

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF BASIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND
HEADTEACHERS IN THE ATWIMA KWANWOMA DISTRICT



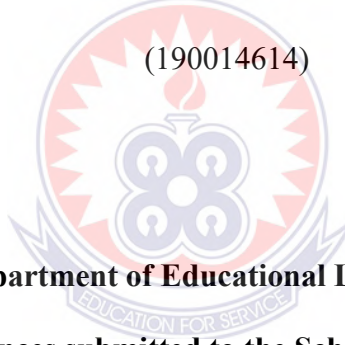
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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF BASIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND
HEADTEACHERS IN THE ATWIMA KWANWOMA DISTRICT

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A Dissertation in the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of Education and Communication Sciences submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of the Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) degree

DECEMBER, 2021

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, EMMANUEL NSOWAH, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation as laid down by the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. STEPHEN BAFFOUR ADJEI

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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DEDICATION

To my late mother, Mary Fordjour.

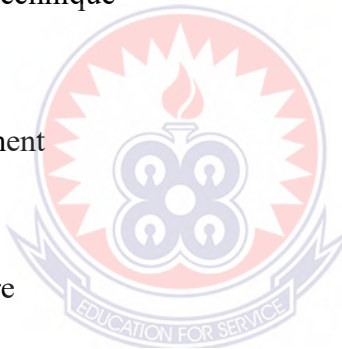


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate conflict management of Basic School Headteachers and Teachers. The objectives of the study were to identify the causes of conflict in basic schools in Atwima Kwanwoma District, determine conflict management practices adopted by teachers and headteachers of selected basic schools in the district, identify roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance, ascertain the challenges encountered by teachers and head teachers in managing conflict in selected basic schools in the district. The sample size of the study was 140 teachers from a population of 220. Purposive and cluster sampling techniques were used to select the participants and schools respectively. Descriptive survey was used to analyze the data. 86.7% of the participants strongly agreed that distrust among teachers caused conflict among teachers in school environment. The commonest conflict management practice among teachers was avoiding with a mean value of 3.43 and standard deviation of 1.43. And 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. Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that training in conflict management should be given to all teachers and head teachers 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 to the Study

In the new global economy, conflict management has become a central issue for effective management of schools. Conflict is common and universal in societies and their affairs. It ensues among organisations, within organizations, among the members of an organisation and within the personality of each individual because presence of conflict is an everyday certainty (Ayalew, 2000).

It has been argued that communication barriers, role uncertainty, uncertain expectations, unresolved prior conflicts, conflicting interests, difference on duty and content issues are some of the factors that can lead to conflict in schools (Gezer, 2009; Kantek & Rahim, 2002). 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 the educational and social aspects of the country in general and the quality of schools.

In the same vein, Romo (2001) asserted that conflict can affect academic achievement as well as social relationships. It is argued that unless we manage conflicts accordingly, it will unquestionably undermine the teaching and learning process, the social life of the schools and the entire society. Conflict-management skills have become increasingly important to institutional heads in postmodern society (Lang, 2009; Ramani & Zhimin, 2010). Overall, these studies demonstrate that conflict is assumed to be a natural part of modern organisations and there is the need for conflict management practices in schools.

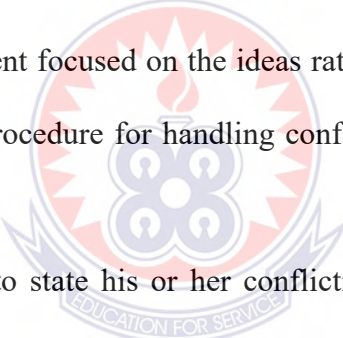
Similarly, Leithwood and Hallinger (2002) suggested that developing an effective approach for conflict management practice in schools require the participation of corporate level of management, which specifies strategies to cope with any unsafe situation which occurs in an academic institution working in harmony and unity.

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

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Several scholars from different disciplines have conducted research on conflict and its management. A study by Joel (2011), Ilikuku (2013) and Soinpa (2015), looked at the strategies of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers. Other scholars including (Hakielimu, 2007; Mosha, 2006) have explored conflicts among teachers and heads of schools and students. Besides, a number of write-ups have considered the effects of failure to resolve conflict on students' academic performance (Nevvslorm Davis, 2002). It is noted that there is the need to manage conflicts in educational institutions in order to take advantage of the constructive aspect of conflict. The existing literature on conflict management practice in schools is extensive and focuses particularly on major causes of conflicts in schools. The key to a productive group is the way ongoing conflicts are resolved. Conflicts are particular disagreements

that occur between two or more members at a particular time. Conflict is not necessarily dysfunctional. In fact, research has shown that successful groups exhibit much conflict (Fullan, 2000). As Roger Johnson stated, “A critical moment of truth in a ... group is when two teachers disagree strongly with each other and argue”. A group can make wise decisions only when there is a wealth of information and ideas to consider. Information and ideas are generated through conflict. To suppress conflict is to limit the group’s decision-making capacity. Therefore, the leadership should encourage conflict, not stifle it. Of course, conflict, if not handled correctly, can degenerate into adversarial and harmful relations. It is not conflict that is bad; it is the way the leader deals with it that determines its value. Conflict occurs when there is a disagreement over ideas. The leader should keep the disagreement focused on the ideas rather than on the personalities of the members. The following procedure for handling conflict serves as a ready reference for the group leader:



Ask each member to state his or her conflicting position. Ask each member to restate the other’s position. Ask each member if conflict still exists. Ask for underlying value positions: Why do they still stick to their positions? Ask the other members of the group if there is a third position that synthesizes, compromises, or transcends the conflict. If not, clarify the various positions. Acknowledge that there exists no apparent reconciliation, and move the discussion to other matters.

Notwithstanding these procedures, there are adverse effects that are inherent in unresolved or partially resolved conflicts amongst teachers in educational institutions in Ghana. This indicates a need to understand conflict management practices in basic schools in Ghana. This study therefore sets out to examine conflict management practices

in schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District in order to obtain data which will help to address this research gap.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine conflict management practices in selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. identify the causes of conflicts in selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District.
2. determine conflict management practices adopted by teachers and head teachers in selected Basic schools in the District.
3. identify roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance.
4. ascertain the challenges encountered by teachers and head teachers in managing conflict in selected Basic schools in the District.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the causes of conflicts in the selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District?

2. What are the conflict management practices used by teachers and head teachers in selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District?
3. What are the roles played by conflict management in attaining institutional performance?
4. What are the challenges encountered by teachers and head teachers in managing conflict in selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study findings may be of great potentialities to head teachers and teachers in understanding challenges they face in managing school conflicts and how they can manage conflicts in school. Besides, the study findings also may be useful to district education officers in understanding challenges school heads face in managing conflicts in schools.

Additionally, the study also may be useful to policy makers in understanding the capabilities of school heads in managing conflicts in schools. In furtherance of this, the study will also contribute knowledge on existing literature related to conflict management practices in school contexts. Lastly, the study will lay foundations for further studies in the field of educational management.

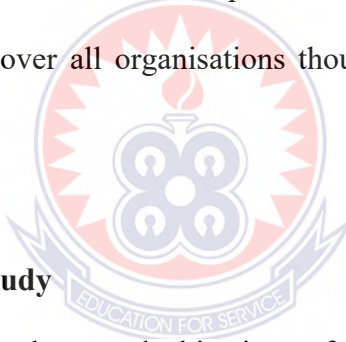
1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study was delimited to the influence of conflict and its management on the performance of teachers in public basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District, Ashanti Region of Ghana. The study was delimited in scope due to financial and time

constraints. It therefore, confined itself to only public basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District, therefore, its application to a larger population or wider area may not be possible.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The results may not be generalized since the research was conducted in selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District. The researcher faced other challenges that had direct bearing on the outcome. Some respondents delayed in completing the questionnaire and the researcher had to give them regular reminders. The analysis of the study were solely based on the information provided by the respondents hence findings cannot be generalised to cover all organisations though the outcome can be used as a model for practice.



1.9 Organization of the Study

In order to attain the stated objectives of the study, the entire research was structured into five different chapters. The first chapter presents introduction to the study namely; background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation and organization of the study. The second chapter focuses on the review of related literature which will focus on empirical review and theoretical framework. 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 provides summary of findings, conclusions reached, and recommendations made on the basis of conclusions drawn from the analyzed data.

Definition of terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms require operational definition to ensure clarity of their meaning:

Conflict: It is an activity which takes place when individuals or groups wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their wants, needs or obligations (Nicholson, 2014).

Conflict Management: Denotes to the management of conflicts in a constructive means in order to take advantages 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: In this study refers to the process of attempting to resolve conflict among parties.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

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

2.1 Concept of Conflict and Conflict Management

The term conflict has been defined in different ways by several scholars. For instance, Merriam-Webster (2014) defines conflict as a difference in ideas or viewpoints that may result in a struggle for power or position. Conflict management, therefore, can be defined as an affirmative and effective approach to managing differences or disagreements.

As business organizations move further into the twenty-first century, there appears to be steady advancement in technology, expansion, and innovation. More than ever, leaders are being developed to handle change, growth and transformation. With rapid growth, leaders are also encountering interpersonal and group-to-group conflict. By reviewing the current literature on leadership and conflict management, leaders can be

equipped to understand what conflict is, how it can be managed and the impact of leadership on conflict situations. This research paper proposes to review the literature related to the impact of leadership on conflict management in organizations. This review begins with a description of conflict management and the factors influencing conflict. Then, an examination of leadership is explored sharing the current literature on leadership of conflict management. Next, a synthesis is provided of how leadership impacts conflict management. Finally, implications are drawn on the effects of leadership on conflict management.

Asawo (2011). Conflict can occur in any setting and as leaders in organizations guide and transform their teams, they are also challenged with managing conflicts that arise both interpersonally and within groups. Doucet, Poitras and Chênevert (2009) share that the nature of conflict is typically connected to an interest or task. A conflict that is interest-related refers to an interpersonal or group divergence in goals or objectives. With the vast array of possible triggers for conflict, management of conflict has been challenging for leaders, thus an examination of the role of leadership in conflict situations is necessary.

Doucet, Poitras, and Chênevert (2009) share that a leader can play a role in organization conflict in three specific ways: directly, through intervention or through leadership style. In a direct role, the conflict may be interpersonal or group-to-group and the leader may exhibit a conflict management style to achieve a desired outcome. If intervening in a conflict, the leader may act as arbitrator or mediator. Lastly, if the leader's management style causes conflict, then the methods or techniques used by the leader promotes conflict interpersonally or group-to-group within his organization

(Curseu, 2011). Giacomantonio *et al.* (2011) share a similar view offering that leaders often have conflict management handling styles that they employ to deal with differences.

As Deutsch and Coleman (2000) suggested that conflict exists because people have different needs, ideas, views and values. Therefore, the challenge for schools, as for the wider community is to find better ways of managing conflict constructively so that, 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 create conflict and the absence of conflict usually signals absence of meaningful interaction. In this view, conflict can be defined as the opposition of individuals, or groups' interest, opinions or purpose. Nevertheless, conflicts which happen in organizations are neither good nor bad and unavoidable. Based on the above definitions, underlying view is that conflict is good only when it enables the organizational members to accomplish the set goals peacefully.

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) pointed out that conflict management is “the process of maximizing the positive aspect of conflict while minimizing the negative aspect of conflict in order to enhance learning and improve organizational performance.” Additionally, conflict management is also defined by Donelson (2009) as “the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict.” It can be argued that this definition implied that, effective conflict management needs the identification of the main causes of the problem. This view is supported by Swanstom and Weissmann

(2005), who proposed that conflict management is seen as a prerequisite that is desired to initiate preventive measures to conflicts. Based on the above definitions, managing conflict requires putting down appropriate measures to prevent the problem from reoccurring. Besides, these definitions highlighted how to achieve the best out of conflict situations in order 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 as a basic and result-oriented part of life (Ghaffar, 2005). Managers are known to be peculiar people who oversee to the general accomplishment of organizational tasks and activities and their knowledge base and skills are derived broadly from the field of management (Caglio & Ditillo, 2008). Management therefore, is composed of the various activities that involve the setting of goals, strategies to reach those goals, and the right decision making process to enable organization thrive in both internal and the external environment (du Plessis, 2007).

Nevertheless, ineffective management of conflict such as a 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 on conflict whether it is possibly beneficial to organization or not. Such conflict leads to

physical and psychological withdrawal and is an extensively occurring singularity in schools that is often labelled as laziness on the part of teachers, students, administrative workers and other stakeholders who have been spoiled by “soft” administrative practices. Based on these scholars’ views, it can be argued that managing conflict in a better manner should be promoted. Therefore, there is the need for teachers and students to understand the dynamic nature of conflict and manage it constructively.

2.2 Stages of Conflict

As businesses nowadays are operating in a turbulent environment where organizations are searching for measures to improve their performance and competitiveness, in the same way organizations are facing the challenges with the advent of conflicts. Therefore there is the need to identify the stages of conflicts and how to resolve conflicts at the early stages for the sake of organizational growth, and survival to enhance performance before they escalates. Conflicts are processes, a cluster of events taking time to evolve and reshape. Like any process, conflicts can be mapped and tracked through a series of stages or phases that we can call, its life cycle (Kriesberg, 2010). This allows the conflict practitioner and the conflicted parties to view and understand the conflict and address the conflict from a holistic perspective.

The typical conflict life cycle map contains seven distinct stages of a conflict’s life cycle: Latent conflict, emergence, escalation, deadlock/stalemate, de-escalation, resolution, and collaborative action. The life cycle is explained below.

Deadlock: Garant and Robin (2012) opined that once conflict escalates it reaches the stage of stalemate. In this stage parties perceive that they cannot win or get everything

they want, yet do not want to give in or back down. Parties begin to run out of resources and tactics to use to their advantage.

Emergence: This is the stage where we begin to notice conflict. Once the accumulation of differences or annoyances build up or an altercation erupts; the latent conflict that may have been dormant manifests in a public manner (Kriesberg, 2012).

Latent conflict: According to Brahm (2012) Latent conflict exists whenever individuals, groups, or organizations have differences with one another, but those differences may not be enough to cause one side to act and escalate the situation. These may be things that another party may be categorized as annoyances, or things not worth getting upset.

Escalation: Escalation is the increase in the intensity of the conflict and in the severity of tactics used. When conflict escalates it tends to spill over involving more people and other related issues. Parties begin using their power and resources to make stronger threats and harsher sanctions (Kriesberg, 2012).

De-Escalation: Brahm (2012) stated that eventually conflicts begin to wind down and transform. Parties begin to change their stances and positions. This may be because of outside forces, change in perspectives or simple time. Parties may begin to see that their goals are unrealistic and begin to change them for realistic solutions.

Resolution: At this stage parties begin to look for a way to resolve their problems. Grievances are often reduced, and both sides begin to look for alternative ways to resolve their conflicts. In this stage resolutions are found (Brahm, 2012).

Collaborative Action: At this stage the parties work together to implement the resolution. This is where the parties begin to work together to implement the resolution (Brahm,

2012). In this stage, parties begin to strengthen their understanding, communication and relationship with each other.

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 poorly managed, it generates a breakdown in trust and lost productivity.

Bell (2002) suggested six key reasons for conflict occurring in the workplace and in 2009 Hart added two more. These 8 causes are generally assumed to be the main reasons conflict can occur in an organisation and we have looked at them in more detail below. Before attempting to resolve any conflict it is always important to determine exactly what is causing it. Understanding what triggers can cause conflict makes resolution easier to reach and conflict easier to avoid in the first place. There are an infinite number of reasons why conflict can occur in the workplace, however a small number of causes are most common and we have looked at them here.

1. Conflicting resources

Employees rely on accessing resources, such as technology, office supplies and meeting rooms, to perform effectively. Unfortunately, it is not always possible for everyone to access the resources they wish to at all times. If the reason someone cannot access the resources is that someone else is using them then this can lead to conflict. A manager's job may then be to decide who has the rightful access to the resource and how it will be distributed in the future.

2. Conflicting styles

No two individuals will work the same. Different methods of organisation, communication and time-keeping are very common in any organisation. This is generally effective as each individual should be allowed to work in their own style. However, when it comes to team tasks this can become problematic, as some individuals will have to compromise on how the work is done. A manager can avoid conflict occurring here by selecting teams based on their similarities and strengths.

3. Conflicting perceptions

Different perceptions of what the organisation's goals are, the methods used and who is responsible for what can often lead to conflict. Bell (2002) Open and transparent communication is the key to avoiding this happening.

4. Conflicting goals

Often different managers will set targets and goals for the same individual and this can often lead to conflicting goals being set. For instance, it is hard to deliver on both speed and quality and hence setting both these targets may cause issues. The conflict here may be between the individual and on or both of the managers or between the managers themselves.

5. Conflicting pressures

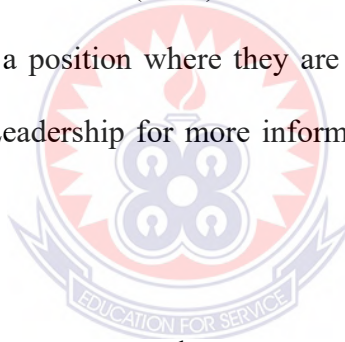
Conflicting pressures are similar to conflicting goals, except they usually exist over a shorter space of time. Individuals may be pressured to complete two different tasks by two different managers before the end of the day and this can lead to conflict.

6. Conflicting roles

Often employees can be asked to perform a task that they are not usually responsible for. This can cause conflict as either the individual feels the task is not appropriate for them or another individual believed it was for them. Whilst this can be avoided by delegating the same tasks to the same individuals, differentiating your team members' roles can be a good opportunity for learning and development.

7. Different personal values

Personal values determine the way we behave and the work we produce. Often, individuals will disagree about the actions they should take due to their personal values and this can lead to conflict. Bell (2002) As a manager, you can ensure your team members are never put in a position where they are asked to compromise their values. See our Wiki on Ethical Leadership for more information about dealing with situations like this.



8. Unpredictable policies

Rules and policies are not always communicated across an organisation effectively. This can lead to a poor understanding of them and confusion amongst team members. It is important to ensure policies, and particularly their changes, are communicated effectively throughout the organisation to avoid conflict like this from occurring.

According to Wayne and Miskel (2008), conflict is created in schools when there is diverse preferences and ideologies that people have 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, attitude or

perceptions among members of different units (Wayne & Miskel, 2008). For example, 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 conflicts. According to the Republic of Kenya (2001), some schools did not have basic facilities including staff room and teaching materials while some head teachers lack even offices to transact official duties. 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 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 conflicts in schools.

The findings of the Republic of Kenya (2001) indicated 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, this leads to misallocation of resources resulting to 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. In school circumstances, sometimes parents

contrast greatly with the teachers over academic performance of their children. Parents place a lot of pressure on the teachers claiming that they contribute to poor academic performance of the students. Such parents at times agitate for the removal of the head teacher and transfer of teachers to other schools, the students sometimes support the parents in the move and become indisciplined to the extent of physically demanding for the removal of the teachers (Republic of Kenya, 2001). 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 favours the other stakeholders and other students

Also, it is argued that many head teachers professed conflicts in educational administration with absence of needed financial resources. According to Some (2010), 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 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 trying to provide the required learning facilities when it is deliberately (Some, 2010). 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.

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

2.4 Conflict Management Practices used by Teachers and Head teachers

Conflict management is a method which is used to facilitate a positive or at least an agreeable outcome. Head teachers do involve in conflict resolution and management in the school system on issues bordering on students' discipline, control and amongst the teachers. All meticulous school head teachers strive for effectiveness, and also to have a strong commitment to fellow teachers in their school as they build relationships with the learners O'Hanlon and Clifford, (2004). In Ghana and most other parts of the world, students are being controlled and guided in schools by rules and regulations, school time table and curriculum contents etc. These however affect students' behaviour and learning, teachers who implement the organizational control patterns are also faced with other statutory duties such as updating continuous assessment records class registers, diaries and scheme of work. The principals and teachers do have constraints than any other as they are required to be diligent, honest and responsible, irrespective of the conflicts that

could arise in the schools while performing these roles. Therefore, when conflict arises, they must be managed with a view to resolving them using either of these strategies: integrating, compromising, avoiding and dominating. Integrating strategy focuses on gathering and organizing information at the same time, it encourages creative thinking and welcomes diverse perspectives. This strategy enable parties involve in conflict to pool all their information together, put their differences on the table and examine them along with any data that might contribute to resolution. It leads to alternative solution, which addresses all parts of the conflict, other than the initial solutions of the parties involve. This implies that the school system, school authority, students and teachers must be able and willing to contribute time, energy and resources to finding and implementing a solution.

Dominating strategy is used by the school principal to resolve the conflict by dictating what the students and teachers will do. It implies that the school management resolves conflict as it deems fit and communicates its decisions and desires to the students and teachers and they will abide by the decision whether or not they the teachers and students are with it. According to Iwowati (2007), the dominating strategy does not allow inputs from students and teachers in the school system. Compromising strategy is a middle of the road strategy that gets every one talking about issues and moves them closer to each other and to a resolution. In compromise, each person has something to give and something to take. Compromise is more effective in the school system, when issues are complex and parties in conflict look for a level playing ground and are also willing to exchange concessions. In this strategy, negotiation and bargaining are complementary skills.

Avoiding strategy: this occurs when one party in a potential conflict ignores the conflicting issues and denies the significant of the conflict. It is a way of not addressing the conflict or postponing the conflict for a better time, which never comes. It is a way of postponing or withdrawing from conflict situations in the school that might cause unpleasantness for the principal in particular and teachers in general. Msila (2011) in his study of effectiveness in schools states that the challenge of school principals is to identify the problems endemic in their schools. Furthermore, Botha in Msila who contends that the workload of school principals is becoming unmanageable and as a result many school principals, especially in secondary schools, lack the time for an understanding of their leadership roles. Conflicts are caused by a number of aspects that create tensions between people. Corvette (2007) contends that conflict exists wherever, and whenever there is incompatibility of cognitions or emotions within individuals or between individuals. Moreover, conflict arises in personal relationship in organizations, between groups and between nations. Many schools have broken down relationships because of the existence of this incompatibility. School managers in conflict schools will face huge tasks as they try to be effective. It is also important to note that the head teacher's philosophy will influence how they react to conflict, some perceive it as something to be avoided at all costs while others see it as an aspect that is necessary to enhances a sustainable learning environment. It is the perception or belief to opposing needs, wishes, ideas, interests. Conflict is everywhere and it is inevitable. It arises from many sources. In addition to being the antecedent for negotiation, conflict may also arise during negotiation. The subject of conflict is large and complex. Conflict if

misdiagnosed, can lead to a spiral of antagonistic interaction and aggravated destructive behavior.

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. In accordance with this notion, Irene (2011) suggests that the accommodating style satisfies the other party's concerns while neglecting one's own. She concluded that the difficulty in habitual use of the accommodating style is that it emphasizes preserving a friendly relationship at the expense of critically appraising issues and protecting personal rights. As Gross (2000), indicated that this style involves a behaviour that is cooperative but not assertive and which may mean an unselfish and a long-term strategy to encourage others to cooperate or submit to the wishes of others. From the above explanation, accommodators are regularly and favourably evaluated by others but are also perceived as weak and submissive.

Concerning an avoiding style, Kogo (2002) suggested that the avoiding approach as 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. The avoiding approach might reflect a decision to let the conflict work itself out or it might 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 who stress that even though such people want to win. Such people are reluctant to jump into 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, and 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 and 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 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 emergency situations. Competition involves authoritative and assertive behaviours. 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 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) defined compromise as an agreement in which people agree to accept less than they originally wanted. It is noted that many teachers and head teachers rely on the compromising style to manage conflicts. Whetten (2005), maintained that compromise is an attempt to have a partial satisfaction for both parties and this compels them to make

sacrifices to obtain a common gain. If this is not possible, one group must give up something of value as a concession. Competing style, choosing a competitive style to manage a conflict implies that an individual is putting his or her interest before everyone else's interest. As Miller (2003) suggest 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 Cannie (2002), 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, not admitting mistakes and ending negative verbal, voice and body messages. This is what, 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 as well as pursuing personal concerns at the expense of the other. In effect, they try to gain power by direct confrontation and try to win without adjusting their goals and desires.

In a study conducted by Abdul (2013) indicates that different secondary schools in Pakistan use accommodation, avoidance, compromise and collaboration as styles 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 because they do not have confidence in their conflict management skills. He further suggested that compromising mode is suitable 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 style of conflict management 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 to the results that obtained from the use of 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 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 school community used collaborating, compromising, accommodating, dominating and avoiding as their most prevalent style respectively.

Collectively, these studies outline a critical role for conflict management in school administration. In view 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. It has been observed in literature that there are less published studies on conflict

management practices common amongst teachers and headteachers in Ghana. Therefore, this study will examine conflict management practices common amongst teachers and headteachers in selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District.

2.5 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 and this may cost the institution so much. In selecting the appropriate style for a conflict condition, a time-consuming approach may be required and much of productive time would have to be forfeited in order to effectively employ a conflict management style. De Drue and Weingart (2003) also noted the consistency with this argument on conflict management style. The scholars further observed that, this error generally occurred when there is lack of proper diagnosis of the problem and where there is insufficient understanding of the nature and cause of the conflict leading to the application of the wrong intervention to the problem.

Another challenge that could be encountered is lack of cooperation on the part of the two parties involved in the conflict. When either of the parties or both parties are unenthusiastic to take 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 take part in the conflict management process when they perhaps feel so hurt about the problem.

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 hurdle and manage the problem. When a wrong method to handling a problem is espoused, the end 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.

In furtherance of this, another challenge in handling conflict has to do with the two dimensions of conflicts, namely; affective and substantive conflict. Substantive conflict was considered as good conflict while affective conflict was considered as bad conflict (De Church & Marks, 2002). Rahim (2002) in his studies drew a conclusion that, there was a positive correlation between the two dimensions of conflict and this is measured as a challenge. Simmons and Petersons (2000) in their studies also drew a conclusion like Rahim's conclusion when they reported a positive correlation between the two dimensions of conflict which were around 0.34 and 0.88. However, some few scholars concluded in their studies that there was rather a negative correlation between affective and substantive conflict. In managing conflicts, there are some factors that influence conflict management in most institutions in the country. This study will contribute to literature by exploring the challenges encountered in managing conflict in schools in Ghana as there is less study on this important subject matter.

2.6 Other Conflicts in Organizations

Bell (2002) identified other similar causes of conflicts in organizations. He suggests the reasons for conflict in the workplace include: conflicting styles, conflicting perceptions, conflicting goals, conflicting pressures, and conflicting roles.

Conflicting styles: Individuals differ in the way they approach people and problems. Associates need to understand their own style and learn how to accept conflicting styles. Personality tests, such as Myers-Briggs Personality Type Inventory (MBTI), can help people to explore their instinctive personality styles (Bell, 2002). An example of conflicting styles would be where one worker works best in a very structured environment while another worker works best in an unstructured environment. These two workers could easily drive each other crazy if they constantly work in conflict with one another and do not learn to accept one another's work style.

Conflicting perceptions: Just as two or more workers can have conflicting styles, they can also have conflicting perceptions. They may view the same incident in dramatically different ways. Bell (2002) gives an example of what might happen if a new administrative assistant was hired in the organization. One associate might see the new hire as an advantage (one more set of hands to get the job done), while another associate might see the same new hire as an insult (a clear message that the current associates are not performing adequately). Resentment and conflict can also occur when one department is viewed as more valuable to the organization than others (Hart, 2000).

Conflicting Goals: Associates may have different viewpoints about an incident, plan, or goal. Problems in the workplace can occur when associates are responsible for different duties in achieving the same goal. Take for instance the patient being admitted to a

hospital, the business office is responsible for documenting financial information and getting paid, whereas the nursing staff is responsible for the patient's physical assessment and immediate admission. Both objectives are important and necessary, but may cause conflict (Bell, (2002).

Conflicting Pressures: In the words of Hart (2000), conflicting pressures can occur when two or more associates or departments are responsible for separate actions with the same deadline. For example, Manager A needs Associate A to complete a report by 1:00 p.m., which is the same deadline that Associate B needs Associate A to have a machine fixed. In addition, Manager B (who does not know the machine is broken) now wants Associate B to use the broken machine before 3:00 p.m. What is the best solution? The extent to which we depend on each other to complete our work can contribute greatly to conflict.

Conflicting Roles: Conflicting roles can occur when an associate is asked to perform a function that is outside his job requirements or expertise or another associate is assigned to perform the same job. This situation can contribute to power struggles for territory. This causes intentional or unintentional aggressive or passive-aggressive (sabotage) behavior. Everyone has experienced situations where associates have workplace and to work as a team wielded their power in inappropriate ways.

Type of Behavior: A participant's desire to satisfy the other's concern and the participant's desire to satisfy his own concern at the same time can also cause conflict.

Interaction of Various Parties: The interaction of different parties may lead to escalation or de-escalation of the conflict, depending upon such factors as the trust level that is established, biases and self-fulfilling prophecies that get the way, the level of competition between the participants, and the openness and sensitivity to each other.

Conditions that influence behavior: When rules and procedures, written and unwritten, formal and informal become dysfunctional such that they lead to rigid, repetitious behaviour that does not allow for exceptions (highly bureaucratic), they can cause or exacerbate conflict. Quite often, rules and procedures become so complicate the processes of working out a relatively simple misunderstanding through direct negotiations that, they create conflict.

People's personality in an organization: People in organisations with particular reference to their personality predispositions, e.g. their attitudes towards authority and the extent and flexibility of their responses to others can cause conflict.

Organizational cultures: Every organization has its social norms- social pressures e.g. “stand up and fight”, don't rock the boat”, secretiveness, or restricted communication that try to smooth over friction and disapprove of open challenge and questioning to authority, can make it very difficult to identify and confront conflict in the first place. This situation can actually cause conflict in such organizations.

Governmental controls: When the government, through its Ministry of Education, for example, introduces rules and regulations for schools e.g. a ceiling for fees to be charged to students, or a staff quota – 20 students to one teacher, some schools may find it problematic operating effectively on these rules. Conflicts in various forms therefore arise.

2.7 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, appropriate diagnosis could be made, and proper interventions could be employed so that higher performance could be accomplished.

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 of enhancing organizational learning, according to Rahim (2002). It is argued that it supports employees and managers to obtain deeper understanding of problems 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.

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.

The constructive aspect of conflict is very indispensable in achieving higher productivity thereby leading to institutional growth. Conflict management as suggested by most scholars guarantees a competitive working environment which 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).

This could be observed when subordinates and stakeholders are stimulated to speak against the decisions of their superiors when those decisions may lead to hostile outcomes. Furthermore, Rahim (2002) also suggested that, for organizations to manage conflicts ethically, organizations should put in place some key positions. These positions include customer advocate, employee advocate, supplier advocate, environmental and stockholders' advocates.

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

2.8 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. To overcome conflict, studies support the need to adopt different conflict management practices (conflict resolution) 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 kind of 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 influence 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 rules and regulations of the organization should be considered. This will go a long way to affect the overall performance of the organization at any point in time



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

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

3.1 Research Approach

Research approach is the plan of research that essentially guides the conduct of the whole research (Hair, 2013). The researcher needs to develop a proper research approach before conducting data collection and analysis, because research approach will guide the logical flow of the research project. The study used quantitative research approach. It is important to have a clear and systematic research design at the outset of the project for being rigorous throughout the investigation process and for being confident in the outcome of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for the study was a descriptive survey. The design was adopted because descriptive studies are suitable for fact finding and result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problems (Orodho. 2003). Kombo and Tromp (2007) observed that descriptive approach is utilized in order to obtain information concerning the current phenomenon and wherever possible

to draw valid conclusions from facts discussed. This method also is preferred because it makes enough provision for protection against bias and maximizes reliability.

3.3 Population

The target population was 220 teachers and head teachers in basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The researcher considered them as valuable source of information because they have requisite experience in terms of the information needed for the study. These teachers encounter conflict and use different styles of conflict management to resolve conflicts and can bring out the information needed.

3.4 Sample and sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, was used to select teachers aged 25 to 59 years who are currently teaching within the Atwima Kwanwoma District. The aim of purposive sampling is to focus on characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable the researcher to answer research questions. Additionally, purposive sample produces a sample that can be logically presumed to be representative of the population.

Cluster sampling technique was used in the selection of 10 primary schools and 10 basic schools in selected towns in the Atwima Kwanwoma District. With cluster sampling, the researcher divides the population into separate groups, called clusters. Then, a simple random sample of clusters is selected from the population. Cluster

sampling is very time-efficient and cost-efficient probability design for large geographical areas and this technique is easy to be used from practicality viewpoint.

3.5 Sample Size

The researcher used 140 participants as the sample, out of which 120 were teachers and 20 head teachers from 10 primary schools and 10 basic schools in selected towns in the Atwima Kwanwoma District. This means in totality, participants from 20 separate schools will be used. The teacher population of the entire 20 schools is 220 and hence a sample size of 140. This is based on Krecjie and Morgan's (1970) table for the determination of sample size for research work. The table indicates that for a population of 220 the sample size should be 140.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire was used to obtain information from the respondents. The questionnaire was developed through a guide by existing literature on the prevalence of conflict. The first section of the questionnaire will address the participant's socio-economic and demographic information. The next section will deal with questions on the major causes of conflicts. It will then pose relevant questions to participants about conflict management practices used by teachers and head teachers. Next, participants will answer questions concerning challenges encountered in managing conflicts. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire will deal with the advantages of conflict management in attaining institutional performance.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

In this study, the researcher validated the data collection instrument by pilot testing the questionnaire in order to assess the worth before using the instrument. Pilot test was done at Bosomtwe District owing to the fact that this district shares similar characteristics with Atwima Kwanwoma District. The pilot-test involved two schools comprising one Primary and Junior High School respectively with a sample size of 8 teachers and two head teachers. The aim is to check and evaluate the validity and reliability of the instrument in order to attain the objective of the study.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis is a critical examination and scrutiny of the coded data in order to make deductions and inferences. This activity involves uncovering underlying structures; extracting important variables, detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions. First data was checked manually for completeness and coding will be performed. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze numerical data through summaries such as percentages, tables, diagrams and charts. This type of data analysis method to be used is profoundly dependent on the research design and the instruments used to collect data.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Prior research ethical clearance was required from the respondents. After approval, then permission was sought from Atwima Kwanwoma District Education Directorate and Bosomtwe District Assembly before data collection. The participants

were given information on the purpose of the study to enable them to decide either to participate in the study or not. Again, those who accepted to participate in the study were encouraged to exercise their right to pull out from the study if they desire so and no penalties were attached to such withdrawal. This was done to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. Privacy and confidentiality of every participant was ensured throughout the study period and beyond. Data entries were stored electronically on the principal investigator's (PIs) computer which is password protected. Hard copies of filled questionnaires were only accessible to the principal investigator and others involved directly in the study. Finally, the results of this study was disseminated in a manner that no information was linked to the identity of any participant.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of data analysis and results from the responses of respondents who responded to questionnaire on “conflict management practices in selected basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District.” In the order of the analysis, each research question asked was basically recognized and questionnaire item measured for every single question.

Table 4.1: Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

Variable	N=140 Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	80	57.1
Females	60	42.9
Age		
25years	10	7.1
26-29 years	30	21.5
30-39 years	55	39.3
40-49 years	35	25
50-59 years	10	7.1
Educational Qualification		
WASSCE	5	3.6
Diploma	90	64.2
Bachelor’s degree	40	28.6
Master’s Degree	5	3.6
Rank		
Professional Teacher	80	57.1
Non-Professional Teacher	60	42.9
Religious Affiliation		
Christian	90	64.3
Moslem	40	28.5
Traditionalist	10	7.2
Marital Status		

Single	40	28.5
Married	65	46.4
Cohabiting	20	14.3
Separated/Divorced	10	7.2
Widowed	5	3.6

Source: Field Survey, 2022

4.2 Presentation of Results

A total number of 140 questionnaires were administered to teachers and head teachers in basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District. Out of the 140 questionnaires, 140 (100%) were obtained and valid for the data analysis.

4.2.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

The table above illustrates socio-demographic characteristics of participants. Over half (60%) of those surveyed are males whereas females constituted 40%. Concerning the participants' age, those whose ages fell within 30-39 years were 60%, respondents within the age ranges of 26-29 years and 40-49 were 20% and 20% respectively. Just over half (60%) of respondents held diploma certificates and those who possessed bachelor's degree constituted 30%. Respondents who possessed West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and master's degree were 6.7% and 3.3% respectively. Majority of the respondents (60%) were professional teachers whereas non-professional teachers were 40%. Almost two-thirds of the participants (65.3%) were Christians while 28% were Moslems and traditionalist were 6.7%. About the participants' marital status, those who were married were 46.6%, those who were single were 31.7% and those who were cohabiting were 21.7%.

4.2.2 Presentation of Results for Research Question 1

The research question sought to determine the causes of conflict in schools. Table 4.2 presents the results. From Table 4.2 on the issue of incompatible goals, values and beliefs, 120 (85.7%) respondents strongly agreed whereas 18(12.8%) respondents agreed and 2(1.4%) disagreed to the statement. This show that majority of the respondents agreed that incompatible goal, values and beliefs is a cause of conflict.

The first set of analyses examined the major causes of conflicts among the pupils in various schools. All the participants (100%) agreed that they experienced conflict in their institutions.

Table 4.2: Major causes of conflicts

Variable n=140	Strongly agree N(%)	Agree N(%)	Disagree N(%)	Strongly disagree N(%)
Incompatible goals, values, beliefs,	120(85.7)	18(12.8)	2(1.4)	0(0.0)
Distrust among teachers	120(85.7)	20(14.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Misunderstanding among teachers	120(85.7)	20(14.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Limited resources	140(100)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Communication problems	100(71.4)	30(21.4)	10(7.1)	0(0.0)
Interdependent work activities	100(71.4)	35(25.0)	5(3.5)	0(0.0)
Differentiation of activities	40 (28.5)	80(57.1)	20(14.2)	0(0.0)
Lack of common performance standards	140(100)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Disciplinary problems	100(71.4)	30(21.4)	10(7.1)	0(0.0)
Frustration, stress and burnout	120(85.7)	15(10.7)	5(3.5)	0(0.0)
Lack of planning	120(85.7)	20(14.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Jurisdictional ambiguities	80(57.1)	60(42.8)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Individual differences	120(85.7)	20(14.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2022

It is apparent from this table that almost all the participants (85.7%) strongly agree with the statement that distrust among teachers causes conflict among teachers in school environment. Additionally, majority of the participants (85.7%) 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 4.2 that two-thirds of the participants (71.4%) 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 respondent (57.1%) strongly agreed with this statement while 42.9% of them disagreed with it.

4.2.3 Common conflict management practices used by teachers and head teachers

The first set of questions aimed to establish conflict management practices used by teachers and head teachers. The themes identified in these responses are presented in Table 4.3.

Each individual score on each practice is the number of times respondents selected statements representing that practice over other statements. To determine the most highly used conflict management practice, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used.

Table 4.3: Conflict Management Practices

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Competing	140	3.36	1.2123
Collaborating	140	2.53	1.2691
Compromising	140	3.10	1.4285
Avoiding	140	3.43	1.4386
Accommodating	140	3.00	1.4590

N=Number of participants

Source: Field Survey, 2022

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. Items 22 to 27 denote accommodating practice computed in frequency first, and then their respective mean values and standard deviation also computed.

As described in Table 4.3 above, a difference was observed within the mean of each of the five conflict management styles. It can be seen from the table that, avoiding with a mean value of 3.43 and standard deviation of 1.43 was the first prominently used style of interpersonal conflict management in the schools under study. In other words, avoiding as a practice of conflict management is argued to work well when the issue is trivial. Competing was observed to be the second regularly used conflict management practice with a mean score of 3.36 and standard deviation of 1.21. Compromising was the third most common conflict management practice with mean value of 3.10 and standard deviation of 1.43. It is followed by accommodating which has a mean score of 3.00 and standard deviation of 1.4590. The least common conflict management practice used by the participants is collaborating which has a mean score of 2.53 and standard deviation of 1.2691.

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 4.4 shows the proportion of different categories of main challenges encountered during management of conflict.

Table 4.4: Challenges facing conflict management

Variable n=140	Strongly agree N(%)	Agree N(%)	Disagree N(%)	Strongly disagree N(%)
Poor articulation of causes of conflict	120 (85.8)	20 (14.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Poorly stating why conflict needs to be resolved	120 (85.8)	20 (14.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Not addressing issues face-to-face	100 (71.4)	40 (28.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Not sticking to the issues	100 (71.4)	40 (28.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Not taking a time-out	120 (85.8)	20 (14.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Differences in values	140 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lack of cooperation among parties	120 (85.8)	20 (14.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lack of professional skills	140 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Conflict management as being time demanding	100 (71.4)	40 (28.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the table, it can be seen that by far the commonest challenges that all the participants (100%) strongly agreed were common included, “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 120 (85.8%) participants each strongly agreed and 20 (14.2%) 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 (71.4) and 40 (28.6) 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. The Table 4.5 below illustrates an overview of the participants' responses. Regarding the statement on conflict management ensuring strengthening of the bond between employees, all the respondents (100%) strongly agreed with it. Similarly, all the participants (100%) strongly agreed with that statement that conflict management helps in maximization of constructive aspect of conflict.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree with the statement that helps staff to acquire new knowledge and experiences. Majority of the respondents, 120 (85.8%) strongly agreed whereas 20 (14.2%) agreed. When the participants were asked whether conflict management offers an opportunity to verbalize needs, 120 (85.6%) strongly agreed with the statement while 20 (14.2%) agreed with the statement. These statements on the roles played by conflict management “conflict management leads to greater output” and “helping staff to set limits”, 130 (92.87%) participants each strongly agreed and 10 (7.2%) agreed respectively.

Table 4.5: Roles played by Conflict Management

Variable n=140	Strongly agree F	Agree M	Disagree	Strongly disagree SD
Staff acquire new knowledge and experiences	120 (85.8)	20 (14.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Enhancement of organizational learning	120 (85.8)	20 (14.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lead to greater output	100 (71.4)	40 (28.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Strengthening of the bond between employees	140 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Maximization of constructive aspect of conflict	140 (100)	0 (0.00)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Help staff to set limits	130 (92.8)	10 (7.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Opportunity to verbalize needs	120 (85.8)	20 (14.2)	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 early years of teaching. A possible explanation for this might be the participants' inclusion criteria for the study. Education, thus, is very significant characteristic that should not be ignored. This study showed that most of respondents had completed tertiary education. The implication is that this category of teachers can identify conflict management and recognize the 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 are able to 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 to develop skill set and concepts for understanding how to prevent, manage, and resolve competing needs and interest without resorting to violence.

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

4.3.2 Major causes of conflicts amongst teachers and head teachers

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 to be 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 the 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 in order to do their jobs, it creates conflict in their

various schools as well as distrust among teachers. This result could be explained by the fact that most schools have limited resources and each person is competing for available 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 conflicts in schools 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. Also, almost 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 finding provides some support for the conceptual premise that conflict management practices are crucial for the attainment of organizational goals.

4.3.3 Common conflict management practices amongst teachers and head teachers

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 jump into 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. The least common conflict management practice used by the participants is collaborating. These relationships may partly be explained that people deal with conflict in a variety of ways, therefore you need different conflict resolution strategies. This is based on the assumption that people choose how cooperative and how assertive to be in a conflict. It suggests that everyone has preferred ways of responding to conflict, but most of us use all methods under various circumstances. This study produced results which corroborate the findings of Abdul, (2013) which indicated that different secondary schools in Pakistan use 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 to the results that obtained from the use of conflict management styles.

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 despite its significance, still possesses some notable challenges. Conflicts need to be resolved effectively. Comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms there are many challenges associated with conflict management (De Drue & Weingart, 2003; Cronin & Weingart, 2007).

It is not only important to resolve the conflict, but also 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 the emotional wellbeing of people involved 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 are in agreement with Brooks’ (2009). Smith’s findings which showed when a wrong method to handling a problem is espoused, the end results could be catastrophic. This provides some explanation as to why people need to rise above their personal emotions while resolving conflicts and they need to think about the final goals of the project or work in hand.

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

ensuring strengthening of the bond between employees, all the respondents (100%) strongly agreed with it. Similarly, all the participants (100%) strongly agreed with that statement that conflict management helps in maximization of constructive aspect of 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 and set limits for employees.

Rahim (2002) and Cox (2003) found that conflict management plays a critical role of enhancing organizational learning and guarantees a competitive working environment which motivates employees to put in their best as well as tension among employees is reduced to a lower level to ensure employees have sound minds to work effectively and efficiently. An implication of this result finding is that it is important to understand (and apply) various conflict resolution techniques in every organizational setting

CHAPTER FIVE

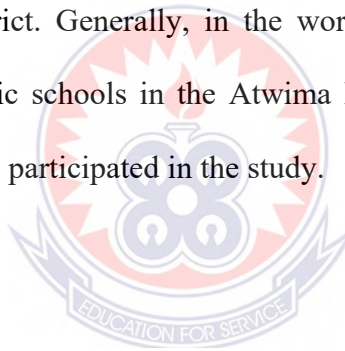
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. 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.

5.1 Summary

This study was to examine conflict management practices in Basic Schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District. Generally, in the workplace, conflicts are common and unavoidable including basic schools in the Atwima Kwanwoma District. In all, a total number of 140 respondents participated in the study.



5.2 Key Findings

The study findings revealed the following:

It was 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.

The commonest used conflict management practice was avoiding followed by competing and compromising.

It was revealed that conflict management leads to greater output and helping staff to set limits for employee.

The most challenges to effective and efficient conflict management practice were poor articulation of the causes of conflict among teachers, differences in values and lack of professional skills in solving conflict.

5.3 Conclusion

Conflicts are inevitable when number of teachers are working together and it is important for teachers to understand clearly what conflict is; why conflict occurs, challenges in resolving conflicts, various methods for resolving conflicts and benefits of conflict management practice. Conflict management 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 management should be given to all teachers and head teachers 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, they should be offered training which covers the strategies of managing conflict in their institutions. This will help them to know how and when to choose a particular strategy that will suit the situation.
3. District Director of Education in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service should 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 module should be taught in various teacher-training institutions across the country to enable teacher-trainees to understand that a positive force behind health conflict leads to personal development and innovation.

5.5 Suggestions for further studies

The study was conducted to investigate the conflict management practices used by teachers and headteachers in the Atwima Kwanwoma District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana so further study should be conducted to investigate the conflict management practices use by teachers and headteachers in other metropolis, municipal and districts of the Ashanti Region of Ghana.



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APPENDIX

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STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographic Data

Gender: Male [] Female []

Age

Respondent's Age: 25years [] 26-29 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

Indicate to what extent you find each of them to be the sources of conflict. 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

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.

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 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. 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. Thus, indicate 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				