ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to assess the influence of secondary school principals’ conflict management practices on students’ retention in Isiolo District. This study will seek the views of administrative leaders and principals of public secondary schools in Isiolo District. Six research objectives were formulated to guide the study. The study will adopt a descriptive survey. The sample comprised of 8 headteachers, 67 teachers and 170 students. Data were gathered by use of structured questionnaires. Findings revealed that conflict influenced retention rate in public secondary schools in Isiolo District. The study objectives sought to determine the influence of conflict, principal’s conflict management practices on students’ retention. It also enhances the involvement of Provincial Administration, Community Leaders and Religious Organizations, which determines the retention of students in the schools. The study also sought to establish the effect of principals’ conflict management practices, working on improving Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E)
Findings on the influence of working with community leaders on students retention in secondary schools revealed that the community around the school was involved in the school activities. They discussed with the community members on the issues of students' retention, they discussed with the community leaders on how conflicts can be resolved. Based on the findings, it was concluded that conflict affected education to a large extent. Conflict in the area affected students retention in schools. Head teacher said that the conflict in the area affected students retention in schools to a large extent. The study also concluded that conflict affected performance of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) especially where conflicts occurred during examinations. The poor performance in the area was attributed to conflict.
The study also concluded that headteachers used various conflict management practices to enhance retention of students in school. For example invited the community for dialogue, they involved the provincial administration in enhancing retention, the provincial administration as involved in solving conflict. They also indicated that the provincial administration had structures to make sure that students are protected during conflicts. The headteachers also worked with the community leaders in addressing the issue of retention of students. Based on the findings it was recommended that the BOG/PTA should be educated on the importance of being involved in the retention of students in school. The head teacher should be at the front line in the establishment of good school community relations so that the community should not have a negative attitude towards the school. It was also recommended that the government should initiate trainings to the community on how to live harmoniously.