

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

EXAMINING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SELECTED JUNIOR HIGH  
SCHOOLS IN THE UPPER DENKYIRA WEST DISTRICT



PATRICK ANTWI

**A Dissertation in the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of Education and  
Communication Sciences, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University of  
Education, Winneba, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for award of the Master of  
Arts (Educational Leadership) degree**

DECEMBER, 2020

**DECLARATION**

**STUDENT'S DECLARATION**

I, PATRICK ANTWI, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

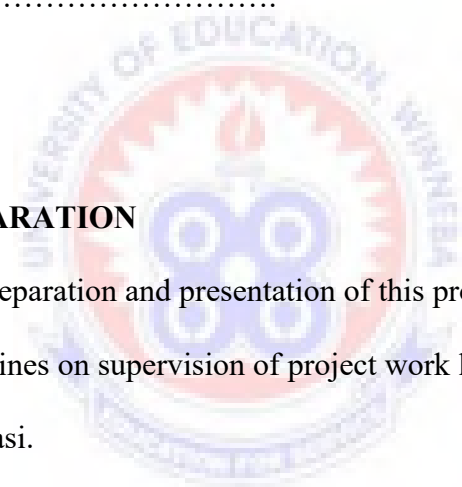
**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this project work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the University of Education, Winneba-Kumasi.

NAME: DR. PHILLIP OTI-AGYEN

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....



## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated my late mother, Ama Antwiwaa. The thesis is also dedicated to my wife, Gifty and the kids, Kwame Kwarteng and Ama Korkor.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Let everything that has breath give thanks to the Lord Almighty, the creator of the universe. I could not have come this far without the love and blessings of my maker. I therefore want to express my innermost gratitude to Him for granting me the wisdom to undertake this project. May His name be praised!

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Philp Oti-Agyen for the patience he had in editing this thesis for final submission. I also register my sincere thanks to the entire lecturers of the Department of Educational Leadership; I say God should replenish all that you lost on me. To my family, friends, and study mates, in fact, your support, encouragement and understanding of my plight motivated me to undertake this programme with amazing success. I cannot complete this without congratulating my wife, Mrs. Gifty Antwi for the domestic hardship she endured during my long absence from home.

To my colleague researchers especially Mr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi and Mr. Kwabena Nyarko Addai, I appreciate the untiring assistance you put in my work. Finally, I am grateful to all participants and individuals whose contribution direct or indirect helped to bring this project to success especially my children, Vida Donkor, Kwame Kwarteng Antwi. and Ama Korkor Antwi.

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENT	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Purpose of the Study	5
1.4 Research Objectives	5
1.5 Research Questions	5
1.6 Significance of the Study	6
1.7 Delimitation	6
1.8 Limitation of the Study	7
1.9 Organisation of the Study	7
1.10 Operational Definitions	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Concept of Conflict and Conflict Management	9

2.4 Conflict Management Practices amongst Teachers and Head teachers	16
2.5 Roles of Conflict Management in Attaining Institutional Performance	23
2.6 Challenges in Managing Conflict in Schools	26
2.7 Summary and Conclusion	30
2.8.1 Conceptual Framework Explained	32
CHAPTER THREE	33
METHODOLOGY	33
3.1 Introduction	33
3.2 Research Design	33
3.3 Study Population	33
3.3.1 Inclusion criteria	34
3.3.2 Exclusion criteria	34
3.4 Sampling Techniques	34
3.5 Sample Size	35
3.6 Data Collection Tool and Technique	37
3.7 Validity and Reliability	37
3.8 Data Collection Procedure	38
3.9 Data Analysis	38
3.10 Ethical Consideration	39
CHAPTER FOUR	40
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	40
4.1. Introduction	40
4.2 Presentation of Results	40



4.2.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents	40
4.2.2 Major causes of conflicts amongst teachers and headteachers	42
4.2.3 Common conflict management practices amongst teachers and headteachers	43
4.2.4 Challenges encountered in managing conflict	45
4.2.5 Roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance	46
4.3 Discussion	47
4.3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents	47
4.3.2 Major causes of conflicts amongst teachers and headteachers	48
4.3.3 Common conflict management practices amongst teachers and headteachers	49
4.2.4 Challenges encountered in managing conflict	51
4.3.5 Roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance	52
CHAPTER FIVE	53
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION	53
5.1. Introduction	53
5.2 Summary	53
5.3 Conclusion	54
5.4 Recommendations	54
REFERENCES	56
Appendix A:	67
Informed Consent Form	67
Appendix B:	70
Structured Questionnaire	70





## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Number of schools selected for study	35
2	Respondents' demographic characteristics	40
3	Key causes of conflicts	41
4	The frequently used conflict management practices	43
5	Challenges facing managing conflict	45
6	Benefits of conflict management	46



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Conceptual framework	30



## ABSTRACT

This study examined conflict management practices in selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District. The research design adopted was a descriptive survey. The sample size of the study was 150. Purposive and cluster sampling techniques were used to select the participants and study locations. The study used a quantitative research method approach. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The results show that all the participants (100%) agreed that they experienced conflict in their institutions; 86.7% of the participants strongly agreed that mistrust (misgiving) among teachers caused conflict among teachers in the school environment. The commonest conflict management practice among teachers was avoiding style about others, with a mean value of 3.43 and standard deviation of 1.43. All the participants (100%) strongly agreed that poor articulation of the causes of conflict among teachers, differences in values, and lack of professional skills were the main key challenges facing managing conflict practices in schools. The study concluded that conflict management practices should be approached with the idea that conflicts can be good for the team and recommended that training in conflict management should be given to all teachers and headteachers to enable them to turn conflict erupting in their schools into a positive force that can bring positive change.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In the new global economy, conflict management has become a central issue for the effective management of schools. Conflict is common and universal in every community. Conflict occurs within organizations, among the members of an organization, and within everyone's personality because conflict is an everyday certainty (Ayalew, 2000). This implies that conflict is an inevitable concomitant of choices and decision features of human interaction (Miller, 2004).

It has been argued those communication barriers, role uncertainty, uncertain expectations, unresolved prior conflicts, conflicting interests, the difference in duty, and content issues are some of the factors that can lead to conflict in schools (Rahim, 2002; Kantek & Gezer, 2009). Erasmus and Swart (2000) further note that competition for scarce resources, differences in values, and contradictions among educators and learners may also lead to disagreement between people. This phenomenon may affect an organization to attain its performance.

In the same vein, Romo (2001) asserts that conflict can affect academic achievement and social relationships. It is argued that unless we manage conflicts accordingly, it can unquestionably undermine teachers' efficiency and effectiveness. Conflict-management skills have become increasingly important to institutional heads in this contemporary era (Lang, 2009; Ramani & Zhimin, 2010). Overall, these studies demonstrate that conflict is assumed to be a natural part of modern organizations, and there is a need for conflict management practices in schools.

Similarly, Leithwood and Hallinger (2002) suggest that developing an effective approach for conflict management practice schools requires a corporate level of management, which specifies strategies to cope with any unsafe situation in an academic institution. Therefore, teachers need to work in harmony and unity as all stakeholders in the education should have a common determination and focus on strategies for conflict management in the school.

Educational management in basic schools in Ghana involves applying management values and skills in designing, developing, and effecting resources towards achieving educational goals. In that case, conflict management is part of the school administration problem and has become part and parcel of Ghanaian educational institutions, including basic schools. The nature and types of conflicts that occur vary from one school to another (Armstrong, 2009).

Undoubtedly, in Ghana, basic schools, specifically the headteachers, seem to be the most important medium toward delivering effective and quality education (Rahim, 2002). It is noted that conflicts are an integral part of any social system. It needs to be correctly managed to create an enabling environment for effective and efficient responsibilities. Even though conflicts are often perceived as negative and must be eradicated at all costs, there is evidence that conflict is not necessarily negative (Fillipo & De Waals, 2000; Afful-Broni, 2007).

Specifically, as far as the conflict in basic schools in Ghana is concerned, it may differ from other conflicts which happen in other establishments since different individuals and groups such as students, teachers, and administrative workers. In Ghanaian schools, conflict generally occurs between headteachers and teachers, teachers and pupils, teachers and parents, pupils, and schools and their communities (Afful-Broni, 2007). It is suggested that the indicators of conflict in Ghanaian schools include unplanned transfers, hostility among staff members, and withdrawal from active participation in school activities. It is noted that conflict in Ghanaian

schools may affect the professional work of staff in a way that may be unable to focus on their assigned task if it is not resolved amicably (Afful-Broni, 2007).

Thus, conflict is an important issue that must be conscientiously addressed due to its effect on organizational performance. It requires imperative attention when resolving it. Therefore, finding effective ways to promote and consolidate the common good and reduce the dysfunctional effects of conflicts is essential for the survival of any institution, including academic institutions. To this end, this research will explore conflict management practices in selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Several scholars from different disciplines have conducted researches on conflict and its management. Similar studies are done differently by Joel (2011), Likuku (2013), and Soimpa (2015) explored the approaches and strategies of interpersonal conflicts between headteachers and teachers. These studies identified three factors that influence conflict: organizational power, a personal status difference of the individuals handling the conflict, and previous interactions. They had a comparable conclusion that these factors influence the individuals' behavioral responses or emotions.

Other scholars, including Mosha (2006), Afful-Broni (2007), and Hakielimu (2007), have investigated and explored conflicts among teachers and heads of schools and students. These studies separately analyzed conflict as a function of organizational conditions about school size, teaching specialization, and authority's centralization. These studies distinctly classified conflict as intra and inter-stratum content upon the participants involved in the conflict situation. They individually found that the major determinant of intra-stratum conflict in

Senior High Schools was the centralization of authority. In contrast, in Junior High Schools, intra-stratum conflict was primarily a function of all variables Mosha (2006), Afful-Broni (2007), and Hakielimu (2007). My study investigates conflict management practices beyond school size, teaching specialization, centralization of authority, and considers all possible causes of conflict in Junior High Schools.

Several authors have also considered the effects of failure to resolve conflict and its effect on students' academic performance (Robert & James, 2001; Nevvslorm & Davis, 2002). These studies suggest a need to manage conflicts in educational institutions to take advantage of the constructive aspect of the conflict. In Ghana, Afful-Broni (2007), Gyan and Tandoh-Offin (2014), Opoku-Asare, Takyi, and Owusu-Mensah (2015) have conducted separate researches on causes of conflict in schools. For instance, Gyan and Tandoh-Offin (2014) and Opoku-Asare, Takyi, and Owusu-Mensah (2015) separately suggest that some of the notable causes of conflict range from religious cause through misapplied policy, lack of technical know-how in conflict management to the representation of school leaders in the day-to-day administration of the school.

Likewise, Afful-Broni (2007) highlighted the need to strengthen guidance mechanisms and encourage peer mediation to curb conflict in school environments and promote teamwork significantly. Although existing literature on conflict management practice in schools in Ghana is extensive, it is really good to study conflict management practice in basic schools in the Upper Denkyira West District since it appears we do not have any literature on that. To fill the research gap, this study sets out to examine conflict management practices in basic schools in the Upper Denkyira West District to obtain data that will help address this research gap.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine conflict management practices in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To identify the major causes of conflicts in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District.
2. To find out common conflict management practice amongst teachers and headteachers in selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District
3. To assess the roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District.
4. To discuss the challenges encountered in managing conflict in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are the major causes of conflicts in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District?
2. What are the common conflict management practices amongst teachers and headteachers in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District?
3. What roles do conflict management practices play in attaining institutional performance in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District?
4. What challenges are encountered in managing conflict in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District?



### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that these study findings may support headteachers and teachers in the Upper Denkyira West District to understand the conflict in schools and help manage conflicts in Junior High Schools. It is anticipated that the study findings will provide an important opportunity to circuit supervisors in the district to understand and appreciate the causes, styles, and effects of conflict management practices in basic schools, thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills to manage conflict in their various circuits. Besides, the study findings may also be helpful to Ghana Education Service in understanding challenges school heads, and teachers face in managing conflicts in their various schools and developing training programmes to help develop headteachers' conflict management skills.

In furtherance of this, the study may lay the foundation for researchers in education to conduct further research regarding conflict management practice in schools in Ghana. Lastly, the study will also contribute knowledge on existing literature related to conflict management practices in school contexts in Ghana.

### **1.7 Delimitation**

This study examined conflict management practices in basic schools in the Upper Denkyira West District. This district was selected because it is a new district, and it appears there is no published empirical study into conflict management practice in basic schools located in the area. The study focused on conflict management in the basic schools as conflict undermines the professional work of staff if it is not resolved, and this needs to be looked at to find relevant strategies to manage conflict in schools effectively. The study engaged the following concepts to understand conflict management: major causes of conflicts, common conflict

management practices, challenges in managing conflict practice, and the roles of conflict management in schools. The rationale underpinning this delimitation was to address and attain the research objectives. Besides, the study involved headteachers and teachers from selected Junior High Schools in the district because they are better positioned to offer the required information to achieve the study objectives. This scope was engaged because it allowed the researcher to easily access information needed to undertake the study and ensure easy access to the participants.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

A crucial challenge that the researcher encountered in the study was obtaining support from the targeted population owing to the stigma attached to conflict-related questions. Therefore, the researcher has to take ample time to explain to the participants that there was no risk of participating in the research. If they disclose any information that poses any risk, they were assured that their information would be kept confidential.

Additionally, it was challenging to get the participants since schools were closed in all parts of Ghana owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The district education directorate communicated to the headteachers of the selected schools regarding this study. This action enabled the researcher to meet the participants in their various schools to administer the questionnaire.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

The entire study was structured into five different chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction to the study. The second chapter focuses on the review of the related literature. The third chapter treats the research design and methodology, whereas the Fourth Chapter

asserts data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the major findings. The last chapter summarizes the findings, conclusions reached, and recommendations based on conclusions drawn from the analyzed data.

### **1.10 Operational Definitions**

**Conflict:** It is a part of interaction demonstrated in disagreement, differences, and conflicting interests, desires, and wishes between two or more parties within schools (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1996).

**Conflict management:** Denotes the management of conflicts in a constructive means to take advantage of them (Ghaffar, 2005).

**Conflict management practices.** Different personal conducts of responding to conflict in the dimension of assertiveness—the craving to satisfy one’s own needs and wishes; and cooperativeness—the desire to satisfy another party’s need and concerns (Ayalew, 2000; Mozilla, 2010).

**Conflict resolution:** this study refers to the process of attempting to resolve conflict among parties.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on a critical review of literature done on conflict management practices. It begins with a review of the concept of conflict and conflict management. It would then discuss the major causes of conflicts. This will be followed by a discussion on conflict management practices common amongst teachers and headteachers. The chapter then further examines the challenges encountered in managing conflict before reviewing the literature on roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance. The last section of the chapter will present a summary and conclusion of the review.

#### **2.2 Concept of Conflict and Conflict Management**

The term conflict has been defined in different ways by several scholars. For instance, Thomas (1976) defines conflict as the process which begins when one party perceives that the other is frustrated or is about to be frustrated. Similarly, Amason (1996) described the conflict as a form of socialization. He further stressed that people in organizations have personal and role preferences about the organization's actions and policies. Additionally, Schmidt and Kochan (1972) defined conflict as an opportunity for interfering with the other's goal attainment. In the same vein, Hocker and Wilmot (1985) define conflict (from a communication perspective) as an articulated struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals.

Deutsch and Coleman (2000) suggest that conflict exists because people have different needs, ideas, views, and values. Therefore, the challenge for schools is to find better ways of managing conflict constructively as for the wider community. Those involved can learn and grow from the experience in all kinds of human relationships and social settings. It can be argued that a range of potential differences among people creates conflict, and the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction.

Furthermore, Coser (1967) argued that conflict is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources. The opponents aim to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals. This view is supported by Nyamajiwa (2000), who noted that conflict could be defined as the opposition of individuals, or groups' interests, opinions, or purpose. Nevertheless, conflicts which happen in organizations are neither good nor bad and unavoidable. Based on the above definitions, the underlying view is that conflict is good only when it enables the organizational members to accomplish the set goals peacefully. On the contrary, it is bad when it hampers the effectiveness of the organizations (Gray & Starke, 1990 cited in Mosha 1994). Likewise, Kilmann (1970) argues that conflict is the product of frictions among groups, which is the consequence of contradictory ideas, the community or the institution can fall into conflict due to the divergence interest of the subordinates and those at the corporate level, the author emphasized that conflict is inevitable.

Regarding conflict management, it has been defined differently by different scholars. However, there is a shared idea that runs through all the definitions given by these scholars. Rahim (2002) points out that conflict management is “the process of maximizing the positive aspect of conflict while minimizing the negative aspect of conflict to enhance learning and improve organizationally.” Additionally, conflict management is also defined by Burton

(1998) as “the process of identifying the main causes of tension in relationships, being it interpersonal or intra-personal and dealing with them.” It can be argued that this definition implied that effective conflict management needs the identification of the main causes of the problem. This view supports Swanstom and Weissmann (2005), who proposes that conflict management is seen as a prerequisite desired to initiate preventive measures to conflicts. Based on the above definitions, managing conflict required putting down appropriate measures to prevent the problem from reoccurring. Besides, these definitions highlighted how to achieve the best out of conflict situations to make the individuals or organizations more effective and efficient.

Moreover, it is suggested that conflict management is a philosophy and a set of skills that supports persons and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives. Conflict as a concept never remains positive or negative, but it has always been a basic and result-oriented part of life (Ghaffar, 2005). According to Owens (1995), effective management of conflict, including treating it as a problem to be resolved and stressing the collaborative essence of organizational life, can lead to very productive and supportive outcomes for the health of the organizations.

Nevertheless, ineffective management of conflict such as hard-noised rules or guidelines of punishment for offenses gets tough practices in the name of administering the negotiated contract and stressing on the adversarial relationship among teachers, teachers, and learners, teachers, and principals can lead to an environment that aggravates the situation and likely to advance a downward spiral of mounting frustration, deteriorating organizational climate, and increasing destructiveness.

Thus, it is suggested that educational leaders and teachers must contemplate conflict, whether it is possibly beneficial to the organization. Tilahun as cited in Owens (1987), argued that frequent and prevailing conflict can have a devastating effect on people's behavior in organizations. Such conflict leads to physical and psychological withdrawal. It is an extensively occurring singularity in schools often labeled as laziness on teachers, students, administrative workers, and other stakeholders who “soft” administrative practices have spoiled. Based on these scholars’ views, it can be argued that managing conflict in a better manner should be promoted. Therefore, there is a need for teachers and students to understand the dynamic nature of conflict and manage it constructively.

### **2.3 Causes of Conflicts in Schools**

It is noted that the causes of conflict range from philosophical differences and divergent goals to power imbalances, and when conflict is managed poorly managed, it generates a breakdown in trust and lost productivity. Appleby (1994) maintains that schools' conflicts usually arise from the need to share scarce resources. He further suggested that groups or individuals involved come into conflict to attain the resources, thus bringing forth hostile behaviors (Appleby, 1994). Besides, Wayne and Miskel (2008), conflict is created in schools when people have diverse preferences and ideologies as their principles. For instance, conflicts driven by this factor can be demonstrated in different departments where teachers have sets of beliefs that they assert. This implies differences in values, attitudes, or perceptions among different units (Wayne & Miskel, 2008).

Similarly, Duke (1999) noted that conflicts could occur between individuals or groups in an organization if the goals are not stated or when the management shifts blame on units

involved in the work process. For example, the conflict between employees in the workplace is a natural element of worthwhile communication. Again, it is suggested that conflict can occur when there is a change in the organizations and individuals strive to cope with their mutual interdependency in a changing organizational environment (Mayer, 2004).

Some scholars also link conflicts with poor working conditions and lack of clear work and remuneration policy by the government. For instance, it is maintained that schools that face a lot of problems in providing the necessary facilities and even teaching materials experience conflict. According to the Republic of Kenya (2001), some schools did not have basic facilities, including the staff room and teaching materials. Some head teachers lack even offices to transact official duties.

Yee and Cuba (1996) concluded that some head teachers could not adopt and respond to complexities in their institutions quickly. Besides, some boards got impatient because they expect quick positive change, and when change fails to occur that fast, the head teacher is accused of being a low performer, the head teacher was quickly ejected out of the school, and a new one brought in. Rono (2001) shares the same views and shows that some head teachers display poor leadership qualities that created school conflicts. Gordon (1991) indicates that inexperienced head teachers sometimes ran into serious problems when they failed to use their scarce resources properly.

The findings of the Republic of Kenya (2001) indicate that head teachers create conflicts in their schools because of applying wrong managerial skills in planning, budgeting, and expenditure control. In some cases, head teachers do not apply proper use of accounting instructions provided by the Ministry of Education, which leads to misallocation of resources resulting in a lack of essential commodities and services. The Report also indicates that some



head teachers are not transparent and accountable in handling the financial issues of their schools (the Republic of Kenya, 2001).

In school circumstances, sometimes parents contrast greatly with the teachers over the academic performance of their children. According to A Republic of Kenya (2001), parents place a lot of pressure on the teachers claiming that they contribute to the poor academic performance of the students. Such parents agitate for removing the head teacher and transfer of teachers to other schools; the students sometimes support the parents in the move and become undisciplined to the extent of physically demanding for the removal of the teachers. This is supported by Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) that poorly performing schools, many at times, are characterized by a lot of conflicts by the stakeholders. Head teachers sometimes find themselves in problems with the perceptions of the stakeholders that sometimes the head teacher favors the other stakeholders and other students

Also, it is argued that many head teachers professed conflicts in educational administration with the absence of needed financial resources. According to Some (2010), a shortage of finances makes it hard for the head teacher to forge ahead in educational programmes. He also indicates that head teachers have been forced to make ends meet in their schools where there is a lack of finance and material resources. The situation is made worse by low student enrolment in some secondary schools. Lack of finance and resources in school sometimes is blamed on the head teacher. Occasionally, parents blame the head teacher for not providing the required learning facilities when it is deliberately (Some, 2010).

Survey studies carried out in some secondary schools of Cape Town reported by Scanius (1995) show that overworking causes conflicts between head teachers and teachers who are unmotivated in their work. Some teachers go into the teaching profession as a last resort when

other alternatives are absent. These teachers will never settle in their jobs as professionals. They work to earn a salary with the hope that they will soon leave the profession. Foster (1989) upholds this view and shows that unmotivated teachers will not produce good results. Therefore, complaint, laxity, grumbling, and fighting with head-teachers characterizes their work. However, some head teachers perceive causes of conflicts in their school due to lack of commitment by some teachers who lo work in their schools (Foster, 1989).

According to Robbins (1989), all the factors related to the issues of conflict are grouped under three categories. These are communicational, structural, and personal. He explained the factors that are included in each of the categories as:

1. Communicational: includes the insufficient exchange of information, noise, and the semantic differences that arise from selective perception and background differences.
2. Structural: includes the goal incompatibility of members of the group, jurisdictional clarity, and leadership style.
3. Personal factors: includes individual value systems and personality characteristics.

On the other hand, Greenberg (1996) classified the major sources of conflict in organizations into two groups: (1) factors relating to organizational structure or functioning and (2) factors relating to interpersonal relations. Besides, the factors that are relating to interpersonal relations are identified as: lasting grudges (making people angry and look foolish publicly), faulty attributions (errors concerning the sources behind others" behavior), faulty communication, distrust, and personal characteristics.

According to Wiley and Sons (1996) and Greenberg (1996), organizational sources of conflicts were stated as (1) competition over scarce resources, (2) ambiguity over responsibility and jurisdiction, (3) interdependence and events stemming from it, (4) reward

systems, (5) differentiation within organization, and (6) power differentials between organization members. As well, Szilagyi and Wallace (1983), on their part, identified three principal sources of conflict: (1) goal incompatibility, (2) decision-making requirements, and (3) performance expectations. Ayalew (2000) also condensed the sources of conflict into five general categories: goal incompatibility, structural design, role expectation, degenerative climate, and personal differences

Again, Katumanga (2000) noted that many things head teachers and teachers do in their schools pose a serious challenge to school management. Some of these include absenteeism, perennial lateness, dishonesty, inaccessibility, and being autocratic or dictatorial. He further maintained that some head teachers had been forced to deal with conflicts in their schools due to their own making. Together these studies provide important insights into the causes of conflict in schools. None of these empirical studies deals with the causes of conflicts in schools in Ghana. Therefore, this present study will discuss the causes of conflict in basic schools in Ghana to address the gap in the literature.

#### **2.4 Conflict Management Practices amongst Teachers and Head teachers**

According to Oyebade (1994), conflict in schools and other organizations is inevitable, and there is a need to ensure better conflict management practices. Many scholars have highlighted various ways of resolving conflicts, as many of these are applicable in a school situation. For instance, Kilmann (1970) identified five techniques of dealing with conflicts in schools: competitive, collaborative, compromising, accommodating, and avoiding. These methods vary in their degree of cooperativeness and assertiveness. It is noted that school

heads need to understand what is entailed in conflict management and need high conflict competence to be effective in their schools.

Robbins (1974) focuses on strategies precisely labeled as resolution techniques. He lists eight techniques: problem-solving, super ordinate goals, avoidance, smoothing, compromise, authoritative command, altering the human variable, and altering structural variables. As Thomas (1976) examines conflict management strategies, he focused on general strategies used by administrators in an educational setting. These strategies for management are citizens' advisories, confrontation sessions, sensitivity training, process involvement, educational pluralism, volunteerism, cooperative studies, and a failure fact of life. Therefore, conflict can be a reality in any social system that provides challenges for the parties involved in a conflict.

Additionally, Ladipo (1997) identified conflict management strategies of forcing, structural changes, avoidance, compromise, and smoothing. In a related study, Hodge and Anthony (1991) also identified conflict management strategies as suppression, smoothing, avoiding, compromise, third-party intervention, cooperation, democratic process, job rotation, and confrontation. Nevertheless, the strategy identified by Meyer (1994) was effective communication which he described as the best because it would make the group aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem-solving.

Equally, Ibukun (1997) identified problem-solving, appeal to superior organizational goals, prevention, avoidance, expression of opportunities and resources, use of authority and command, changing the organization's structure, and compromise as management strategies for resolving conflicts in organizations. Blake and Mouton (1964) identified five conflict-solving strategies, smoothing, compromising, forcing, withdrawal, and problem-solving. It

can be argued that conflict management practices deal with how people produce to handle the situation that is considered detrimental to attaining the desired goal. Humans generate two typical responses as they deal with people, such as assertiveness and cooperation (Thomas, 1976).

Assertiveness is the attempt to satisfy one's own needs and desires at the expense of other persons (organizational demand in the case of administrators). In contrast, cooperation in a manner to satisfy the desires or needs of the other's people (individual needs of the members). Therefore, attempting to satisfy organizational demands can be viewed from an assertive to unassertive continuum while attempting to satisfy individual needs conceptualized from uncooperative to cooperative. The interplay of the two orientations determines the specific behavioral patterns that people follow in managing conflicts (Szilagyi & Wallace, 1983).

Accommodating style implies surrendering one's own needs and wishes to please the other person. According to Namusi (2005), some teachers and head teachers who opt for an accommodating style deny themselves to put their interest last and let others have their way. Many times, they say, such people believe that keeping a good relationship is more worthwhile than anything else. Following this notion, Irene (2011) suggests that the accommodating style satisfies the other party's concerns while neglecting oneself. She concluded that the difficulty in the habitual use of the accommodating style emphasizes preserving a friendly relationship at the expense of critically appraising issues and protecting personal rights.

As Gross (2000) indicates, this style involves cooperative behavior but not assertive and may mean an unselfish and long-term strategy to encourage others to cooperate or submit to the

wishes of others. From the above explanation, accommodators are regularly and favorably evaluated by others but are also perceived as weak and submissive.

Concerning an avoiding style, Kogo (2002) suggested that the avoiding approach is a technique of dealing with conflict from a safe emotional distance. As with viewing a distant mountain range, the specific details get lost the farther away one is. This brings in Wheeler's (1995) notion that teachers and head teachers who choose the avoiding style do generally not get involved in a conflict because they tolerate each other to escape the conflict. Also, Kriesberg (1998) highlights that the avoiding style involves unassertive and uncooperative behavior; thus, an individual chooses this style to stay out of conflict, ignore disagreements, or remain neutral. The avoiding approach might reflect a decision to let the conflict work itself out or reflect an aversion or tension and frustration.

In the view of Convey (2002), head teachers engaging in an avoiding strategy protect themselves from the difficulty of conflict. Such people are reluctant to conflict with the teachers the way someone with a competing response would. Similarly, Connie (2002) claims that the avoiding strategy may be useful when it is important to give some time and space to a conflict because some people are mood-driven. A day or even a few hours can make a tremendous difference in their willingness to engage in conflict productively. This brings in the notion that timing can be extremely important in determining when a problem is brought up or a conflict is discussed and goes with the saying that "time heals some wounds." In agreement with this claim, Barker (2009) notes that conflict may go away over time, particularly if there is continuous contact between both sides on other issues. That contact is mostly positive and productive. In such situations, both parties may decide that what they were upset about in the past is just not important anymore.

Competition functions as a zero-sum game, in which one side wins and the other loses. Extremely assertive personalities often fall back on competition as a conflict management strategy. The competitive strategy works best in a limited number of conflicts, such as emergencies. The competition involves authoritative and assertive behaviors. In this style, the aggressive individual aims to instill pressure on the other parties to achieve a goal. It includes the use of whatever means to attain what the individual thinks is right. It may be proper in some situations, such as when issues are vital to the organization's welfare, but it shouldn't come to a point where the aggressor becomes too unreasonable (Thompson, 1967). It can be argued that dealing with the conflict with an open mind is dynamic for a resolution to be met.

About compromising style, Odich (2001) defines compromise as an agreement in which people agree to accept less than they originally wanted. It is noted that many teachers and headteachers rely on the compromising style to manage conflict. Whetten (2005) maintains that compromise is an attempt to have partial satisfaction for both parties, which compels them to make sacrifices to obtain a common gain. Harrison (1998) reported that there is no distinct winner or loser with compromise, and the decision reached is probably not ideal for either group. Therefore, compromise can be used efficiently when the goal sought can be equitably shared. If this is not possible, one group must give up something of value as a concession. This is in line with previous studies that have shown a significant positive relationship in using collaborating style and people's satisfaction with their tasks, supervision, and job in general (Alexander, 1995).

Competing style, choosing a competitive style to manage a conflict implies that an individual puts his or her interest before everyone else's interest. As Miller (2003) suggests that teachers and head teachers who adopt a competitive style try so hard to get what they want that they

end up ruining their relationships. In the view of Kreps (1990), there is always a winner and a loser with the competing style which allows one party to adopt the "I win-you lose" approach to resolving the conflict and so does all in his or her power to win the conflict, for example, one party's tactics may include manipulation, not telling the whole truth and not admitting mistakes and ending negative verbal, voice and body messages. Connie (2002) clarifies as "going all out to win the conflict." Again, Orodho (2003) noted that when teachers and head teachers employ the competitive style of conflict management, they tend to be aggressive and uncooperative and pursue personal concerns at the expense of the other. In effect, they try to gain power by confrontation and try to win without adjusting their goals and desires.

A study conducted by Abdul (2013) indicates that different secondary schools in Pakistan use accommodation, avoidance, compromise, and collaboration to manage conflict. Nevertheless, the choice of which style to use depends on the situation. Teachers and head teachers avoid conflicts out of fear of engaging in a conflict or lack confidence in their conflict management skills. He further suggested that compromising mode is suitable are when you are dealing with issues of moderate importance, when you have equal power status, or when you have a strong commitment for resolution. Teachers and head teachers usually also apply this conflict management style as a temporary solution when there are time limitations (Abdul, 2013).

It is noted that no consensus has been reached among different scholars and researchers regarding the results obtained from conflict management styles. For instance, a study was employed to compare the prevalent conflict management style chosen by students in nursing and those chosen by students in allied health professions (Sportsman & Hemilton, 2007). They took 126 sample students in a Comprehensive University completed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), which requires respondents to choose behaviors



most characteristic of their response to conflict and classifies those behaviors as one of the five styles. The result confirmed that the mean difference was observed between the prevalent conflict management styles chosen by graduate and undergraduate nursing students and those in allied health. The prevalent style for nursing students was compromising followed by avoiding. However, the prevalent style for allied health students was avoiding, followed by compromising and accommodating. Another study was conducted to examine Conflict Management Styles among administrative workers, teachers, and students at Gunchire and Meki High Schools by Tiglu (2008). The result of the study affirmed that members of the school community used collaborating, compromising, accommodating, dominating, and avoiding as their most prevalent style, respectively.

Equally, Rahim (2002), a renowned scholar in conflict management, further acknowledged that there is no one best approach to managing conflict. However, Likert and Likert (1976) suggested the problem-solving style or the integrating style of managing conflict as the most appropriate in most situations. Deutsch and Coleman (2000) are one such author who came up with “integrative” and “distributive” models of managing conflict. The distributive style of managing conflict focused on distributing a fixed quantity of positive outcomes where one party ends up winning and the other party losing. The integrative style focused on integrating the concerns of both parties to obtain the best possible outcome.

For instance, authors such as Swanstom and Weissmann (2005) came up with a meta-taxonomy for managing conflict, which they considered to be encompassing all other styles based on the amount of “activeness” and “agreeableness.” Agreeableness at the highest level was associated with the attempt to satisfy all parties involved. In contrast, activeness was associated with open discussions of different opinions while still pursuing their interest. In the

authors; studies, they also discovered that activeness doesn't necessarily have any significant effect on the effectiveness of conflict resolution but agreeableness, on the other hand, had a positive effect on conflict resolution because it impacted positively on how groups felt about how the conflict was managed irrespective of the outcome. In their studies, the authors also discovered that the integrative model led to consistency in better task-related outcomes than the distributive mode (Swanston & Weissmann, 2005).

Collectively, these studies outline a critical role for conflict management in school administration. Because of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that there are various conflict management practices that head teachers and teachers use to resolve conflict. The literature has observed fewer published studies on conflict management practices common amongst teachers and headteachers in Ghana. Therefore, this study will conflict management practices common amongst teachers and headteachers in selected junior high schools in the Upper Denkyira West District.

### **2.5 Roles of Conflict Management in Attaining Institutional Performance**

Every institution or organization desires to grow so that the entire nation could benefit from it. Conflict management plays a crucial role in promoting and sustaining institutional growth (Rahim, 2002). It is observed that when conflicts transpire in organizations, they slow down the activities of the organization and could lead to unproductivity if not appropriately managed. It is argued that when the required attention and consideration is given to every conflict in the institution, no matter how inconsequential they may be, the appropriate diagnosis could be made. Proper interventions could be employed so that higher performance could be accomplished.

According to Maccoby and Studder (1998), in conditions where the conflict type was damaging rather than constructive, the appropriate conflict management strategy should be employed. If not, organizational efficiency may not be attained. In the same way, if the conflict is constructive and the appropriate conflict management mechanism is not employed, organizational effectiveness may lack. Conflict management also plays a critical role in enhancing organizational learning, according to Rahim (2002). It is argued that it supports employees and managers to understand problems better and allocate the appropriate measures to deal with them efficiently. For instance, the conflict management process offers managers the opportunity to learn new things such as the new causes of conflicts, the nature of conflicts, and the appropriate remedies to deal with them.

Argyris and Schon (1996) defined learning as the detection and correction of errors. They also acknowledged single-loop and double-loop learning as two main kinds of learning. Single-loop learning was the type that brought about cognitive and behavioral changes within the existing model through the diagnosis and intervention of the problem without changing the underlying policies. On the other hand, double-loop learning leads to cognitive and behavioral changes outside the existing model through the diagnosis and intervention of the problem by changing the fundamental policies.

According to Bateson (1972), double-loop learning was also known as deuterio-learning. The scholar also suggested that every effective conflict management practice promoted double-loop learning rather than single-loop learning. Managers learn a lot of new things as they manage conflicts in their institutions. Through experience, they could acquire new concepts about the nature of the problem, the type of conflict it may lead to (substantive and affective), and the suitable measures to manage the conflict effectually.

Conflict management also safeguards the constructive part of the conflict to be maximized, whereas the destructive aspect is minimized as much as possible (Peters, 1988). The constructive aspect of the conflict is indispensable in achieving higher productivity, thereby leading to institutional growth. This affirms the comments posited by Pruitt and Carnevale (1993) when they noted that substantive conflict should be maximized as much as possible while minimizing affective conflict. As suggested by most scholars, conflict management guarantees a competitive working environment that motivates employees to put in their best. Also, tension among employees is reduced to a lower level to ensure employees have sound minds to work effectively and efficiently (Cox, 2003).

Roloff (1987) suggested that conflict management assists in progress and strengthens the bond between employees and management. He believed that when conflicts are correctly managed, employees could learn to appreciate their differences and work affectionately to improve the organization. In other words, through conflict management, peace and stability could also be accomplished.

Also, Mitroff (1998) noted that conflict management also plays an ethic advocator function. This could be observed when subordinates and stakeholders are stimulated to speak against the decisions of their superiors when those decisions may lead to adverse outcomes. Furthermore, Rahim (2002) also suggested that organizations should put in place some key positions for organizations to manage conflicts ethically. These positions include customer advocate, employee advocate, supplier advocate, environmental and stockholders' advocates. According to Rahim et al. (1992), proper consideration should be given to these advocates to achieve an ethically managed institution. This, in the long run, would aid in the progress of the institution.

Therefore, conflict can create opportunities for change, and it has been found appropriate to classify conflict based on these sources for a proper understanding of its nature and implications. Ross (1993) also contends that successful conflict management should address the underlying sources of conflict constructively. These are the development of shared interests among the disputants and the transformation of the disputants' interpretations of each other's needs and motives. However, unmanaged conflict can create dysfunctional schools which deprive learners of their rights to citizenship through free and equal education

From the above studies, it can be noted that there is less study that convincingly shows how conflict management practice plays an important role in attaining institutional performance, particularly in schools in Ghana. This study will explore the role of conflict management practices in attaining institutional performance in schools to contribute to the literature.

## **2.6 Challenges in Managing Conflict in Schools**

Conflict management, despite its significance, still possesses some notable challenges. These challenges cut across from the individual level to the organizational level. One of the key challenges of conflict management is that some of the conflict management styles regularly turn out to be time-consuming, which may cost the institution so much. In selecting the appropriate style for a conflict condition, a time-consuming approach may be required, and much productive time would have to be forfeited to employ a conflict management style effectively. De Drue and Weingart (2003) also noted that consistency with this argument on conflict management style.

According to Mitroff and Featheringham (1974), one of the challenges encountered in managing conflict is the incidence of some form of errors. One of such errors is the likelihood

of solving a wrong problem. The scholars further observed that this error generally occurred when there is a lack of proper diagnosis of the problem and insufficient understanding of the nature and cause of the conflict leading to the application of the wrong intervention to the problem.

Msila (2011) states that the challenge of school heads is to identify the problems endemic in their schools. Msila (2011) added that the workload of school heads is becoming unmanageable, and as a result, many school heads become unable to manage conflict in their school. As a result, the school's performance may be lower due to the strategies used by them in managing conflict in their schools. Similarly, Bonkovskaya (2012) conducted a study on developing conflict management strategies to increase organizational effectiveness in Nordic companies in Iceland. Findings show that despite managers' satisfaction with their employees' level of productivity, they still have many complaints from their employees about stress at work. If the manager ignores these kinds of complaints, it could lead to potential conflict.

Turay (2001), in the study about an examination of intra-secondary school conflicts in complex emergencies: the case of Sierra Leone, the study revealed that most of the participants held negative views about the conflict. It also shows that the individual's socio-economic, political, cultural realities or context influence how they perceive conflict and deal with it. Likewise, Okotoni (2002) conducted a study on conflict management in secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. Findings showed that school administration had been adversely affected by a lack of knowledge of conflict management. Most administrators handled conflict by trial and error approach because there were no specific procedures and methods of managing conflicts.

Another challenge that could be encountered is a lack of cooperation between the two parties involved in the conflict. When either of the parties or both parties are unenthusiastic to take an active part in the conflict management process, the success of the entire style may not be attained. One of the parties or both parties may refuse to participate in the conflict management process when they perhaps feel so hurt about the problem. According to French and Bell (1999), for a conflict management practice to flourish, the parties involved should be enthusiastic about taking an active part in the entire conflict management process.

Cronin and Weingart (2007) argue that conflict between or among people is associated with emotions. When the person handling the conflict does not have the professional skills required to deal with the problem, he/she may end up worsening the situation. Conflict cannot just be managed by anyone. There are some details required in managing conflicts. Choosing the appropriate conflict management style could be very challenging, as suggested by Euwema et al. (2007). But managers still need to jump this heddle and manage the problem. When a wrong method to handling a problem is espoused, the results could be catastrophic (Brooks, 2009). Therefore, it is suggested that it takes a professional to find and choose the appropriate conflict management style to solve the right problem.

Another challenge in handling conflict is the two dimensions of conflicts, namely, affective and substantive conflict. According to De Drue (1997), affective conflict, which is also branded as relationship conflict, deals with mismatches relating to interpersonal relationships, while functional conflict, also known as task conflict, deals with group members' incompatibilities. The substantive conflict was considered a good conflict, while the affective conflict was considered a bad conflict (De Church & Marks, 2001).

Rahim (2002), in his studies, concluded that there was a positive correlation between the two dimensions of conflict, which is measured as a challenge. Simmons and Petersons (2000) also concluded Rahim's conclusion when they reported a positive correlation between the two dimensions of conflict: around 0.34 and 0.88. However, a few scholars concluded that there was a negative correlation between affective and substantive conflict. In managing conflicts, some factors influence conflict management in most institutions in the country. This study will contribute to the literature by exploring the challenges encountered in managing conflict in schools in Ghana as there is less study on this important subject matter.





## **2.7 Summary and Conclusion**

It is observed from the above studies that conflict is an unavoidable phenomenon that confronts all organizations, including school administration. There are many causes of conflict in organizations. Studies support the need to adopt different conflict management practices (conflict resolution) to overcome conflict, including accommodation, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, diffusion, smoothing, and negotiation. It is significant to note that the strategy involved in coming up with a resolution is relative to the situation. The consequence of unresolved conflict may affect job satisfaction and employee loyalty in any given organization. Superior should mediate a conflict by using the right method.

Therefore, institutions should learn to deal with them using the appropriate measures. Conflicts in organizations have both positive and negative influences on the individual and organization. The positive aspect could significantly be achieved when conflicts are appropriately managed using the appropriate conflict management practices. Nevertheless, in espousing any practice of managing conflict, some significant factors such as the organization's rules and regulations should be considered. This will go a long way in affecting the organization's overall performance at any point in time.

## 2.8 The Conceptual Framework

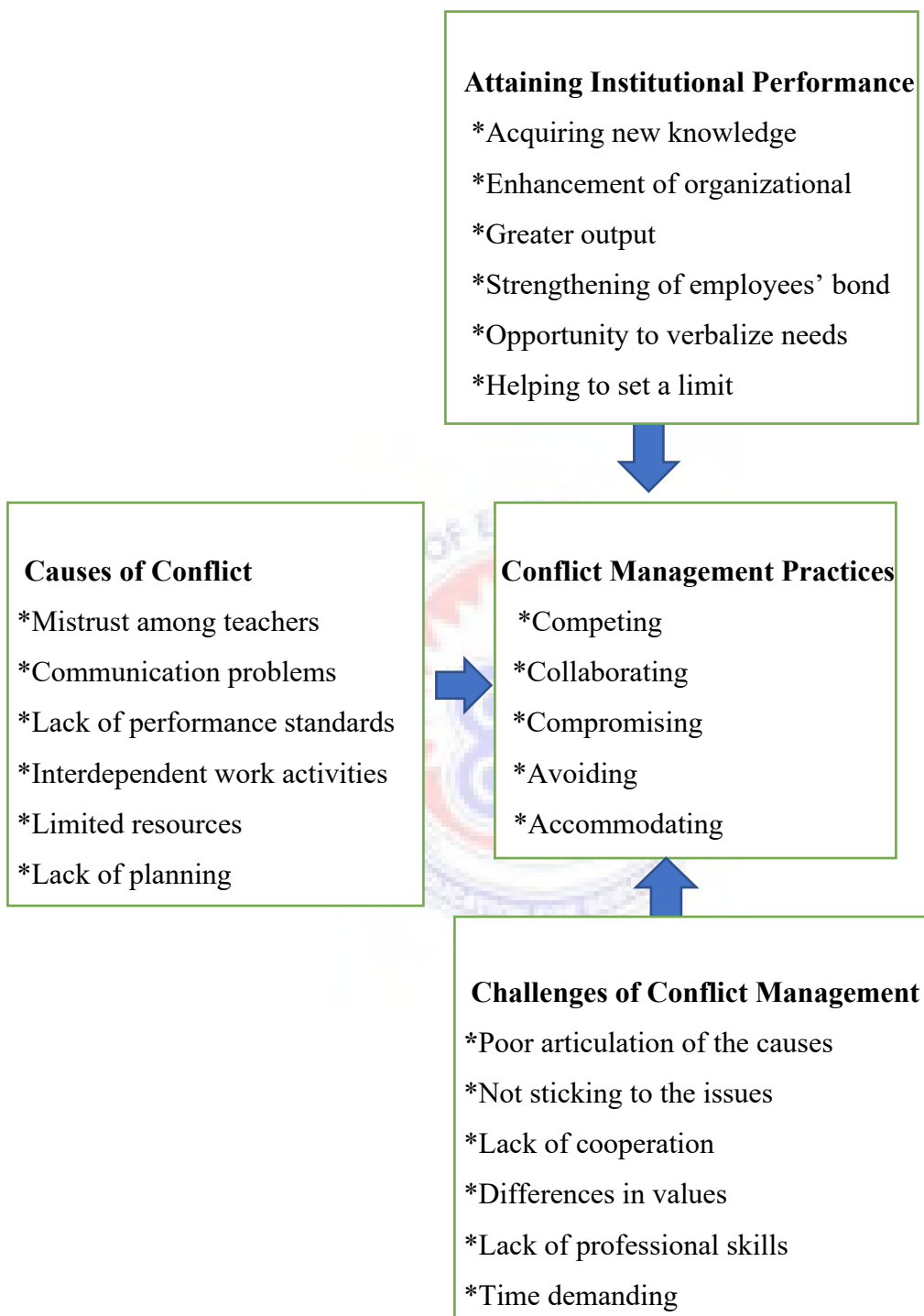


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing conflict management practices

Source: Author's Construct, 2020

### **2.8.1 Conceptual Framework Explained**

Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework that explained the influence of conflict management on organizational performance was developed (see Figure 1). It is suggested that conflict management practices influence the overall performance of organizations. Some of the main causes of conflict include mistrust among teachers, communication problems, lack of performance standards, interdependent work activities, limited resources, and lack of planning. It is noted that most scholars have broadly categorized conflict management practice into five segments. These are competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. It is argued that individuals may employ any of these conflict management practices to resolve conflict. Some challenges undermine conflict management practice. These include poor articulation, not sticking to the issues, differences in values, lack of cooperation among parties involved, and lack of professional skills in handling conflict situations. Therefore, these challenges need to be addressed to attain effective conflict management practice.

Besides, it is suggested that if the conflict is managed properly within an organization, it has many positive impacts on the organization. These positive impacts may include the medium to acquire new knowledge, enhancement of organizational learning, greater output because the workers are challenged to put up their best, strengthen the bond between employees and management, and maximize the constructive aspect of conflict and opportunity verbalize needs among staff.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methodology, including the research design, study population, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection instruments, validity and reliability issues, data analysis plan, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design for the study was a descriptive survey. The study used a quantitative research method approach. This design was adopted because descriptive studies are suitable for fact-finding and result in the formulation of important knowledge and solutions to significant problems (Orodho, 2003). Kombo and Tromp (2007) observe that a descriptive survey is designed to obtain information concerning the current phenomenon and, wherever possible, to draw valid conclusions from the facts discussed. This method also is preferred because it makes enough provision for protection against bias and maximizes reliability. Surveys are self-report studies that can be used for obtaining descriptive quantitative and sometimes qualitative data from the sample (Mugenda, 1999).

#### **3.3 Study Population**

The target population was teachers and headteachers in selected Junior High Schools (JHS) in the Upper Denkyira West District in the Central Region of Ghana. The researcher considered them as a valuable source of information because they can bring out the needed

information. These teachers encounter conflicts and use different styles of conflict management to resolve them.

### **3.3.1 Inclusion criteria**

The following were the inclusion criteria adopted for the study:

- Teachers aged 22 to 59 years who have taught in the district for at least one year and present at the study field during the date of the data collection.
- Teachers who accepted to take part in the study.

### **3.3.2 Exclusion criteria**

The following categories of people were excluded from the study:

- Teachers aged 22 to 59 years who have not taught in the district for at least one year.
- Teachers who did not accept to take part in the study.

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, was used to select teachers aged 22 to 59 years who are currently teaching within the Upper Denkyira West District. The rationale underpinning the selection of these age ranges are the following. First, it is noted that teachers retire at the age of 60 years, and they cannot be part of the selection criteria. Besides, it is assumed most people under 22 may still be in the universities and colleges of education pursuing their studies and mandatory national service. Purposive sampling aims to focus on characteristics of a population of interest, which will best enable the researcher to answer research questions.

The cluster sampling technique was used in the selection of ten localities in the Upper Denkyira West District. These ten localities are Diaso, Kwameprekrom, Ayanfuri, Gyaman, Dominase, New Obuasi, Subin Hill, Modaso, Akwaboso, and Treposo. Twenty JHS were selected from these towns; there are 23 JHS in the district. The twenty (20) JHS were selected based on sample guidelines offered by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size for a given population. This was done to ensure a representative statistical sample in the given population.

Table 1 illustrates the number of schools in each town, the number of schools selected, and several teachers selected. The total number of schools selected was based on the number of schools in each town. In all, the 150 selected participants comprised 130 teachers and 20 headteachers. The 150 participants were distributed proportionally among the schools based on the school's total number. The headteachers were selected because they possess vital information to assist the researcher in achieving the objectives.

### 3.5 Sample Size

The study used 150 participants out of the 245 teachers from 20 Junior High Schools in selected towns in the Upper Denkyira West District. The sample size determination was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size for a given population. This sample determination was used to eliminate bias in the selection process as a quantitative research method requires. The distribution of selected teachers and JHS from each town is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Number of schools selected for the study**

<b>Selected Towns</b>	<b>Total Number of JHS in each town</b>	<b>All JHS in each town were selected</b>	<b>Number of teachers in each JHS</b>	<b>Number of teachers selected from each school</b>
Diaso	4	Diaso Anglican JHS Diaso L/A JHS Diaso Methodist JHS St. Theresah's JHS	14 12 13 12	9 7 8 7
Kwameprekrom	2	Kwameprekrom D/A JHS Kwameprekrom Catholic JHS	12 13	7 8
Ayanfuri	3	Ayanfuri Methodist JHS Ayanfuri Catholic JHS Ayanfurim L/A JHS	14 12 13	9 7 8
Gyaman	2	Gyaman L/A JHS Gyaman Methodist JHS	11 12	7 7
Dominase	2	Dominase JHS Dominase Catholic JHS	12 13	7 8
New Obuasi	2	New Obuasi Catholic JHS New Obuasi L/A JHS	12 11	8 7
Subin Hill	1	Subin Hill JHS	12	7

Modaso	2	Modaso Anglican JHS	13	8
		Modasi Catholic JHS	12	7
Akwaboso	1	Akwaboso JHS	10	6
Treposo	1	Treposo JHS	12	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>150</b>

### 3.6 Data Collection Tool and Technique

A closed-ended questionnaire was used to obtain information from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed through a guide by existing literature on conflict management practices in schools. The questions were done, and answers were scored according to a 4-point Likert scale.

The first section of the questionnaire dealt with the participants' demographic information. The next section dealt with questions on the major causes of conflicts. It then posed questions to participants about conflict management practices common amongst teachers and headteachers. Next, participants answered questions concerning challenges encountered in managing conflicts. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire dealt with the roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance.

### 3.7 Validity and Reliability

In this study, the researcher validated the data collection instrument by pre-testing the questionnaire to assess and worth before using the instrument to make valid and worth using them in collecting data for the study. Pre-testing was done at three JHS in Upper Denkyira West that were not selected for the study. These schools were Jameso Nkwanta Anglican JHS,



Jameso Nkwanta L/A JHS, and Besease JHS. Each of these JHS has 12 teachers. Therefore, based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size for a given population, 9 teachers and 1 headteacher were selected from each school. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to participants. Afterwards, the researcher identified some inconsistencies in the questionnaire. Changes were made to the questionnaire, which helped to evaluate the validity and reliability of the instrument.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher adjusted time to administer and provide information to participants for the study under investigation. The selected participants were met individually at their various homes or through their mails. They requested public places to clarify how to complete the questionnaire due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated precautionary measures. Moreover, with the support received from the Upper Denkyira West District Education Directorate, the researcher was able to administer the questionnaire to 150 participants based on the sample using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table. Data collection took one and half months.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a critical examination and scrutiny of the coded data to make deductions and inferences. This activity involves uncovering underlying structures, extracting important variables, detecting anomalies, and testing any underlying assumptions. First, data were checked manually for completeness before coding was done. Responses were grouped under thematic areas before they were entered in SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics were

used to analyze numerical data through summaries such as percentages, tables, diagrams, and charts.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher sought permission to conduct the Upper Denkyira West District Education Directorate study, and permission was granted before data collection commenced. The participants were given information on the purpose of the study to decide whether to participate in the study. Again, those who accepted to participate in the study were encouraged to exercise their right to pull out from the study if they desired so, and no penalties were attached to such withdrawal. Questionnaire numbers were used instead of the names of respondents. For example, numbers ranging from 001-150 were used in place of the respondent's name. This was done to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. Privacy and confidentiality of every participant were ensured throughout the study period and beyond. Finally, the results of this study were disseminated in a manner that no information was linked to the identity of any participant. All Covid-19 pandemic protocols and preventive measures were observed fully before and during the administration of the questionnaire.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of data analysis. It results from respondents' responses who responded to the questionnaire on “conflict management practices in selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District.” In the analysis order, each research question was recognized, and questionnaire items were measured for every question.

#### 4.2 Presentation of Results

A total of 150 questionnaires were administered to teachers and headteachers in basic schools in the Upper Denkyira West District. The 150 participants comprised 130 teachers and 20 headteachers. All the 150 questionnaires were obtained and valid for the data analysis, and the response rate yielded 100%.

##### 4.2.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 2 illustrates the socio-demographic characteristics of participants. Over half (60%) of those surveyed were males, whereas females constituted 40%. Concerning the participants' age, those whose ages fell with 30-39 years were 40%, respondents within the age ranges of 22-29 years and 40-49 were 26.7% and 26.6%, respectively. Just over half (60%) of respondents held diploma certificates, and those who possessed a bachelor's degree constituted 30%. Respondents who possessed WASSCE and master's degrees were 6.7% and 3.3%, respectively. Most of the respondents (60%) were professional teachers, whereas non-professional teachers (persons who are teaching without a formal certification or training in

education) were 40%. About the participants' marital status, those who were married were 46.6%, the singles were 26.7%, while the cohabitantes were 16.7%.

Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Variable	N=150	
	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	90	60
Females	60	40
<b>Age</b>		
22-29 years	40	26.7
30-39 years	60	40
40-49 years	40	26.6
50-59 years	10	6.7
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
WASSCE	10	6.7
Diploma	90	60
Bachelor's degree	45	30
Master's Degree	5	3.3
<b>Rank</b>		
Professional Teacher	90	60
Non-Professional Teacher	60	40
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>		
Christian	98	65.3
Moslem	42	28
Traditionalist	10	6.7
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	40	26.7
Married	70	46.6
Cohabiting	25	16.7

Separated/Divorced	10	6.7
Widowed	5	3.3

Source: Field Survey, 2020

#### 4.2.2 Major causes of conflicts amongst teachers and headteachers

The first set of analyses examined the major causes of conflicts among the participants' various schools. All the participants (100%) agreed that they experienced conflict in their institutions. Table 3 illustrates an overview of the major causes of conflicts amongst participants.

Table 3: Key causes of conflicts

Variable n=150	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Incompatible goals, values, beliefs,	120 (80)	30 (20)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Distrust among teachers	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Misunderstanding among teachers	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Limited resources	150(100)	0 (0.)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Communication problems	100 (66.7)	50 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Interdependent work activities	100 (66.7)	50 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Differentiation of activities	50 (33.3)	100 (66.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lack of common performance standards	150 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Disciplinary problems	100 (66.7)	50 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Frustration, stress and burnout	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lack of planning	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Jurisdictional ambiguities	80 (53.3)	70 (46.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Individual differences	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Interestingly, the data in this table is that all the participants strongly agreed that teachers feel that they must compete for limited resources (teaching and learning materials) to do their jobs. This creates conflict in their various schools. It is apparent from this table that almost all the participants (86.7%) strongly agree with the statement that mistrusts among teachers causes conflict among teachers in the school environment.

Additionally, the majority of the participants (86.7%) strongly agreed with each of these statements “misunderstanding among teachers,” “lack of planning,” and “frustration, stress, and burnout” were major causes of conflict among teachers in schools. It can be seen from the data in Table 3 that two-thirds of the participants (66.7%) strongly agreed with each of these three statements, “communication problems,” “interdependent work activities,” and “disciplinary problems” also create conflict. Regarding the statement on jurisdictional ambiguities as a cause of conflict, more than half of the respondents (53.3%) strongly agreed with this statement, while 46.6% agreed with it.

#### **4.2.3 Common conflict management practices amongst teachers and headteachers**

The first set of questions aimed to establish conflict management practices common amongst teachers and headteachers. The themes identified in these responses are presented in Table 4. Each score on each practice is the number of times respondents selected statements representing that practice over other statements. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to determine the most highly used conflict management practice.

**Table 4: The frequently used Conflict Management Practices**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Competing	150	3.36	1.2123
Collaborating	150	2.53	1.2691
Compromising	150	3.10	1.4285
Avoiding	150	3.43	1.4386
Accommodating	150	3.00	1.4590

N=Number of participants

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the items designed for conflict management practices in the questionnaire, items 1, 2, 3, and 4 denote competing, items 5 to 9 represent collaborating, items 10 to 14 for compromising, whereas items 15 to 21 for avoiding. Besides, items 22 to 27 denote accommodating practice were computed in frequency first, and then their respective mean values and standard deviation were also computed.

As described in Table 4, a difference was observed within the mean of each of the five conflict management styles. As seen from the table, the most surprising aspect of the data, avoiding a mean value of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 1.43, was the first prominently used style of interpersonal conflict management in the schools under study. This is an unexpected result. In other words, avoiding conflict management is argued to work well when the issue is trivial.

Interestingly, “competing” was observed to be the second regularly used conflict management practice with a mean score of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 1.21. Compromising was the third most common conflict management practice with a mean value of 3.10 and a standard

deviation of 1.43. It is followed by accommodating, a mean score of 3.00, and a standard deviation of 1.4590. The participants' least common conflict management practice is collaborating, which has a mean score of 2.53 and a standard deviation of 1.27. This is a surprising result.

#### 4.2.4 Challenges encountered in managing conflict

Nine items on the questionnaire measured the extent to which teachers encountered challenges when managing conflict in their schools. Table 5 shows the proportion of different categories of main challenges encountered during managing conflict.

**Table 5: Challenges facing managing conflict**

Variable n=150	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Poor articulation of causes of conflict	150 (100)	00 (20)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Poorly stating why conflict needs to be resolved	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Not addressing issues face-to-face	100 (66.7)	50 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Not sticking to the issues	100(66.7)	50 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Not taking a time-out	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Differences in values	150 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lack of cooperation among parties	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lack of professional skills	150 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Conflict management as being time				



demanding	100 (66.7)	50 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
-----------	------------	-----------	-------	-------

---

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the table, by far the commonest challenges that all the participants (100%) strongly agreed are the key were these statements, “poor articulation of the causes of conflict among teachers,” “differences in values,” and “lack of professional skills.”

The second most strongly agreed statements were “poorly stating why conflict needs to be resolved” and “not taking a time-out and resume resolving the conflict at another designated time” as 130 (86.7%) participants each strongly agreed, and 20 (13.3%) agreed respectively. Moreover, the three least suggested statements indicating challenges hindering conflict management in schools were “no addressing issues face-to-face,” “not sticking to the issues,” and “conflict management as being time demanding” whereby 100 (66.7) and 50 (33.3) of the participants each strongly agreed and agreed with these statements respectively.

#### **4.2.5 Roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance**

The last set of analyses examined the roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance. Table 6 below illustrates an overview of the participants’ responses. Regarding the statement on conflict management, ensuring strengthening the bond between employees, all the respondents (100%) strongly agreed. Similarly, all the participants (100%) strongly agree that conflict management helps maximize constructive aspects of the conflict. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree with the statement that helps staff acquire new knowledge and experiences. The majority of the respondents, 130 (86.7%), strongly agreed, whereas 20 (13.3%) agreed. When the participants were asked whether conflict management offers an opportunity to verbalize needs, 130 (86.7) strongly agreed with

the statement, while 20 (13.3%) agreed. These statements on the roles played by conflict management “conflict management leads to greater output” and “helping staff to set limits,” 130 (86.7%) participants each strongly agreed, and 20 (13.3%) agreed respectively.

**Table 6: Benefits of conflict management**

Variable n=150	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Staff acquire new knowledge and experiences	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Enhancement of organizational learning	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lead to greater output	100 (66.7)	50 (33.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Strengthening of the bond between employees	150(100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Maximization of constructive aspect of the conflict	150 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Help staff to set limits	130 (86.9)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Opportunity to verbalize needs	130 (86.7)	20 (13.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Source: Field Survey, 2020

### 4.3 Discussion

#### 4.3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

From the results, almost all the participants were within their productive teaching years. A possible explanation for this might be the participants’ inclusion criteria for the study. Education, thus, is a very significant characteristic that should not be ignored. This study showed that most respondents had completed tertiary education. The implication is that this category of teachers can identify conflict management and recognize they need to practice

conflict management. A possible explanation for this might be that higher levels of education are thought to enhance people's skills, afford important structural advantages, and empower better coping conflict management practices, all of which lead to efficiency and effectiveness in schools. Thus, persons can shape a better society if they understand and appreciate effective conflict management practices.

These findings have important implications for developing conflict management modules that will help teachers and headteachers develop skill sets and concepts to prevent, manage, and resolve competing needs and interests without resorting to violence.

All participants professed that they have religious affiliations. Religion has been considered a vital factor that influences the choice of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of the conflict.

#### **4.3.2 Major causes of conflicts amongst teachers and headteachers**

The study findings revealed that all the participants agreed that they experience conflict in their institutions. The interpretation for this is that in a society where people with diverse interests, views, and values coexist, differences between such individuals and groups are expected. A possible explanation for this might be that conflict among workers in an organization is inevitable. An implication of this is the possibility that when organizational leaders ignore workplace conflict, they send a message that unsatisfactory job performance and inappropriate behavior are acceptable. Therefore, there is a need for effective conflict management. This also accords with our earlier observations, which showed that conflict exists because people have different needs, ideas, views, and values (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000).

The study findings showed that participants strongly agreed that when employees compete for limited available resources to do their jobs, it creates conflict in their various schools and distrust among teachers. This result may be explained by the fact that most schools have limited resources, and each person is competing for the adequate resource. This provides some explanation as to why adequate resources are needed in every organization. This finding is consistent with that of Appleby (1994), who suggests that schools' conflicts usually arise from the need to share scarce resources.

This current study also showed that almost all the participants strongly agreed that misunderstanding among teachers, lack of planning and frustration, stress, and burnout also cause conflict among teachers in schools. Nearly all the participants strongly agreed that communication problems, interdependent work activities, and disciplinary problems also cause conflict in schools. These results seem to be consistent with other research which found misunderstanding among teachers, inadequate planning, communications, diverse preferences and ideologies with poor working conditions, and lack of clear work (Mayer, 2004; Wayne & Miskel, 2008). This combination of findings supports the conceptual premise that conflict management practices are crucial for attaining organizational goals.

#### **4.3.3 Common conflict management practices amongst teachers and headteachers**

The study findings revealed that “avoiding” was the first prominently used style of interpersonal conflict management in the schools under study. Several factors could explain this observation. Firstly, it is argued that different people use different methods to resolve conflict, and most people have one or more natural, preferred conflict resolution strategies that they use regularly. Besides, it is suggested that someone who uses a strategy of

"avoiding" mostly tries to ignore or sidestep the conflict, hoping it will resolve itself or dissipate. These results, therefore, need to be interpreted with caution. These results corroborate the ideas of Convey (2002), who suggests that teachers engage in an avoiding strategy protect themselves from the difficulty of conflict. Therefore, such people are reluctant to conflict with the teachers the way someone with a competing response would.

Additionally, "competing" was observed to be the second regularly used conflict management practice followed by compromising, which was the third most common conflict management practice. The least common conflict management practice used by the participants is collaborating, which is a surprising result. These relationships may partly be explained that people deal with conflict in a variety of ways. Therefore, you need different conflict resolution strategies. This assumes that people choose how cooperative and how assertive to conflict. It suggests that everyone has preferred ways of responding to conflict, but most use all methods under various circumstances. This study produced results that corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in Abdul (2013), indicated that different secondary schools in Pakistan use the accommodation, avoidance, compromise, and collaboration as styles to manage conflict. It is noted that no consensus has been reached among different scholars and researchers regarding the results obtained from conflict management styles. These findings have important implications for developing conflict management techniques among teachers. Hence it is important to understand clearly, what a conflict is, why conflict occurs, challenges in resolving conflicts, and various methods for resolving conflicts.

#### **4.2.4 Challenges encountered in managing conflict**

This study revealed that there are key challenges that teachers and headteachers face in conflict management. The results showed that by far the commonest challenges that all the participants strongly agreed were “poor articulation of the causes of conflict among teachers,” “differences in values,” and “lack of professional skills.” The next most strongly agreed statements were “poorly stating why conflict needs to be resolved” and “not taking a time-out and resume resolving the conflict at another designated time.” This result may be explained by the fact that conflict management still possesses some notable challenges despite its significance. Conflicts need to be resolved effectively. A comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms many challenges associated with conflict management (De Drue & Weingart, 2003; Cronin & Weingart, 2007).

It is not only important to resolve the conflict, but also it is equally important to ensure that the parties involved in conflict do not unnecessarily end up being in any kind of emotional stress during the resolution process of the conflict. Striking a balance between resolving the conflict to find the decision and maintaining people's emotional well-being will be critical to successful conflict management.

The study results also showed that “not addressing conflict issues face-to-face,” “not sticking to the issues,” and “conflict management as being time demanding” were also key challenges. These results agree with Brooks’ (2009) findings which showed when a wrong method to handling a problem is espoused, and the results could be catastrophic. This explains why people need to rise above their personal emotions while resolving conflicts and need to think about the project's final goals or work.

#### **4.3.5 Roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance**

The study results revealed that all the participants strongly agreed that conflict management practice is needed in every institution or organization. A possible explanation for this might be that the participants possessed greater awareness of the importance of conflict management practice. The statement on conflict management ensures strengthening the bond between employees; all the respondents (100%) strongly agreed. Similarly, all the participants (100%) strongly agreed that conflict management helps maximize constructive aspects of the conflict. These results reflect those of Rahim (2002), who also found that every institution or organization desires to grow so that the entire nation could benefit from it. Conflict management plays a crucial role in promoting and sustaining institutional growth.

It was revealed that conflict management offers an opportunity to verbalize needs; conflict management leads to greater output and helping staff to set limits for employees.

It is encouraging to compare this figure with Rahim (2002) and Cox (2003). They found that conflict management plays a critical role in enhancing organizational learning and guarantees a competitive working environment that motivates employees to put their best. Tension among employees is reduced to a lower level to ensure employees have sound minds to work effectively and efficiently. This result finding implies that it is important to understand (and apply) various conflict resolution techniques in every organizational setting

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter gives a summary, conclusion of the major findings that the research has come out with. It further gives recommendations on how best the issues that were identified could be effectively addressed. Study contributions, as well as pointers for further studies, were also included in this chapter.

#### 5.2 Summary

This study examined conflict management practices in selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District. Generally, conflicts are common and unavoidable in the workplace, including basic schools in the Upper Denkyira West District. In all, a total number of 150 respondents participated in the study.

The study findings revealed the following:

1. Teachers and headteachers always encounter conflict in their various schools as there is no organization without conflict.
2. The study revealed that limited resources, lack of planning and frustration, stress and burnout, communication problems, interdependent work activities, and disciplinary problems are key causes of conflict in most schools.
3. The commonest used conflict management practice was avoiding, followed by competing and compromising.



4. The biggest challenges to effective and efficient conflict management practice were a poor articulation of the causes of conflict among teachers, differences in values, and lack of professional skills in solving conflict.
5. Most teachers and headteachers lack the professional skills to resolve conflicts effectively and ensure that the parties involved in conflict do not unnecessarily end up being in any emotional stress during the resolution process of the conflict.
6. It was revealed that conflict management practice is needed in every institution or organization since conflict management helps maximize constructive aspects of the conflict.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Conflicts are inevitable when several teachers work together. It is important for teachers to clearly understand a conflict, why conflict occurs, challenges in resolving conflicts, and various methods for resolving conflicts and benefits of conflict management practice. Conflict management practice should be approached with the idea that conflicts can be good for the team.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Training in conflict identification and management in schools should be given to all teachers and headteachers to enable them to turn conflict erupting in their schools into a positive force that can bring positive change.

2. It is recommended that when teachers assume various positions and responsibilities in their schools, GES management should offer training that covers the strategies of managing conflict in their institutions. This will help them to know how and when to choose a strategy that will suit the situation.
3. Ghana Education Service must ensure that all teaching and learning materials needed by basic schools are supplied on time to help reduce conflict in schools.
4. Conflict management practice modules should be taught in various teacher-training institutions to enable teacher-trainees to understand that a positive force behind healthy conflict leads to personal development and innovation.



## REFERENCES

- Abdul, E. S. (2013). *Conceptualizing quality of primary education in Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: Man Graphics Limited.
- Afful-Broni, A. (2007). *The School as a Social Unit: The Ghanaian Perspective*. Revised Edition. Accra: Yamens Press.
- Alexander, P. (1995). *Organizational behavior: Concepts, controversies and applications*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Malaysia Pty Ltd
- Amason, A. C. (1996). Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict Management teams” *Academy of Management Journal*, 39 (1), 123-148.
- Appleby, S. (1994). *Using mediation techniques to manage conflict*. AACN: Clin Issues.
- Appleby, D. (1998). *The handbook of psychology*. James Patterson College. Amazon Book Clubs, Early Access
- Argyris, C., & Schon, D. (1996). *Organizational learning II*, Cambridge: MA Blackwell
- Armstrong, M. (2009). *A handbook of personnel management practice*, (10th Ed). London: Kogan Page Limited
- Ayalew, S. (2000). *Theories of educational management*. (EDAD 611): Set Reader, Department of Deduction Administration Faculty of Education. Addis Ababa University. Barki
- Back, K., & Back, K. (1994). *Assertiveness at Work*, 2nd Ed. BCA: McGraw-Hill
- Barker, R. P. (2009). *Conceptualizing the construct of interpersonal conflict*. New York: Free Press.
- Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an Ecology of mind*. San Francisco: Chandler
- Blakes, R. R., & Mouton, J. S. (1964). *The managerial grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf

- Bonkovskaya, F. D. (2012). *Indigenous mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts*. Oslo: Norway.
- Brooks, (2009). *Development of conflict management*. Unpublished masters' dissertation Reykjavik University.
- Brooks, I. (2009). *Organizational behavior* (4th ed.). UK: Pearson Education Ltd
- Burton, J. (1998). *Conflict resolution as a political philosophy*. New York: Penguin Books
- Connie, L. K. (2002). Representational gaps, information processing and conflict in functionally diverse teams. *Academy of Management Review*, (32), 761-771
- Convey, M. N. (2002). *Managing conflict in organizational interfaces*. Massachusetts: Addison.
- Coser, L. (1967). *Continuities in the study of social conflict*. New York: Free press.
- Cox, K. B. (2003). Effects of intrapersonal, intragroup and intergroup conflict on team performance and work satisfaction. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, (2), 58
- Cronin, M. A. (2009). Representational gaps, information processing and conflict in functionally diverse teams. *Academy of Management Review*, (32), 761
- Cronin, W. I., & Weingart, A. (2007). *International dimensions of organizational behavior*, (5th ed.). Mason, Thomson Southern Wester
- De Church, L., & Marks, K. (2001). *Organizational behavior*. New York: Harper and Row Printing Press
- De Dreu, C. K.W. (1997). Productive conflict: The importance of conflict management and conflict issues. In C. De Dreu and E. Van De Vliert (Eds.), *Using conflict in organizations*. London: Sage

- De Drue C K.W, & Weingart, L. R. (2003). Extension administrators approach to conflict management: A study of relationships between conflict management styles and personality type. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 35(3), 18-22.
- Deutsch, M., & Coleman P. T. (2000). *Handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Duke, D. L. (1999). *Teacher evaluation policy: From accountability to professional development*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Erasmus, K., Swart, L. & Morietta, V. (2000). *Advanced communication skills*. Pretoria: Mc Painter.
- Euwema, C. M., Van de Vliert, E., & Bakker, B. A. (2007). *Substantive and relational effectiveness of organizational conflict behavior*. London: Information Age Publishing Incorporation
- Fillipo, A., & De Waal, F. B. M. (2000). *Natural conflict resolution*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Foster, P. (1965). *Education and social change in Ghana*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Foster, T. (1989). *Managing conflict in organizational interfaces*. Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.
- French, T., & Bell, S. (1999). *The conflict management styles*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Delaware.
- French, W. L., & Bell, C. H. J. (1999). *Organizational development*. (6th ed). Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hill

- Ghaffar, A. (2005). Conflict in schools. Its causes and management strategies. *Journal of Managerial Sciences*. 3(11)
- Gordon, J. (1991). *Pfetter's classic activities for managing conflict at work*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Gordon, J. (2003). *Pfetter's classic activities for managing conflict at work*. San Francisco: Green Room, New York: Sloan Publication Ltd.
- Greenberg, J. (1996). *Behavior in organizations understanding and managing the human side of work*. Prentice-Hall Canada Inc. Scarborough and Viacom Company.
- Gross, K. L. (2000). *A multimethod Examination of Benefits and Determinants of Intragroup Conflict*, UK: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Gyan, E. K., & Tandoh-Offin, P. (2014). Management of conflicts in senior high schools in central region, Ghana. *International Journal of Management Sciences*, 3(4), 246-253
- Hakielimu, Y. (2007). *Redefine quality education in Tanzania*. From Input to Capabilities. 7(3), 255- 275.
- Harrison, I. L. (1998). *Educational administration and organizational behavior*. (3rd ed.), Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Hellriegel, D., & Slocum, J. W. (1982). *Management* (3rd ed.). California: Addison Wesley publishing Company.
- Hellriegel, D., & Slocum, J. W. (1996). *Management* (7th ed.). Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing
- Hocker, J. L., & Wilmot, W. W. (1985). *Interpersonal conflict*. Dubuque, Iowa, Wm. C. Brown publishers.

- Hodge, T. O., & Anthony, A. M. (1991). *The role of ethical frames and values on teacher interaction with academic policies*. Doctoral Dissertation: Texas A&M University. College Station, TX.
- Ibukun, W. O. (1997). *Educational management theory and practice*. Ado-Ekiti Bamgboye and Co.
- Irene, L. K. (2011). *Conflict resolution as a political philosophy*. New York: Penguin Books
- Joel, P. (2011). *What it means to be a principal: Your guide to leadership*. California: Corwin Press.
- Kantek, F., & Gezer, N. (2009). Conflict in schools: Student nurses' conflict management styles. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, (1), 102
- Katumanga, R. J. (2000). Conflict in Schools: Student Nurses' Conflict Management Styles. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 1, 102-117
- Kilmann, R. (1970). Interpersonal conflict handling behavior as reflections of Jungian personality dimensions. *Psychological Report*, 37, 971-980.
- Kogo, T. (2002). *A study on teacher-principal conflicts in Amhara Regional State Secondary Schools*. Addis Ababa University, MA Thesis.
- Kombo, W., & Tromp, L. K. (2007). *Educational governance and administration*. (5th ed.) USA. Pearson Educational Inc.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D.W., (1970). *Determining sample size for research activities*. Educational and Psychological Measurement.
- Kreps, T. (1990). *Leading and managing for effective education*. London: Sage Publication Ltd.

- Kriesberg, L. (1998). *Project management: A system approach to planning*. New York: John Willey and Sons, Inc.
- Ladipo, M. (1997). *Crisis management*. Paper presented at association of Nigerian Universities pp. 1-2.
- Lang, E. (2009). *Leader behavior description questionnaire*. Columbus: Personnel Research Board, Ohio State University.
- Leithwood, P., & Hallinger, D. (2002). Conflict across organizational boundaries: Managed Care Organizations Versus Health Care Providers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(4), 754-755
- Likert, R., & Likert, J. G. (1997). *New ways of managing conflict*. New York: McGraw-Hills
- Likuku, A. (2013). Managing workplace incivility: The role of conflict management styles- Antedote or Antidote? *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, (4)39
- Maccoby, M., & Studder, S. A. (1998). *The structured assessment interview: A Psychometric Review*, California: Macedonia County Publishers
- Mayer, Q. (2004). Conflict avoiders and compromisers: Toward and understanding of their organizational communication style. *Group and Organization Management*, 11(4), 387-402.
- Meyer, M. (1994). News of battering. *Journal of Communication*, 44(2), 23-56.
- Miller, C.A. (2004). *A Glossary of terms and concepts in peace and conflict studies*. King, Mary E. Geneva: University for Peace.
- Miller, J. (2003) Constructive conflict at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20(4), 475-491



- Mitroff, I. I., & Featheringham, T. R. (1974), On systematic problem solving on the error of the Third Kind. *Behavioral Science*, 19
- Mitroff, I. I. (1995). *Smart thinking for crazy times: The art of solving the right problems*. San Francisco: Berret-Koehler
- Mitroff, I. I. (1998). On the fundamental importance of ethical management: Why management is the most important of all human activities. *Journal of Management Inquiry*. SAGE journals
- Mosha, H. J. (1994). *Conflict management and organizational health in Universities: Lessons from Tanzania*. Oslo: Ham Trykk as/bb—grafisk.
- Mosha, H. J. (2006). *Conflict management and organizational health in Universities: Lessons from Tanzania*. Oslo: Ham Trykk as/bb—grafisk.
- Mozilla, F. (2010). *Conflict resolution methods: Resolving conflicts rationally and effectively*. From <http://www.mindtools.com>Leadership Skill-Coached-Similar.html>. Retrieved on December 19, 2013
- Msila, V. (2011). School management and the struggle for effective schools. *Africa Education Review*, 8(3), 434–449.
- Mugenda, S. A. (1999). *The structured assessment interview: A psychometric review*, California: Macedonia County Publishers.
- Namusi, J. K. (2005). Culture, gender, organizational role, and styles of conflict resolution: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 165-196.
- Nevvslorm. S., & Davis, J. (2002). *Conflict management a practical guide to developing negotiation*. New Jersey: Prentice hall

- Nyamajiwa, B. M. (2000). *Communication in negotiation*. Harare University of Zimbabwe Centre for distance education.
- Odich. D.F. (2001). *A study on teacher-principal conflicts in Amhara Regional State Secondary Schools*. Addis Ababa University, MA Thesis.
- Okotoni, C. A. (2002). *Management of conflicts in Secondary Schools in Osun State*. M.A. Thesis, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.
- Okotoni, O., & Okotoni, A. (2003). Conflict management in Secondary Schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 12(1), 23-38.
- Opoku-Asare, N. A. A., Takyi, H., & Owusu-Mensah, M. (2015). *Conflict Prevalence in Primary School and How It Is Understood to Affect Teaching and Learning in Ghana*. and Margaret Owusu-Mensah. SAGE Open.
- Orodho, M. N (2003). School management and the struggle for effective schools. *Africa Education Review*, 8(3), 434- 451
- Owens, R. G. (1987). *Organizational Behaviour in Education*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall
- Owens, R. G. (1995). *Organizational behaviour in education*. (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon
- Oyebade, O. P. (1994). *Conflict management strategies*. University administrators in South-West Nigeria.
- Peters, T. (1988). *Thriving on chaos: Macmillan suggested ways of handling conflict*, USA: Free Press
- Pruitt, D. G., & Carnevale, P. J. (1993). *Negotiation and social conflict*, Buckingham: Open University.

- Rahim, M. A. (2002). Towards a theory of managing organizational conflict. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, (3), 206.
- Rahim, M. A., Garret, J. E., & Buntzman, G. F. (1992). Ethics of managing interpersonal style of handling conflict with supervision. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (2), 87.
- Ramani, A. B. & Zhimin, E. P. (2010). Culture, gender, organizational role, and styles of conflict resolution: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 165-19.
- Republic of Kenya (2001). *The effects of state-wide conflict management initiative in schools*. Kenya's Ministry of Education Report.
- Robbins, S.P. (1974). *Organizational Behavior Concepts, Controversies and Applications*. Englewood Clifits NJ: Prentice-Hall
- Robbins, S.P. (1989). *Organizational Behavior Concepts, Controversies and Applications*. Englewood Clifits NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Robert, E. W., & James, H. (2001). Conflict management and school leadership. *Journal Communication*, 3(1), 25-34
- Robert, R. C., & James, A. M (2001). Conflict across organizational boundaries: managed care organizations versus health care providers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(4), 754-755
- Roloff, M. E. (1987). *Communication and conflict*. Newburg Park, CA: Sage
- Romo, H. D. (2001). Improving ethnic and racial relations in the schools. In Schultz, Fred. (Ed.). *Multicultural education*, (8th ed.), Connecticut: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin
- Ross, M. H. (1993). *The management of conflict*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Scanius, J. T. (1995). *Leadership in organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Schmidt, S. M., & Kochan, T. A. (1972). Conflict: Toward conceptual clarity. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17, 359-370.

Simmon, T. L., & Peterson, R. S. (2000). Task conflict and relationship conflict in top management teams: The pivotal role of intra group trust. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, (1), 85.

Soinpa, E. A. (2015). Managing conflict in school teams: The impact of task and goal interdependence on conflict management and team effectiveness. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(3), 359-390.

Some, J. A. (2010). *Lessons from the classroom: A policy research report on teachers' motivation and perceptions in Nepal*. Kathmandu: VSO Nepal.

Spotsman, S., & Hamilton, P. (2007). Conflict management styles in health professions. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, (3), 157.

Swanström, N. L. P., & Weissmann, M. S. (2005). *Conflict, conflict prevention and conflict management and beyond: A Conceptual Exploration*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Programme, Washington, DC and Nacka, Sweden

Szilagyi, A. D., & Wallace, M. J. (1983). *Organizational behavior and performance* (3rd ed.). London: Glenview.

Thomas, K. W. (1976). *Conflict and conflict management*. Chicago: Rand McNally

Thomas, K. W. (1977). *Towards a multi-dimensional values in teaching: The Example of Conflicts Behaviors*, Chicago: Rand McNally.

Thompson, S. (1967). *Conflict and conflict management*. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Tiglu, C. A. (2008). *The management of conflict*. New haven, CT: Yale University press.

Turay, T. M. (2001). *An examination of intra-secondary school conflicts in complex emergencies*, The Case of Sierra Leone.

Wayne, N. M., & Miskel, O. (2008). The effects of state-wide conflict management initiative in schools. *American Secondary Education*, 29(3), 32-33.

Wheeler, P. O. (1995) Exploring causes of principal burnout. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 34, 60–71.

Whetten, L. K. (2005). *Conflict and conflict resolution in Africa*. Washington: CQ Press.

Wiley, J. & Sons (1996). *Management and organizational behavior*. New York.

Yee, L., & Cuba, X. (1996). *Leadership in organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.



## APPENDICIES

### Appendix A:

#### Informed Consent Form

My name is Patrick Antwi a student at the University of Education, Winneba. As part of my study programme requirement, I am working on a project titled: **Examining Conflict Management Practices in Selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District**. I am therefore asking if you would agree to participate in my research by answering a questionnaire.

You do not have to participate at all, or, even if you agree now, you can terminate your participation at any time without prejudice. You also do not have to answer individual questions you don't want to answer. Your name will not be attached to the questionnaire and I will ensure that your participation remains confidential. (This consent form will be kept separate from the questionnaire for all participants.)

I can tell you that your response may be included in the paper I will write at the conclusion of this project; however, your responses would be anonymous and nobody could connect your responses with you as an individual and will be used strictly for academic purposes. A benefit you may experience by participating in this study is greater knowledge of conflict management practices in basic schools.

By participating in this study, you risk being upset or made uncomfortable by the questions asked. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [pyantwi@yahoo.com](mailto:pyantwi@yahoo.com) and on 0242776680.

## **PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM**

Title: Examining Conflict Management Practices in Selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District

Researcher: Patrick Antwi. Address: University of Education, Winneba, Kumasi Campus, Tanoso, Kumasi.

### **General Information about Research**

The aim of this study is to examine conflict management practices in selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District. The entire duration for data collection is over a period of four weeks. I humbly request that you sign a consent form to enable you to participate in the study.

### **Possible risks and discomfort**

You will not be exposed to any physical danger during the period of study, however the topic of interest may cause a level of discomfort because it is about conflict management in basic schools. If you are uncomfortable, you may take a break or choose to opt out.

### **Benefits**

The study may not benefit you directly; however, it will provide the schools, Ghana Education Service particularly Upper Denkyira West Education Directorate and policy makers with findings that will help policy makers to initiate conflict management practice policies.

### **Confidentiality**

You are assured that data collected will be coded with a password on a storage device. The password will be known by the researcher and the supervisor. The hard copies will be securely kept in cabinet which will only be accessible to the supervisor and the researcher.

### **Privacy**

Your privacy is assured; there will be no teacher in the room where questions will be answered.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

You can withdraw from the study at any time and it will not be used against them.

### **VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

The above document describing the benefits, risks and procedures for the research title: **Examining Conflict Management Practices in Selected Junior High Schools in the Upper Denkyira West District**, has been read and explained to me. I have been given an opportunity to have any questions about the research answered to my satisfaction. I agree that my child should participate as a volunteer.

---

Date

---

Name and signature of participant



**Appendix B:**

**Structured Questionnaire**

**Section A: Demographic Data**

Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

Age

Respondent's Age: 22-29 years [ ] 30-39 years [ ] 40-49 years [ ] 50-59 years [ ]

Educational Qualification: WASSCE [ ] Diploma [ ] Bachelor's degree [ ]

Master's Degree [ ]

Employment status: Professional Teacher [ ] Non Professional Teacher [ ]

Religious Affiliation: Christian [ ] Moslem [ ] Traditionalist [ ]

Marital Status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Cohabiting [ ] Separated/Divorced [ ]

Widowed [ ]



**Section B: Major causes of conflicts in schools**

There are lists of statements describing the sources of conflict in the school settings perceived by individuals here under. Thus, please indicate that to what extent you find each of them to be the sources of conflict. Give your best choice by putting numbers 1-4. The numbers represent the following: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree.

No.	Sources of Conflict	4	3	2	1
1	Incompatible goals, values, beliefs, etc				
2	Distrust among teachers				

3	Misunderstanding				
4	Limited resources				
5	Communication problems				
6	Interdependent work activities				
7	Differentiation of activities				
8	Lack of common performance standards				
9	Disciplinary problems (violating code of ethics, absenteeism, not to be punctual, etc)				
10	Frustration, stress and burnout				
11	Lack of planning				
12	Jurisdictional ambiguities				
13	Individual differences				

**Section C: Common conflict management practices amongst teachers and head teachers**

Conflict Management Practices Assessment

Consider situations in which you find your wishes and goals differing from those of others. How do you respond to such situations? Reflect on such conflict situations you have had with others in your school organization. Several statements describing possible behavioral responses based on Thomas-Kilmann’s Conflict Mode Instrument (1976) were given below. For each statement, please indicate to show your choice below the numbers which represent: 5=always, 4=usually, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely, and 1=never at all.

No.	<b>When I come across with differences, disagreements or confliction incidents in my school</b>	5	4	3	2	1
1	When quick, decisive action is vital—e.g., emergencies					
2	On important issues where unpopular actions need implementing—e.g., cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline					
3	On issues vital to company welfare when you know you're right					
4	Against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior					
5	When trying to find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised					
6	When your objective is to learn					
7	When merging insights from people with different perspectives					
8	When gaining commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus					
9	When working through feelings that have interfered with a relationship					
10	When goals are important but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes					
11	When opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals					
12	When attempting to achieve temporary settlements to complex issues					
13	When arriving at expedient solutions under time pressure					

14	When in a conflict with someone, I ask them to explain their position.						
15	When an issue is trivial, or when more important issues are pressing						
16	When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns						
17	When potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution						
18	When letting people cool down and regain perspective						
19	When gathering information supersedes immediate decision						
20	When others can resolve the conflict more effectively						
21	When issues seem tangential or symptomatic of other issues						
22	When you find you are wrong—to allow a better position to be heard, to learn, and to show your reasonableness						
23	When issues are more important to others than yourself—to satisfy others and maintain cooperation						
24	When building social credits for later issues						
25	When minimizing loss when you are outmatched and losing						
26	When harmony and stability are especially important						
27	When allowing subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes						

**Section D: Challenges encountered in managing conflict**

There are lists of statements describing challenges encountered during managing conflict in the school settings perceived by individuals here under. Thus, please indicate that to what extent you find each of them to be the main challenges encountered during managing conflict.

Give your best choice by putting number in each statement. Numbers representations are 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree.

No.	Challenges encountered during managing conflict	4	3	2	1
1	Not clearly articulating the causes of conflict				
2	Poor statement of why conflict needs to be resolved and reasons to work on conflict				
3	No addressing and settling issues face-to-face				
4	Not sticking to the issues				
5	Not taking a time-out and resume resolving the conflict at another designated time,				
6	Differences in values (due to ethnicity, religion, friendship, etc)				
7	Lack of cooperation among parties involved				
8	lack of professional skills in handling conflict situations				
9	Conflict management as being time demanding				

**Section E: Roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance**

There are lists of statements describing roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance in the school settings perceived by individuals here under. Thus, please indicate that to what extent you find each of them to be the main roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance. Give your best choice by putting

number in each statement. Numbers representations are 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree.

No.	Roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance	4	3	2	1
1	Staff acquire new knowledge and experiences (Teaches us patterns of behavior)				
2	Enhancement of organizational learning				
3	Lead to greater output because the workers are challenged to put up their best				
4	Strengthening of the bond between employees and management in basic schools				
5	Maximization of constructive aspect of conflict				
6	Helps us to set limits				
7	Opportunity to verbalize needs				