, creating resentment (Nyaibuli & Mwila, 2024). Role ambiguity is another related factor. Teachers may not have clear guidelines on responsibilities, especially in schools with limited administrative support. For instance, a teacher may be expected to handle multiple administrative tasks on top of teaching duties, while colleagues may focus primarily on instruction. Such inconsistencies lead to disputes regarding expectations, accountability, and evaluation. Research shows that workload-related conflicts contribute to absenteeism, stress, and reduced morale, undermining the overall effectiveness of the school (Rosa et al., 2025). Implementing collaborative decision-making and shared workload planning can mitigate these conflicts. When teachers participate in scheduling and resource allocation, they develop a sense of ownership and fairness, which reduces tension and promotes cooperation (Blimpo et al., 2026).

Communication Breakdowns

Poor communication is a persistent cause of conflicts in schools. In Mara Region public secondary schools, limited access to structured communication platforms often leads to misunderstandings among teachers and between teachers and administrators. Informal communication, gossip, or unclear directives contribute to mistrust and misinterpretation of intentions (Zhao & Wang, 2023).

For example, conflicting messages about curriculum priorities, examination schedules, or student assessment responsibilities may create frustration and blame. Teachers may perceive omissions or delays as intentional, creating resentment and hostility. Research in Tanzanian schools demonstrates that communication breakdowns are frequently linked with both interpersonal

and organizational conflicts and can amplify existing tensions (Urlick et al., 2022). Structured communication channels, such as weekly staff meetings with clear agendas, reporting protocols, and mediated discussions, can prevent misunderstandings. Collaborative strategies ensure that all teachers receive consistent information, share their views, and clarify doubts before conflicts escalate (Arar et al., 2026). In line with observation, therefore conflicts accelerated by practised in the selected public secondary schools' presence of poor leadership, communication barrier, shortage of resources, presence of poor decision making, unequal distribution of workload and inadequate of transparency or openness. (Alex & Mukadi, 2022).

Leadership and Management Practices

Leadership style and management practices significantly influence the occurrence of teacher conflicts. Schools with top-down or authoritarian leadership often experience higher levels of tension, as teachers feel excluded from decision-making or perceive favoritism in promotions, workload allocation, or recognition (Abdullah et al., 2025). Conversely, schools where participatory leadership is absent or inconsistent struggle to implement collaborative conflict resolution. Teachers may feel powerless to voice concerns or participate in problem-solving, increasing frustration and mistrust. Empirical studies indicate that ineffective leadership correlates with higher rates of absenteeism, workplace tension, and reduced instructional quality (George et al., 2024; Blimpo et al., 2026). Leadership interventions that encourage shared decision-making, mentorship, and inclusion in policy and planning discussions can significantly reduce conflict. When teachers feel their voices are heard and their professional contributions valued, interpersonal and organizational tensions are minimized (Rarieya et al., 2024).

Collaborative Strategies Are Most Applicable and Effective in Managing Teachers' Conflicts

Structured Dialogue

Structured dialogue is one of the most effective collaborative strategies for resolving teacher conflicts. It involves organizing formal discussions in which teachers communicate their concerns in a safe and systematic environment. In Mara Region schools, structured dialogue sessions often follow specific protocols: each participant expresses issues without interruption, concerns are clarified, and solutions are explored collectively. This method ensures that conflicts do not

escalate due to misunderstandings or assumptions (Urlick et al., 2022). Heads of schools and teachers must create suitable methods through dialogue discussing reach fruitful opinion when the conflict arise in the schools' environment.

Structured dialogue allows teachers to identify the root causes of conflicts rather than merely addressing superficial symptoms. For example, disagreements over lesson planning or student assessment may stem from misaligned expectations or unclear role definitions. Facilitated dialogue provides an opportunity to clarify responsibilities, negotiate workload distribution, and agree on common teaching standards. Teachers reported that these sessions improve mutual understanding, reduce tension, and promote trust among colleagues (Rarieya et al., 2024). Research evidence supports structured dialogue as a practical tool for conflict resolution in schools worldwide. Studies in African secondary schools indicate that structured discussions foster cooperation, reduce resentment, and create a sense of collective responsibility (Arar et al., 2026).

In Tanzania, structured dialogue has been successfully used to resolve conflicts over teaching methods, administrative responsibilities, and communication breakdowns, demonstrating its adaptability to resource-constrained school environments. Additionally, structured dialogue reinforces the principles of Social Interdependence Theory, promoting positive interdependence among teachers. When teachers recognize that their success is interconnected, they are more willing to engage in problem-solving and collaboration, which reduces conflict frequency and intensity (Johnson & Johnson, 2020). The conflict resolves should be used based on specific approaches since the origin causes are distinctive, these approaches such as competition, collaboration, compromising, accommodating, avoiding, warning letters and meetings depend on variations variables choices in dealing with conflicts in secondary schools. (Alex & Mukadi, 2022).

Peer Mediation

Peer mediation involves selecting trained teachers to act as neutral facilitators in conflict resolution. Mediators do not impose solutions; instead, they guide the conflicting parties toward mutually agreeable outcomes. In Mara Region public secondary schools, peer mediation is applied when interpersonal or professional disputes arise that cannot be resolved informally (Rarieya et al., 2024). This strategy empowers teachers to manage conflicts

internally, reducing reliance on external authorities, which can delay resolution or exacerbate tensions. Peer mediators help parties clarify perspectives, identify underlying issues, and negotiate solutions in a structured and impartial manner. Teachers in schools where peer mediation is implemented report higher satisfaction with conflict resolution outcomes, stronger collegial relationships, and increased willingness to collaborate in future activities (Urlick et al., 2022). Peer mediation is particularly effective for resolving conflicts related to personality clashes, workload disagreements, or differences in teaching philosophy. Research in similar African contexts shows that mediation reduces absenteeism, stress, and job dissatisfaction while improving school climate (Blimpo et al., 2026).

Implementing peer mediation requires teacher training in communication, negotiation, and ethical facilitation, ensuring that mediators are credible and trusted by colleagues. Rahim's Conflict Management Model emphasizes the integrating or collaborative approach, which aligns with peer mediation. The goal is to find solutions that satisfy all parties rather than enforcing top-down directives, making mediation a practical application of this theoretical framework (Rahim, 2022). The study recognized that principal of school should handle interpersonal conflicts in public secondary schools using the various approaches as well as meeting, negotiations, communication, collaboration, scolding and warning, mediation, guidance, counselling and education these strategies accentuate trust, personal grow, respect on teachers' job effectiveness in secondary schools. (Messanga & Mkulu, 2021) so teachers and school heads are essentials human resource in managing conflict through various approaches in schools' environments.

Shared Decision-Making

Shared decision-making involves teachers actively participating in decisions that affect their work, school policies, or curriculum delivery. In Mara Region, conflicts often emerge when decisions are imposed by administrators without teacher input. Shared decision-making addresses this issue by creating opportunities for teachers to influence policies regarding workload allocation, assessment strategies, and scheduling (George et al., 2024). participatory decision making it is suitable methods in resolving conflict within the schools through involving all teachers in resolving conflict in constructively way teachers feel valued and respected in engage for handling conflict. Teachers participating in

shared decision-making feel a greater sense of ownership, accountability, and fairness. This reduces perceptions of favoritism or bias and mitigates disputes related to workload or resource distribution.

Empirical evidence from Tanzanian schools shows that inclusive decision-making enhances collaboration, strengthens trust between staff and administration, and improves overall school climate (Rosa et al., 2025). Additionally, shared decision-making encourages continuous reflection and negotiation, which reduces the recurrence of conflicts. When teachers contribute to policy formation, they are more likely to comply with decisions and collaborate to implement them effectively. Social Interdependence Theory supports this approach, as positive interdependence emerges when success is shared and collective goals are emphasized (Johnson & Johnson, 2020). In Kenya, majority of teachers were not engage in decision-making, values and interests triggering conflicts among teachers and schools' administration. Teachers are involving more in decision-making in private secondary schools, there is improvement of academic performance among the students. Majority of the teachers believed that the use of guidance and counselling could be an effective way of solving conflicts between teachers and the school administration. Teachers' involvement in decision-making is one of the most significant managerial practices that school heads should consider practicing. Additionally, there is need for active channels of communication to be set in place by the school administrators to decrease conflicts and progress students' academic performance. Moreover, it sparks off school environment uncomfortable for serious academic activities; consequently, the need for strategies on conflict supervision. (Cherotich et al, 2024). In the similar vein, education administrators applying professional conflict supervision training for school participants and including students in decision-making methods can help create a more comprehensive and supportive learning environment. By addressing these issues and equipping education administrators with the necessary conflict resolve skills, schools can effectively supervision conflicts and encourage a positive school culture inspiring to teaching and learning. (Khalid & Qian, 2024).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide a structured environment for continuous collaboration, reflection, and professional development. In Mara Region schools, PLCs consist of teacher teams that

meet regularly to discuss teaching practices, student performance, and instructional challenges (Arar et al., 2026). PLCs encourage dialogue, peer support, and problem-solving, which reduces the likelihood of conflicts related to teaching methods or classroom management. Teachers participating in PLCs report stronger collegial relationships, better communication, and increased alignment in teaching strategies. PLCs also create a sense of shared responsibility for student outcomes, fostering collaboration and reducing interpersonal tension. Literature shows that schools with active PLCs experience improved school climate, reduced workplace stress, and higher teacher retention (Rarieya et al., 2024). PLCs operationalize collaborative principles, allowing teachers to engage in joint problem-solving and learning while addressing conflicts constructively. This aligns with Rahim's integrating conflict style, as PLCs facilitate negotiation and mutually beneficial outcomes (Rahim, 2022).

Training in Conflict Resolution and Communication Skills

Collaborative strategies are more effective when teachers receive targeted training in conflict resolution, communication, and problem-solving skills. In Mara Region, many conflicts arise from misunderstandings, poor negotiation skills, or lack of awareness of professional norms. Training workshops equip teachers with tools to manage disagreements constructively and foster a collaborative mindset (Urlick et al., 2022). Such training enhances the success of other collaborative strategies, including structured dialogue, peer mediation, and PLCs. Teachers who develop active listening, negotiation, and empathy skills are more likely to participate in collaborative processes effectively. Studies indicate that continuous professional development in conflict management improves teacher relationships, reduces stress, and strengthens institutional cohesion (Blimpo et al., 2026). Integrating training with practical strategies ensures sustainability, as teachers internalize collaborative norms and are better prepared to address future conflicts independently. Social Interdependence Theory reinforces the need for skills development, as it strengthens positive interdependence and shared responsibility for outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study examined the applicability of collaborative strategies in managing teachers' conflicts in public

secondary schools in Mara Region, Tanzania. Conflicts among teachers arise from a combination of interpersonal, organizational, and structural factors. Key causes include personality differences, divergent teaching philosophies, unequal workload distribution, communication breakdowns, and leadership practices perceived as unfair or non-inclusive. These factors interact to create tension that can undermine professional relationships, teamwork, and instructional quality. Understanding these root causes is essential for designing effective conflict management interventions. The study demonstrates that collaborative strategies such as structured dialogue, peer mediation, shared decision-making, professional learning communities (PLCs), and professional development in conflict resolution are effective mechanisms for addressing both interpersonal and organizational conflicts.

Recommendations

Enforcements of rule and regulation on interpersonal relationship between schools' heads and teachers in secondary schools in Tanzania. Policy makers and education planners must include conflict in the curriculum in secondary schools in Tanzania, so that education administrators and teachers know various way in managing conflict in constructively way in schools. Government must ensure training and retraining for schools' heads, teachers and education administrators to be aware on conflict resolution strategies in education institution to cultivate effective conflict supervision which is constructive to schools' environment.

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