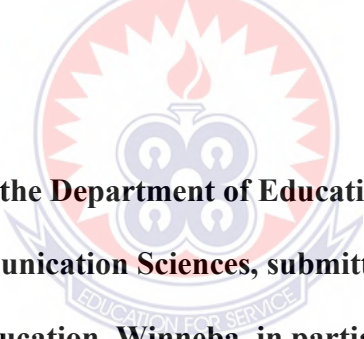


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SOME SELECTED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN
THE PRU DISTRICT OF BRONG AHAFO REGION

JASPER KWASI ANDOH

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central lamp with a flame, set against a background of radiating lines. Below the lamp are three interlocking circles. The emblem is surrounded by a banner with the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE".

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

DECEMBER, 2016

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE

DATE



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this research work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of project report as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME: DR. STEPHEN BAAFI-FRIMPONG

SIGNATURE

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to register my profound gratitude and appreciation to my untiring supervisor Dr. Stephen Baafi-Frimpong, a senior lecturer at the University of Cape Coast for the provision of every needed guidance throughout the research work. His comments coupled with correction and critique of the entire thesis immensely helped in bringing it to its final state. I am indeed thankful and may the Almighty God richly bless and strengthen him. A special thanks equally goes to Mr. Samuel Kwabena Assaw of Abeaseman Senior High School for dedicating his time to read through the work and providing very useful and meaningful suggestions. I am also thankful to Mr. Patrick Opoku of Somanya whose inputs have in no small way helped to bring this work to the present form. May you remain richly blessed.

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DEDICATION

To my dear Wife, Angelina Yaa Ainoo and my three children namely: Adelaide C.

Andoh, Athanasius Adu Andoh and Eugene Boakye Andoh



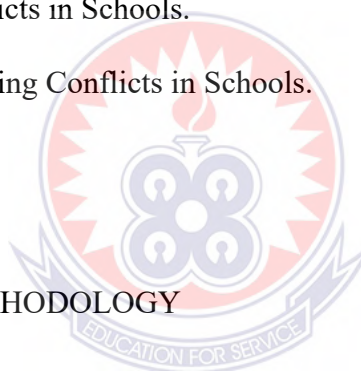
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to look into the issue of conflict management in ten selected Junior High Schools in the Pru District of Brong Ahafo Region. Literature was reviewed to put the matter of conflict management into high perspective. The study researched into kinds of conflict that exist in Junior High Schools in Pru District, Junior High School teachers perception of conflicts in schools, the causes of conflicts in Junior High Schools and how conflicts are managed in Junior High Schools in Pru District. The study used the qualitative framework to gather data and also used the same framework to analyse the data. The accessible population was made up of 50 from the ten selected junior high schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 20 head teachers and teachers from participating schools, three circuit supervisors and two high ranking officers from Pru District Education Office. The instrument used for the study was semi structured interview. The researcher distributed the semi-structured interview and questionnaire after permission have been given by the heads of the various junior high schools. The qualitative data collected was analysed using content analysis. The study found among others that conflict exists in schools and that not all conflicts are bad. The study also revealed that the most prevalent conflicts in Junior High Schools in the Pru District are conflicts between teachers and head teachers. The study recommended that people in management positions like head teachers should find prudent means of solving conflict as and when they arise and that they should do it on time to prevent conflict from escalating. The study also recommended that the capacity of school head teachers should be built to equip them with skills and techniques in handling conflict situations. This according to the study would prevent the many conflicts in schools in the Pru District.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Conflicts exist in any human organization. Conflicts, for a long time have been with humans and all human institutions. Wherever two or more individuals live together as members of the same family, married couples, members of the same church, individuals belonging to the same group or people who work together in organizations and even schools, conflicts exist. The simple fact that two or more individuals live or work together is enough reason for conflicts to emerge. This could be attributed to incompatibility of goals, differences in interpretation of facts, disagreements based on behavioral expectations, differences in family backgrounds and theoretical orientations. All these situations have the potential to breed conflicts in organizations and institutions such as schools. Achua and Lusier (2010) simply indicated that conflict is inevitable because people don't see things exactly the same way.

An organization's success is based on how well it deals with conflicts. This means that it is important to accept the fact that conflicts are part of human organizations and that what is most important is how well and how best people in positions of trust and authority deal with conflict situations when they arise. This work therefore is to look into conflict management in some selected Junior High Schools in the Pru District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This will eventually bring to the fore some of the good strategies of resolving conflicts. When people who are supposed to work together are up in arms, productivity suffers badly. Some way somehow certain issues will crop up to bring about conflicts. As a result, it is important to delve into conflicts to cure the various

perceptions about conflicts and also to help educational authorities especially in the setting of the study to better understand conflicts and how well to manage conflicts when they arise.

Ghana has a laudable policy towards the education of all children. All policy statements and reform directives aim at making sure that all children are educated within the framework of general education. Article 21 clause 1 of the 1992 constitution states that all children shall have the right to equal educational opportunities with a view of achieving the full realization of these rights. This affirms the importance attached to education of children by the Ghanaian society. As a result of these concerns for educational delivery in Ghana, teachers, parents, educational authorities and the general public have all taken keen interest in education in recent times. In line with this, teacher education and teacher capacity building programmes have been designed to ensure that teachers are properly trained and given the necessary professional development to be able to carry out their tasks as teachers effectively and efficiently.

The GES (2014) asserted that, for any education system to flourish and achieve its goals, the role of teachers have to be paramount. The quality of training that teachers receive and the systematic support for their professional growth are what would ensure that education systems reap the full potential of teachers' contribution to quality education. This piece of information from the Ghana Education Service clearly affirms the importance of teachers in the educational delivery system. Schools as institutions are made up of individuals from different background. Afful-Broni (2004) affirmed this

when he asserted that schools as formal organizations are unique entities and have unique character of formal organizations. One of these characters is conflict.

Conflicts are part and parcel of every human organization. Conflicts have the capacity to erode all the gains that an organization can make over time. It is important to mention that how conflicts are managed in institutions like schools is very important. If conflicts are well managed, the organization can function effectively and efficiently as one unit to achieve organizational goals and in the case of schools, societal goals for education. However, if conflicts are not well managed in organizations including schools, the whole organization could crush down. Rodney and Menefee (2010) illustrated that, different people view conflicts differently. Some people believe that conflicts should be avoided. Others view conflicts as natural part of life and that people need to learn how to resolve them. This view particularly posits that when faced with life's conflicts, people need to learn how to handle them in the best way. There are others who perceive conflict as a positive force that is needed for a group of people working together to perform effectively. This group of people looks at conflict as beneficial and that it keeps groups changing and innovative.

These are some of the reasons that make the researcher more interested in investigating conflict management in some selected Junior High Schools in Pru District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. At the Junior High School level, adolescents are prepared for secondary and vocational education. This means that, this point is the foundation of the human resource development of our country. As a result of this, whatever happens at that level affects corporate bodies, entrepreneurs and the society at

large. To this end, the researcher has taken it upon himself to delve into the matter of conflict management at this level. The end product would be effective and efficient management of conflicts. To all intents and purposes, conflicts would be with schools no matter what and so it is important to look out there for the most effective ways of managing them when they do arise. This will prevent the negative consequences of unresolved or improperly resolved conflicts. This work therefore seeks to work with teachers, headteachers, circuit supervisors and other educational workers to delve into the matter of conflict management.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Conflicts are inevitable in all human institutions. If there is any group of people who agree all the time on issues that crop up, then there is something wrong with that group. It is not normal for a group of people to agree on issues all the time. There would surely be disagreements here and there. Glickman, Gordon and Jovita (2010) in agreement with this submission posited that, the key to a productive group therefore is the way ongoing conflicts are resolved. This means that, teachers as professionals may see things differently. When these differences arise it is equally important to manage such differences in tactful manner to ensure that both parties come to a common ground to make the group remain one solid unit. Unfortunately it appears there is no known research on conflict management in schools in the setting of the study.

It is to fill the gap in research that the researcher sought to carry out the study on conflict management in some selected Junior High Schools in the Pru Districts of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work is to investigate the issue of conflict management in some selected Junior High Schools in the Pru District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This would be done qualitatively with the appropriate research tools and techniques to enable the researcher delve deep into the matter of conflict management in the setting of the study to come up with tangible suggestions and recommendations for effective and efficient management of conflict in the setting of the study. This will foster peaceful co – existence among teachers to enable them work effectively for the transformation of the Ghanaian society through proper education of the Ghanaian child. In the end, poverty would have been reduced as a result of the proper education of the Ghanaian child. This is in line with the position of UNICEF (1999) when it asserted that, reducing poverty starts with children. Helping children reach their full potential means investing in the progress of humanity. The quality of care children are given in the early years of their lives is very important in determining their future, and the future of their nations. Again, children constitute a large percentage of the world’s poor so investing in children means achieving development goals faster. This piece of information from UNICEF indicates that educating children to realize their full potentials is very important. The question then is, if the teachers who are to the lead in providing this education are not at peace how can they effectively and efficiently carry out this all important role. This is where conflict management in schools is very important.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

Specifically the study seeks to:

1. Find out the kinds of conflicts that exist in J.H.S. in the Pru District
2. Find out J.H.S. teacher's perception of conflicts in schools in the Pru District.
3. Find out the possible causes of conflicts in J.H.S. in the Pru District.
4. Find out how conflicts are managed in J.H.S. in the Pru District.

1.5 Research Questions

The research was guided by the following questions:

1. What kinds of conflicts exist in J.H.S. in the Pru District?
2. What is J.H.S. teachers' perception of conflicts in schools in the Pru Districts?
3. What are the causes of conflicts in J.H.S.'s in the Pru District?
4. How are conflicts managed in J.H.S. in the Pru District?

1.6 The Significance of the Study

Conflict management at the Junior High School level require unique qualities because of the nature of the early adolescent students. Teachers and educational workers who deal with these young adolescents would therefore have to be very well equipped to be able to comfortably manage these children effectively. Apart from this, the teachers themselves need to be aware of conflicts and how to deal with it at their level as teachers to enable them work together effectively.

This work will therefore look into conflict and conflict management to come up with suggestions and recommendations for the effective and efficient management of

conflicts in basic schools in the Pru District in particular and Ghana as a whole. This will equip teachers, head teachers, circuit supervisors and educational authorities with the requisite competencies, capabilities and techniques in handling conflict situations when they do arise. Glickman et al. (2010) asserted that, conflict if not handled correctly, can degenerate into adversarial and harmful relations. They contended that, it is not conflict that is bad but rather the way the leader deals with it that determines its value. This affirms the importance of conflict management. How well or otherwise a conflict would be managed will determine whether the group can continue to work together as one unit or disintegrate to the detriment of the whole group.

The study is very significant because it will erase the perception that conflicts are always bad. Any time conflict is mentioned, the first thought that comes to a lot of people is the negativity of it. This may also stem from the fact that because leaders most often fail to manage conflicts effectively, people always see the negative sides of conflicts and so become oblivious of the fact that there may be some positives associated with conflicts. The other side of conflict is that something is wrong somewhere and this will help leaders to look out there for the missing link and try to fix it. This implies that conflicts in themselves are not that bad. Robbins and Judge (2010) affirmed this when they indicated that another perspective proposes not only that conflict can be a positive force in a group but that some conflicts are absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively. This makes this study very significant because the traditional notion of conflict is that conflict is very ugly and that everything possible should be done to avoid it. However, Robbins and Judge (2010) are trying to convince us that some forms of conflicts are needed for effective performance of the group. It is therefore expected that

the findings of this research would assist policy makers, teacher training institutions and educational authorities to take the issue of conflict management seriously in our schools. This will serve as a means to influence the practice of teaching and learning that ultimately will help in improving academic performance in schools as a result of the harmonious coexistence of the members of the school community. It will have a positive impact on performance and output which has become a thorny issue in the Ghanaian society in recent times.

1.7 Limitations of the study

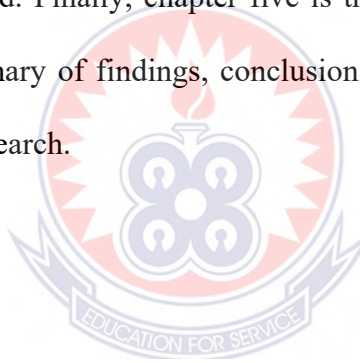
Conducting the interview was very challenging regarding time availability on the part of respondents notwithstanding prior appointment booked with them. Due to limited time and financial resources at my disposal, I adopted cross-sectional survey approach to the study instead of studying the sampled population over a period of time. Generalization of the findings therefore **may** be done with caution.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The focus of the study which is to look into conflict management is very sensitive. As a result the researcher selected the Pru District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana where he can easily access information from the research. This is because the researcher is a worker in the District. The study is also confined to J.H.S.'s in the Pru District. The study is also restricted to finding out the kinds of conflicts that exist, teachers' perception of conflicts, the causes of conflicts and how conflicts are managed in the district

1.8 Organization of the Study

The organization of this work is made up of five chapters. Chapter one is the general introduction of the study. It gives the overview of the study. The second section, which is chapter two also deals with the theoretical and empirical review of relevant literature. It takes into accounts the definitions of conflicts, perceptions of conflicts and strategies for the management and resolution of conflicts. This chapter is one of the most important pillars on which the study rests. Chapter three deals with research methodology which consists of research design and instruments for data collection. Chapter four focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the study. The findings are then discussed. Finally, chapter five is the concluding chapter of the study which presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations as well as suggestions for further research.

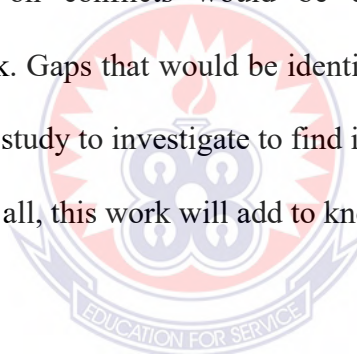


CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to review relevant related literature. It considers both theoretical and empirical studies. Some of the issues discussed are: what is conflict, what are the causes of conflicts, conflict management strategies and conclusion. At the end of it all, the review will point out the inside out of conflicts and how conflicts can be managed effectively and efficiently for the general good of all the members of the group and to ensure the sustenance and the continuous existence of the group. In this direction, varied related literature on conflicts would be critically looked at to form the underpinnings of this work. Gaps that would be identified in the related literature will be a matter of interest for the study to investigate to find information that will assist in filling such gaps. At the end of it all, this work will add to knowledge in the area of conflict.



2.1 What is Conflict?

Conflicts are particular disagreements that occur between two or more members of a group at a particular time. According to Robbins and Judge (2010) there has been no shortage of definitions of conflict, but common to all is the idea that conflict is a perception. If no one is aware of a conflict, then it is generally agreed no conflict exists. Also needed to begin the conflict process are opposition or incompatibility and some form of interaction. This means that there are always two or more parties involved in most conflicts and conflict situations. Conflict can therefore be defined as the process that

begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about. In many instances an employee will avoid actual or perceived conflict until the situation seems to be unmanageable. This definition of conflict affirms that conflict could clearly be grounded on perception. Perception is also said to be more powerful than truth and reality. The definition also describes the point in on-going activity when an interaction crosses over to become an interparty conflict. It encompasses a wide range of conflicts people experience in organizations which emerge as a result of incompatibility of goals, differences in interpretation of facts and disagreements based on behavioral expectations. It stretches from overt and violent acts to subtle forms of disagreements. Conflicts therefore exist whenever people are in disagreement and opposition. It also occurs when there is a disagreement over ideas. Robbins and Judge (2010).

Rodney and Menefee (2010) posited in their explanation of conflict that, conflicts will arise in nearly all aspects of one's life. There can be conflict on the job with a superior, a coworker, a subordinate, a customer, or someone else in the business environment. This explanation of conflicts indicates that conflicts cut across and transcends all facets of human life. Kusi (2012), Meeks, Heit and Page (1996) in their contribution to the definition of conflicts indicated that, conflict is a natural disagreement resulting from individuals or groups that differ in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs and choices. They contend that conflict is a natural event that forms part of nearly every working day. It starts off as nothing more than highly determined action to achieve preferred outcome. They indicated that conflict in itself need not be a problem but rather the hostility that is usually seen as the harmful aspect of conflict. They continued to

explain that, the existence of conflict is very prevalent in every human institution. Many view the existence of conflict on mere perception. But whether one believes or not conflict is real and available in every human institution. There is conflict in the church, marriage, governance and every other human institution that exists today. This definition of conflict corroborates with the definition of conflict by Rodney and Menefee (2010). This also means that conflict can thrive in schools. Brandt (1987) agreed with this when he asserted that a critical moment of truth is when two teachers disagree strongly with each other and argue. This view affirms that conflicts can thrive in schools. This is quite obvious because the school community is made up of individuals with different kinds of motives, drives, values and attitudes. All these have the tendencies and capacities to breed conflict in schools.

Conflict according to Jones (2006) is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests between people working together. It is the process that begins when an individual or a group's feelings negatively affect another individual or group. Jones (2006) contends that conflict is a natural event that occurs on daily basis, especially in educational organizations. He continued to explain that conflicts in educational setting can take several forms. Some of these are goal conflict, cognitive conflict, affective conflict and behavioral conflict. This shows the complex nature of conflicts. It means that conflicts can take several forms and dimensions. Owens (1987) looked at conflict as a contest of opposing forces of powers. That is to say a struggle to resist or overcome. According to Owens (1987), a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. He contends that there are two most important things to any conflict. These are divergent views and incompatibility of those views. Incompatibility according

to Owens (1987) produces a dilemma. Conflict then becomes the pursuit of the incompatible or seemingly incompatible goals, such that gains to one side come out at the expense of the other. Johns (1988) in agreement with Owens (1987) definition stated that conflict is a process of antagonism that occurs when one person or organizational subunit frustrates the goal attainment of another. Conflict then involves the joint occurrence of antagonism and blocked goals. Antagonism according to Johns (1988) may involve both attitudes and behaviors. With regard to the attitudes, the conflicting parties may develop a dislike for each other, see each other as unreasonable, and develop negative stereotypes of their opposites. With regard to the behaviors, the opposing parties may resort to name calling, sabotage, or even physical aggression. Frustrated goals often mean that mutual assistance between the conflicting parties is low. Instead of aiding each other in goal attainment, each party views its loss as the other's gain. This is to say that conflict is characterized by high antagonism and low mutual assistance. This may be the worse conflict situation which may not be good for the growth and survival of the group.

Hellriegel (1992) explain that conflict refers to any situation in which there are incompatible goals, thoughts, or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition. Attitudes and conflict styles play an important role in determining whether conflict will lead to destructive or mutually beneficial outcomes. There are many life choices in the life of any normal human being. Costley and Todd (1987) refer to this situation as conflict. They explain that conflict is the inability to choose between two or more alternatives. Bittel (1985) on his part considered conflicts as the disruptive clash of interests, objective, or responsibilities between individuals and groups, or between groups. The essence of conflict is disagreement or incompatibility. Bittel (1985) contends

that in the real world of educative organizations, a significant fact of life is the presence of conflict in many forms and at various levels of strength. Conflict is pervasive in all human experience. It can occur even within a single individual which may induce individuals to make comments like: “How can you behave so foolishly?” This is normal everyday occurrence.

Bittel (1985) argues that it is actually human to quarrel and complain and that where many people must work together, conflict is inevitable. Accordingly, a small amount of conflict can be a good thing. It is when there is no end of quarrelling and confrontation that group leaders should begin to worry about how good a job they are doing. Kossen (1991) on his part emphasized that whenever two or more persons have some mutual interest, an organization exists. He continued to argue that whenever an organization exists, there is the potential for conflict resulting from a litany of reasons. Conflict is not necessarily inevitable in every situation, but with the numerous differences among individuals, both in how they perceive and in the strength of their needs, conflicts among human beings are likely to be common in organizations. Considerable discord can also stem from difficulties in communication. Differences in the ways organizational members interpret words frequently lead to misunderstandings. It is evident from the definition of conflicts that conflicts are not entirely bad but what is important is its management. It is something we all face when working with others. Conflicts sometimes lead to more creativity and better ideas. It is important to deal with conflict in a constructive way.

2.2 Views of Conflict

There are various views of conflict. This section of the literature review attempts to look into some of these views. These views form the basis for the various ways through which different individuals look at conflict. Some of these views are; the traditional view of conflict, the interactionist view and managed conflict view as posited by Robbins and Judge (2010).

2.2.1 The Traditional View of Conflict

The early approach to conflict assumed all conflict was bad and to be avoided. It was viewed negatively and discussed with such terms as violence, destruction and irrationality to reinforce its negative connotation. Individuals who hold this view believe conflict is a dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, lack of openness and trust between people, and the failure of managers to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their employees. This view of conflict offers a simple approach to looking at the behavior of people who create conflict. The traditional view of conflict maintains that attention should be focused on the causes of conflict and to correct the malfunctions to improve group and organizational performance. This view was consistent with attitudes about group behavior that prevailed in the 1930s and 1940s. This view, however, fell out of favour for a long time as researchers came to realize that some level of conflict was inevitable. This prompted attention for more research and probe into conflict, Robbins and Judge (2010).

2.2.2 The Interactionist View of Conflict

The interactionist view of conflict encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, and cooperative group is prone to becoming static, apathetic, and unresponsive to needs for change and innovation. This view asserts that a minimal level of conflict can help keep a group viable, self critical and creative. All these are very important for the growth and the continuous existence of the group. The interactionist view does not propose that all conflicts are good. However, functional conflict supports the goals of the group and improves its performance and is therefore a constructive form of conflict. A conflict that hinders group performance is a destructive or dysfunctional conflict. What therefore differentiates functional from dysfunctional conflict is task, relationship and process.

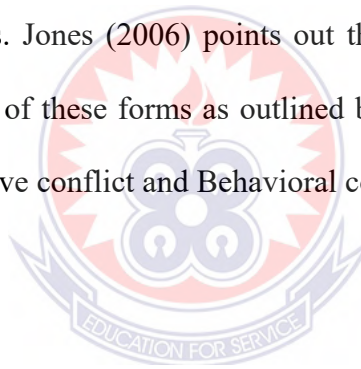
2.2.3 The Managed Conflict View

According to Robbins and Judge (2010) long term studies show that all conflicts reduce trust, respect and cohesion in groups, which reduces the long term viability of conflicts. This according to Robbins & Judge (2010) brings to bear the problems inherent in encouraging conflicts. There are some specific cases in which conflicts can be beneficial however, workplace conflicts are not productive. They take time away from job tasks. Not only that hurt feelings and anger often linger after conflict appear to be over. People seldom can wall off their feelings into neat categories of task or relationship disagreements. Conflicts in this sense produce stress which may lead people to become more close minded and adversarial. In light of these, researchers have started to focus more on managing the whole context in which conflicts occur. This view suggests that

the negative effects of conflicts can be minimized by focusing on preparing people for conflicts, developing resolution strategies and facilitating open discussions. This perspective of conflict accepts that conflict is probably inevitable in most organizations. It therefore focuses more on productive conflict resolution. This view is all about finding constructive methods for resolving conflicts productively so that their disruptive tendencies can be minimized.

2.3 Forms of Conflict

Many writers in the field of educational leadership and management highlight various forms of conflicts. Jones (2006) points out that conflicts in educational setting take various forms. Some of these forms as outlined by Jones (2006) are: Goal conflict, Cognitive conflict, Affective conflict and Behavioral conflict.



2.3.1 Goal Conflict

Goal conflict emerges when an individual or a group of people seeks a different outcome from others. The desired end states or preferred outcomes appear to be incompatible. What one hopes to achieve within the group is different from what the other party hopes to achieve. This is enough to bring about disagreements and even confrontations. This form of conflict relates to the content and goals of the work. It normally creates uncertainty about task roles, increase the time to complete tasks and lead members working at cross-purposes.

2.3.2 Cognitive Conflict

There are times individuals working together may hold ideas or even perceptions that are not in line with what other members of the group hold. Ideas and thoughts are perceived as incompatible. This is enough to bring about uneasiness among the members of the group. Most often this situation result in heated arguments with the least provocation.

2.3.3 Affective Conflict

Affective conflict is the situation where an individual or groups' emotions is incompatible with that of the other party. Feelings or emotions here are highly incompatible. This form of conflict focuses on interpersonal relationships. The friction and interpersonal hostilities inherent in affective conflicts increase personality clashes and decrease mutual understanding which hinders the completion of organizational tasks.

2.3.4 Behavioral Conflict

This form of conflict occurs when an individual or group behaves in a way that other individuals or members of the group find unacceptable. This may be as a result of differences in orientations and even the culture of the individuals in question. Something may be acceptable in one society but that same thing may not be acceptable in another culture. So if individuals from such opposing cultures find themselves in any particular group, they may have misunderstandings and disagreements.

2.4 Causes of Conflicts

According to Achua and Lussier (2010) all human relations rest on a psychological contract. This contract is the unwritten implicit expectations of each party in a relationship. At work, there is a set of expectations of what the employee will contribute to the organization. This may take the form of effort, time and skill. There is also a set of expectations the employer is expected to contribute. This may also take the form of compensation and job satisfaction. As long as both parties fulfill their part of the contract there will be mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. However, the moment this contract is broken, then the employer and the employee may have disagreements and misunderstandings. Achua and Lussier (2010) contended that the psychological contract can be broken on two major grounds. The first ground is when one party fails to make explicit his or her own expectations and fail to inquire into the expectations of the other party. The second reason is when one party assumes that the other party has the same expectations that the other party hold. This means that so long as people meet our expectations, everything is fine, when they don't meet our expectations we are in conflict. It is therefore important to share information and negotiate expectations assertively. This is quite simple, how can you expect others to meet your expectations when they do not know what these expectations are?

This idea from Achua and Lussier (2010) lay the foundation for the various causes of conflicts in organizations and among groups and group members for that matter. Some of these causes according to Owens (1987) are competition for scarce resources and goal divergence. Others are differences in power, status and culture, poor communication, governmental controls and frustration.

2.4.1 Competition for Scarce Resources

Owens (1987) contends that when an organization's resources are insufficient to meet the requirements of the subunits to do their work, there is competition for scarce resources. This can occur in areas like budget allocations, assigned teaching positions, space, material, intellectual, economic and facilities. Since resources are not enough to go round equally, hard decisions must be made about who will have what, how much and when. In such allocation it is hard to satisfy all factions. Quarrels among various units of the organization therefore arise. When the various units compete for these resources in an unhealthy manner, disagreements and misunderstandings may occur. This according to Owens (1987) is a recipe for conflict to thrive among the competing factions especially where one party tries all means to get the chunk of the resources ahead of the other party at all cost. The other party may also try to contest for the same resources. This situation becomes a fertile ground for conflicts to thrive between the members of the group. In a situation like this, it is important for a formula for sharing resources to be devised in such a way that it answers the concerns of the parties involved in the conflict.

2.4.2 Goal Divergence

Owens (1987) explained that when two parties in an organization must work together but cannot agree on how to do so, the cause of the conflict is goal divergence. What one party seeks to achieve and how to achieve it is different from what the other party seeks to achieve. This leads to the situation where the two parties would spend quality time over the process and procedures for achieving organizational goals instead of getting the job done. This will surely lead to disagreement by the members of the

organization. When this happens, organizational tasks would not be accomplished and productivity suffers badly.

2.4.3 Differences in Power, Status and Culture

Conflict can erupt when parties differ significantly in power, status or culture. If dependence is not mutual, but one way, the potential for conflict increases. If one party needs the collaboration of another party to accomplish its goals, but the second party does not need the first party's assistance, antagonism may develop. For instance, in school learning, teachers seem to have a total power when it comes to conducting students' examinations, marking and grading. In this case students appear to be at the total mercy of teachers and when students' expectations fail, antagonism develops. Johns (1988) affirmed that status differences provide little impetus for conflict when those of lower status are dependent upon those of higher status. This is the way organizations are supposed to work, and most members are socialized to expect it. However, because of the work, there are occasions when those with technically lower status find themselves giving orders to, or controlling the tasks of, higher status persons. This reversal of usual lines of influence is a very good breeding ground for conflict to exist. Mankoe (2007) posited that the culture of an organization such as a school consists of shared beliefs, values, and assumptions within the school. When two or more different culture exists in values and assumptions, conflict may develop. For example, in an established school, old teachers may have strong beliefs in maintaining traditional practices in staff and student discipline, relationship with the community and its strong links with the founding fathers. New and young teachers may, however, be interested in the new syllabuses, computer

programmes and the link with the outside world through the internet. These are clearly two different types of cultures and their adherents are most likely to clash.

2.4.4 Poor Communication

To some extent all conflict is the product of poor communication. When team members' understanding of issues is unclear they often feel insecure and that can lead to conflict. Regular, but short, team briefings can help to keep the team informed of priorities, dispel rumours and muffle the grapevine. Free flow and movement of information helps to create a more open culture.

2.4.5 Governmental Controls

When the government through its ministries for instance introduces rules and regulations for subsidiary agencies conflicts may arise. For example, the situation where the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education comes up with ceiling for fees to be charged by schools, staff quotas and the likes. Some schools may find this problematic operating effectively on these rules. Conflicts in various forms therefore arise.

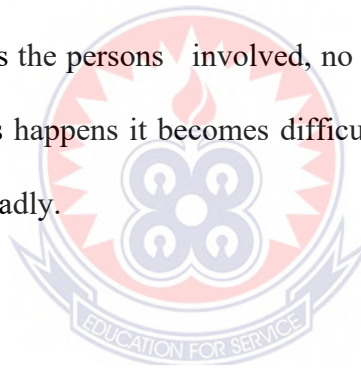
2.4.6 Frustrations

When one party feels frustrated, cheated or looked down upon by another party, conflicts may arise. Denial of request on regular basis, diminishment of status and even insults can put the party who suffered these circumstances to rise up and say enough is

enough. When this happens the result is a fall out. Some of these could even be violent. That is when the frustrated party cannot take it any longer.

2.4.7 Personal Antagonism

Personality clashes and antagonism towards an individual most often result in disagreements. According to Austin Gameh a renowned Ghanaian labour expert, the most difficult conflict to deal with in any organization and work environment is conflict that boarder on personalities. He contends that parties involved in such conflicts hardly compromise and that makes it very difficult to deal with. It is also the case that because the object of the conflict is the persons involved, no party will be prepared to deal with the other party. When this happens it becomes difficult for the parties to work together. This affects productivity badly.



2.5 Levels of Conflict

Mankoe (2007) identified four main levels of conflict within organizations. These are: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup conflicts.

2.5.1 Intrapersonal Conflict

Intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual and can involve some form of goal or cognitive conflict. Intrapersonal conflict occurs when an individual's behavior will result in both positive and negative outcomes. The effect of the behavior of the individual has incompatible outcomes. The positive and negative consequences of the

alternative courses of action are perceived as roughly equal. Intrapersonal conflicts could be seen in three broad areas. The approach – approach conflict, avoidance – avoidance conflict and approach – avoidance conflict. The approach – approach conflict is the situation where an individual must choose between two courses of action that have positive outcomes. The avoidance – avoidance conflict is the conflict in which an individual must choose among two or more alternatives that have negative outcomes. Approach – avoidance conflict according to Mankoe (2007) is the situation in which an individual must decide whether to do something that has both positive and negative outcomes. The individual is attracted to something and at the same time want to avoid it. This may occur when the goal is positive but the activity required to ensure the realization of this goal has negative characteristics.

2.5.2 Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflict involves two or more persons or groups who perceive themselves as being in opposition to each other over preferred outcomes, values and attitudes. Interpersonal conflicts result from role conflict or role ambiguity. When the individual parties involved do not see eye to eye with each other. When they cannot agree on common and simple issues.

2.5.3 Intragroup Conflict

Intragroup conflicts refer to clashes, misunderstandings and disagreements among some or all of a group's members. This often affects the group's success and effectiveness. The members of the group may continually be up in arms over issues concerning the group. The members of the group may not be able to reach agreement on issues concerning the group. This ultimately affects group task and effectiveness.

2.5.4 Intergroup Conflict

Intergroup conflicts refer to opposition, clashes, misunderstandings and disagreements that arise between two or more groups. This type of conflict normally occurs in union-management relations. Such conflicts may be highly intense and costly to the groups involved. Intergroup conflicts can be seen in three main areas. These are: vertical conflict, horizontal conflict and line-staff conflict. Vertical conflict refers to clashes and disagreements between levels in an organization. When superiors attempt to control subordinates too tightly and subordinates resist, the result is vertical conflict. Horizontal conflicts refer to oppositions between groups of employees at the same hierarchical levels in an organization. This normally occurs when each department in an organization strives only for its own goals disregarding the effects on other departments. This kind of conflict is fueled by contrasting attitudes of employees in different department. Line-staff conflict refers to clashes over authority relationships. Most organizations have sub-units for effective management of the organization. Each sub-unit has a sub-head. These sub-heads are responsible for some processes that are part of the organization's total function. The moment one sub-unit perceives that another sub-unit is

about to negatively influence something that is of interest to the first sub-unit line-staff conflict will arise.

2.6 Effects of Conflicts

Achua and Lussier (2010) asserted that conflict may be functional as well as dysfunctional for the individual and the organization. They contended that conflicts may have their roots either within the individual or in the context of the organization. Conflicts in any organization can be a positive force. The resolution of conflicts leads to constructive problem solving. The need to resolve conflict can cause people to search for new ways of doing things. The search for ways to resolve conflict may lead to innovation and change and also make changes more acceptable.

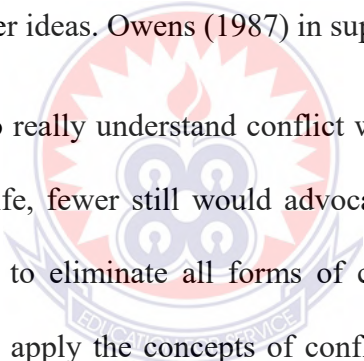
It is also important to mention that unresolved and persistent conflicts can negatively affect the goals of the group or the individuals involved.

2.6.1 Functional Effects of Conflicts

Hellriegel (1992) opined that people in an organization may come to quite different conclusions on what is fair and ethical in different situations. The occurrence of conflicts encourage people to work out their differences and participate in developing an ethical and fair organization and deal directly with injustices. Hellriegel indicated that conflict in an organization can be a positive force. Hellriegel further argued that the search for ways to resolve conflict may not only lead to innovation and change, but it may make changes more acceptable. Jones (2006) contended that conflict may be beneficial to performance of groups and organizations, and that avoiding and suppressing conflict reduces individual creativity, quality of decision making in groups and

communication work and groups. Jones argued that conflict builds self confidence, helps to develop assertive principles, improve status and respect. Jones added that conflict encourage recognition, helps to clear the air and adoption of more effective controls.

Hellriegel (1992) also noted that conflict can produce the following positive consequences: make productivity go up, establishment of better relationship, increased sensitivity to others, development of better communication methods and constructive organizational change. These positive and functional effects of conflict outlined by Jones (2006) and Hellriegel (1992) corroborates the position of Rodney and Menefee (2010) when they indicated that conflict is not always bad and that conflict can sometimes lead to more creativity and better ideas. Owens (1987) in support of this view affirmed that:

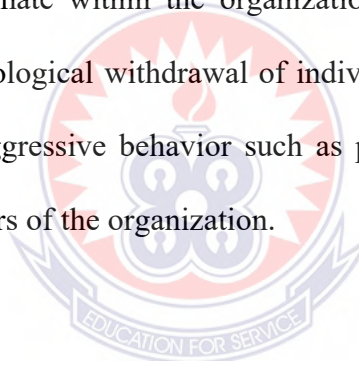


Although few who really understand conflict would advocate its deliberate use in organizational life, fewer still would advocate its elimination or avoidance. Instead of seeking to eliminate all forms of conflict in an organization, it is rather beneficial to apply the concepts of conflict management to minimize its destructive potential and make it as productive, creative, and useful as possible.

This piece of information from Owens (1987) clearly indicates that conflicts have elements of positives in them when they are very well managed. However if conflicts are not properly managed it will result in negative outcomes to make conflicts look very bad.

2.6.2 Negative Effects of Conflicts

According to Robbins and Judge (2010), the early approach to conflict assumed all conflict was bad and to be avoided. It was viewed negatively and discussed with such terms as violence, destruction and irrationality to reinforce its negative connotation. Owens (1987) affirmed this when he observed that frequent and powerful conflicts can have devastating impact upon the behavior of people in organizations. He argued that conflicts often develop into hostility which cause people to withdraw physically and psychologically. The negative effects of conflicts among others are: stress and anxiety which produce negative interpersonal attitudes and perceptions, physical injury which may cause the social climate within the organization to deteriorate, hostilities which cause physical and psychological withdrawal of individual members of the organization and outright hostile or aggressive behavior such as property damage and even loss of lives of individual members of the organization.



2.7 Conflict Resolution

According to Achua and Lussier (2010), conflict is inevitable because people do not see things exactly the same way. An organization's success is how well it deals with conflicts. Mankoe (2007) asserted that managing conflict means finding appropriate strategies to resolve it. He argued that if the occurrence of conflict is an everyday issue, then its management should be a daily affair too. Managing conflicts is thus a common activity in organizations perhaps, because of the frequent prevalence of conflicts in all human institutions. Mankoe (2007) argued that effective conflict management involves more than specific techniques. The ability to understand and correctly diagnose conflict is

the first step in managing it. Hellriegel (1992) maintained that conflict management consists of diagnostic processes, interpersonal styles, negotiating strategies and structural interventions that are designed to avoid unnecessary conflicts, reduce or resolve excessive conflicts, or even increase insufficient conflict. Achua and Lussier (2010) opined that conflict management skills can be developed with appropriate training. They argued that when confronted with conflict situations, there are five conflict management styles to choose from. These five styles according to Achua and Lussier are based on two dimensions of concern. These are the concern for others' needs and concern for your own needs. These concerns result in three types of behavior. These are: a low concern for your own needs and a high concern for others' needs result in passive behavior, a high concern for your own needs and a low concern for others' needs results in aggressive behavior and a moderate or high concern for your own needs and others' needs result in assertive behavior. It is evident from the foregoing discussion that each conflict style of behavior results in a different combination of win – lose situations.

The conflict style that one tends to use the most is based on ones personality and leadership style. There is no one best conflict management style for all situations. Achua and Lussier (2010), identified five strategies for managing and resolving conflicts. These are: Avoiding conflict style, Accommodating conflict style, Forcing conflict style, Negotiating conflict style and Collaborating conflict style.

2.7.1 Avoiding Conflict Style

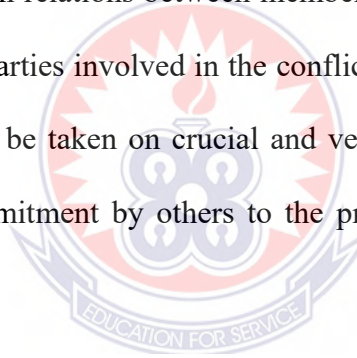
The avoiding conflict strategy attempts to passively ignore the conflict rather than resolve it. This strategy of conflict resolution is unassertive and uncooperative. It intends to make the conflict die a natural death. Individuals avoid conflict by refusing to take a stance, or escape conflict by mentally withdrawing and physically leaving. An individual may recognize that a conflict exists and want to suppress it. A lose-lose situation is therefore created by this strategy because the substance of the conflict is not resolved. This strategy may maintain relationships that would be hurt through conflict resolution. The other side of the avoiding strategy of conflict management and resolution is that the precipitating factors of the conflict are not resolved. The avoiding style is appropriate to use when the conflict is trivial or there is no adequate time to resolve the conflict.

2.7.2 Accommodating Conflict Style

This strategy of conflict resolution tries to resolve the conflict by passively giving in to the other party. The accommodating strategy is unassertive but cooperative. This style of conflict management attempts to satisfy the one party, neglecting the needs of the other party. This strategy creates a win-lose situation. The accommodating strategy of conflict settlement maintains relationships by doing things the other party's way. The other side of the strategy is that giving in may be counterproductive. The accommodating person may have a better solution. This style is normally used when dealing with an autocratic leader. It is also appropriate when the accommodating party enjoys being a follower or is a follower. It is also important to note that the accommodation strategy best suits the situation where maintaining the relationship outweighs all other considerations.

2.7.3 The Forcing Conflict Style

The forcing conflict style resolves conflict by using aggressive behavior. With this strategy, the individual does whatever it takes to get his or her own way. The strategy uses whatever it takes to satisfy the individuals own needs at the expense of the others. Threats, authority, intimidation are the common techniques often employed by this style of dealing with conflicts. This strategy creates a win-lose situation. This style is functional when the forcer is correct, rather than less effective compromised decisions. However, the overuse or the abuse of this strategy results in hostilities and resentment which may not auger well for the attainment of organizational goals. Its frequent use may also not foster good human relations between members of the group especially when the leader and followers are parties involved in the conflict. This style is very effective when an unpopular action must be taken on crucial and very important issues. It is also very applicable when the commitment by others to the proposed action is not crucial to its implementation.



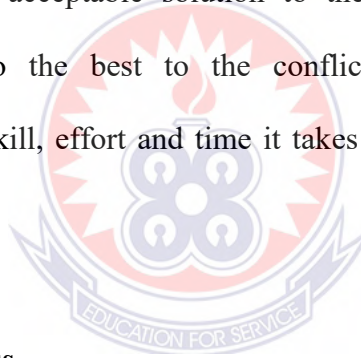
2.7.4 The Negotiating Conflict Style

This style attempts to resolve the conflict through assertive, give-and-take concessions. It is moderate in assertiveness and cooperation. Compromise is what is mostly used when using this style of conflict resolution. It is normally based on secret information. Conflict under this style is resolved relatively quicker and working relationships are also maintained. The negotiating strategy may however lead to counterproductive results. Excessive use of this strategy leads to people asking for much more than they deserve. This is commonly used in labour collective bargaining. It is very

applicable when dealing with complex and critical issues which do not have simple and clear solution.

2.7.5 The Collaborating Conflict Style

The collaboration conflict style attempts to jointly resolve the conflict with the best solution accepted by all parties involved in the conflict. This style of conflict management is very assertive and cooperative. It attempts to find the best solution to the conflict which is satisfactory to all the parties. It is normally based on open and honest communication. This style truly creates a win – win situation. The two parties work together to arrive at an acceptable solution to the situation. Collaboration conflict resolution style leads to the best to the conflict using assertive behavior. The disadvantage is that the skill, effort and time it takes to resolve the conflict are usually greater and longer.



2.7.6 The Conflict Process

Robbins and Judge (2010) identified five stages of conflict process. These stages according to them are: potential opposition or incompatibility, cognition and personalization, intentions, behavior and outcomes. The first step in the conflict process is the appearance of conditions that create opportunities for conflict to arise. These conditions need not directly lead to conflict, but one of these conditions is necessary if conflict is to surface. These conditions according to Robbins and Judge are categorized into communication, structure and personal variables. Word connotations, jargon, insufficient exchange of information, and noise in the communication channel are all

barriers to communication and potential antecedent conditions to conflict. It is also important to mention that the potential for conflict increases when either too little or too much communication takes place. If the conditions cited at the potential opposition or incompatibility stage negatively affect something one party cares about, then the potential for opposition or incompatibility becomes actualized in the cognition and personalization stage. It is at this stage that conflict issues tend to be defined. This is the point when the parties involved in the conflict decide what the conflict is about. A lot of conflicts are escalated simply because one party attributes the wrong intentions to the other. Intentions intervene between people's perceptions and emotions and their overt behavior. They are decisions to act in a given way. This marks the third stage in the conflict process. The fourth stage of the conflict process is behavior. At this stage the conflict becomes visible. This stage includes the statements, actions, and reactions made by the individuals involved in the conflict, usually as overt attempts to implement their own intentions. Conflict intensities escalate as they move upward along the continuum until they become highly destructive. This then leads us to the management of conflict to avoid the excesses or spillovers. The final stage of the conflict process is the outcome stage. At this stage, the action-reaction discourse between the conflicting parties results in consequences. These consequences may be functional if the conflict improves the group's performance. The outcome is dysfunctional if it hinders the performance of the group and individual members of the group.

2.8 Conflicts in Schools

Afful-Broni (2004) maintains that schools are unique and complex entities. These unique entities are made up of people from various backgrounds, beliefs and orientations. This means that it is not possible for them to see things the same way. This clearly indicates that there will surely be conflicts in schools. In recent times the issue of school worship in public schools generated a very huge disagreement between Muslims and Christians in Ghana. This affirms that schools have some forms of conflict.

2.8.1 Conflicts in Basic Schools?

A critical moment of truth in a group is when two teachers disagree strongly with each other and argue (Brandt, 1987). This piece of information from Brandt (1987) indicates that yes there are conflicts in our Basic Schools. This may stem from the fact that Basic Schools are made up of various individuals; young people and adults alike. It is important to mention that wherever two or more individuals coexist to work together they may have disagreements, misunderstandings and even tension. It is therefore practically impossible for all these groups of people in our Basic Schools to see things the same way. Even two adults may not see things the same way as posited by Brandt (1987). This means that conflicts are inevitable in Basic Schools as well. These disagreements, misunderstandings and opposition may stem from varied sources. What is important therefore is how well managers and leaders of the Basic Schools resolve these differences to ensure that they do not degenerate into violence and the excesses associated with conflicts. In situations where conflicts cannot be resolved the third party will help get the

two sides together. Conciliation, fact finding, consultant, mediation and arbitration are some of the third party strategies. Conciliation is aimed at trying to keep the parties talking about resolving the conflict or to get the parties involved in the conflict to start talking about resolving the conflict. The conciliator helps the parties to move toward a solution.

Fact finding is used when the parties disagree over the facts of the conflict. The fact finder is simply to provide the parties with the facts relevant to the conflict. These facts are relevant for the parties to resolve the conflict. A consultant is a person in a position to aid in the problem solving through communication and analysis, sharing of expertise and influence over the individual, group or organization to make changes for resolution of the conflict. The consultant helps the parties to move toward understanding and resolution of the conflict with a goal of a long-term solution. Mediation is when the parties want a third person to help them reach an agreement by keeping them talking and making suggestions about a solution. The mediator does not only allow the parties to work through their conflict but also provides them with resolutions that they may not have found on their own. When parties become deadlocked in a conflict, one solution is to turn to arbitration. The arbitrator makes the final decision to resolve the conflict. The arbitrator hears both parties out and make a decision that is binding on both parties.

2.8.2 The Causes of Conflicts in Schools.

According to Mankoe (2007) in the School situation conflicts may arise as a result of competition for scarce resources, frustration and goal divergence. He argued that these factors among other factors may cause individuals in the school situation to withdraw

physically and psychologically. Physical withdrawal according to Mankoe (2007) in the school situation takes the form of absence, tardiness and laziness on the part of teachers. Psychological withdrawal may also take the form of alienation, apathy and indifference on the part of teachers. When these happen task suffers badly and school and societal goals in the larger context will never be met irrespective of the inputs by civil society, government and all the major stakeholders.

It is therefore important to diagnose every conflict that arise in the school situation and look out there for the best mechanisms and strategies to settle them amicably in a way that will foster good relationship and cooperation. This is because in the school situation people need the cooperation of other individuals to be able to work effectively. When this is done the goals of the schools would be met and that will translate into the meeting of the ultimate societal goals of education.

2.8.3 Measures for Managing Conflicts in Schools.

Mankoe (2007) maintained that conflicts in educational institutions can be resolved through many strategies. Some of these strategies are compromising, avoiding, forcing, accommodating and collaboration. These strategies are mostly used in our Basic Schools to resolve conflicts. Two or more of these strategies can be combined to deal with a situation depending on the conflict situation at hand. These strategies provide school authorities with a variety of techniques in managing conflicts. This is so much important because conflict management is critical for the continuous existence of organizations including schools. It is very common to see a whole staff of teachers being

transferred from a particular school because of opposition, disagreement and misunderstanding among the members of staff.

2.9 Conclusion

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that conflicts are inevitable and will remain with all human institutions for a very long time to come. It can be concluded that conflicts are not entirely bad. Some level of conflict is important for the progress of the group and so conflict should not always be looked at in the negative context as it is with the case of the traditional view of conflict. Again, it can be concluded that conflict management is the key to the sustenance of the group. That is to say, if conflicts are not properly managed group task could be badly affected and this can even lead to the collapse of the group. However, if conflicts are well managed, it may lead to innovation, creativity and respect for opposing views and individuals. This, in the long term will contribute to the continuous existence and relevance of the group.

2.9.1 Summary

The review looked at conflict as a phenomenon that is part and parcel of every group of people who work together. It also looked at the various views of conflict. The review touched on sources and causes of conflicts. It also looked at conflict management and the conflict process. The theoretical and empirical underpinnings of conflict have helped to explain conflict into details for proper understanding of conflict and how to deal with conflict situations in work places and organizations including schools.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The Purpose of this study was to explore the issue of conflict management in some selected Junior High Schools in the Pru District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This chapter looks at the study area, the research design and the population of the study. It also describes the sample and sampling procedures, instruments for data collection procedures for data collection and data analysis.

3.1 The Study Area

Pru District is located in the Northern part of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. It shares boundaries with Kintampo, Atebubu and the Northern Region. The Volta Lake lies between the District and the Northern Region. The District capital is Yeji. The people are predominantly crop farmers, fishermen, fish mongers and traders. Pru District is a cosmopolitan District with several groups of people. The dominant ones are the *Bonos*, *Twumburu* and the *Guans*.

3.2 The Research Design

According to Punch (2009, p42), “research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place. This will include how data is to be collected, what instrument will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing data collected”. In this study, the researcher used the descriptive survey involving the qualitative approach in his exploration of the issue of conflict management

in some selected Junior High Schools in the Pru District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This is as a result of the fact that human experience is shaped in particular contexts and cannot be understood very well if removed from those contexts. This implies that qualitative research is as naturalistic as possible. It creates the medium through which research takes place in the normal every day context of the researched. This study therefore is intended to be carried out in the socio-cultural context of the researched. In the end, the result would be first-hand information about conflict management in educational institutions in the area of the study. Again, the researcher settled on the qualitative framework because, he wants to have an in-depth information about conflict management in the area of the study. This will help the study to get to the bottom of conflict management in JHS in the Pru District.

Further, the researcher became much more convinced in the choice of the qualitative framework for this study because the issue under study is a social one and can therefore be understood most appropriately using the qualitative framework. William (2005) in agreement with this position asserted that one of the possible reasons for the usage of qualitative research is that the type of research problems investigated in the field of social sciences and arts are extraordinarily varied and do not fall comfortably within the parameters of natural sciences. They extend from the analyses of precise problems, amenable to investigating traditional scientific method within a well-established paradigm, explorative situations where the variables are known and theoretical bases are yet to be formulated, to highly valued and meaning-laden sociological studies for which the latest interpretive and literary analytical methods are appropriate. Conflict management falls squarely in this arena of social science as compared to natural science.

As a result, qualitative framework is very appropriate for this work. It can therefore be concluded that, the qualitative approach of research can help delve into the matter of conflict management, lay the facts bare and make recommendations and suggestions.

3.3 The Study Population

Study population is a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested (Creswell, 2005). In line with this, this study has all teachers, head teachers, Circuit Supervisors and some other GES officials in the Pru District of Brong Ahafo as the population. The accessible population however, the accessible population however was made up of a total teacher population of fifty from the ten selected junior high schools, nine circuit supervisors and four high ranking officials from the Pru District Education office. The basis for selecting these professionals for the purposes of this study is the fact that, the subject matter under study is social in nature and so the researcher wants to interact with these professional in their socio-cultural context to be able to gather the needed information regarding conflict management in schools.

3.4. Sample size

A sample size of twenty-five participants were selected from the accessible population. They were made up of twenty head teachers and teachers from the ten selected Junior high schools, three circuit supervisors and two high ranking officials from the District Education office.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the process used by the researcher to select particular group of people among a larger group of people. Creswell (2005) and Fogelman (2002) noted that the sampling strategies available to researchers can be grouped into probability and non-probability. This shows clearly that there are two major categories of sampling for research purpose even though there are other types apart from these two. This notwithstanding, the non-probability sampling strategy was used for the purpose of this study.

Due to time constraints, resources, cost and accessibility, all the teachers, head teachers, circuit supervisors and Ghana Education Service officials in the Pru District could not be interviewed for the subject under discussion. The researcher therefore used purposive sampling technique to choose the study participants. According to Mason(1996), purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants that will enable him or her to make meaningful comparison in relation to the research questions , theory and type of explanation that researcher wishes to develop In line with this, the researcher intentionally and carefully selected individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. According to Cohen et al (2000), purposive sampling allows the researcher to handpick the cases to be included in the sample as their typicality. Furthermore, Marlow (1996) says that purposive sampling includes in the sample those elements of special interest to the researcher. The simple standard used therefore, was whether they were endowed with the information that could help the cause of this work. This explains why the researcher opted for teachers, head teachers, circuit supervisors and Ghana Education service officials as the participants. These groups of people were

related to the subject matter in one way or the other. The researcher is therefore of the view that purposive sampling strategy helped to select and choose the required participants to investigate the issue of conflict management in some schools in Pru District.

3.6 Instruments

The instrument employed in the study to collect the data was semi-structured interview guide. For this reason the participants were interviewed within their natural work environment. The researcher was convinced that interview questions and probes would yield down-to-earth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. All these were in the interest of the study.

Further more, interviews are flexible and offer interviewees the free room and that laxity to express their views and experiences. The interviewer also has that freedom to divert from the questions in the schedule to seek clarity when the need arises. O' Leary (as cited in Kusi, 2012) argued that semi-structured interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free and are perhaps best seen as flexible. Interviews pursue a more conversational style that see questions answered in an order that is natural to the flow of the conversation. In some cases interviews begin with well-defined questioning plan but are ready to pursue interesting tangents that may crop up. The foregoing discussion shows clearly that interviews were more appropriate for the researcher to get to the bottom of the issue under study.

3.7 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing of the research tools were undertaken in one of the Junior High schools in the District which in anyway was not involved in the actual study; precisely, Zabrama N. K Adapare JHS. The pilot study was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the research tool adopted for the study. The results were however not included in the study. According to Kothari (2004), piloting a research study is a trial run that is undertaken in order to prepare for the major study. This concurs with Creswell (2003) who states that the pilot study helps to uncover potential weaknesses and flaws in the construction and conduct of the measuring instrument. The pilot test was undertaken using participants who had similar characteristics to those who were used in the major study. It also helped in determining whether the research tools measured what they ought to measure. The pilot process helped in determining how feasible the administration procedure and the amount of time required to complete the interview would be in the actual study. A period of three days was used to administer the interview guide. After the responses from the interview had been received they were accordingly analyzed.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher with an introductory letter from the Department of Educational Leadership Kumasi Campus of the University of Education, Winneba, visited the ten selected schools in the District. Permission to conduct the study was requested from heads and teachers of the various schools in which this research was conducted likewise other officials. A further letter requesting permission to conduct the study was sent to the District Directorate of the Ghana Education Service (GES). After all participants had

granted permission for the study to be conducted, dates for the interviews were set. The researcher, on the stipulated dates met respondents accordingly for the administration of the interview. The participants were not under any coercion whatsoever to respond to the interview notwithstanding the fact that they were encouraged to respond. The interview was planned between thirty to fifty minutes for each participant and was conducted during the school hours and in their working premises. Copies of the instruments are

The researcher in his bid presented as appendices.

3.9 Validity of the Instrument

to come up with a very good work put the following measures in place:

1. After completing the preparation of the interview guide, discussed with colleagues and other senior members of the academia.
2. The interview guide was given to my supervisor for intellectual and academic scrutiny to make sure that the content was appropriate.
3. A pilot study was conducted in another school which gave an overview of how the whole research process would be, this helped to correct all errors before the actual research.

3.10 Methods of Data Analysis

Some of the indicators that underlie the analytical frame for a study of this nature include; the objectives of the study, the theoretical and philosophical perspectives and most importantly the methodology. It is important to mention that qualitative data can be

analyzed in two major ways. These are manual and software analyses of qualitative data. The researcher therefore settled on manual analyses of the data for this work. The reason is simple-the researcher wanted to be deeply involved in the whole process of exploration. The manual analyses therefore gave him this opportunity to read through the data severally. This enabled him to imbibe the major findings of the study. The data was grouped into main themes which formed the basis of the findings.

Again, the researcher took into serious consideration the individual responses and aligned them to the research questions. Important statements from the respondents were quoted to support the analyses.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

This study paid attention to ethical issues like access, informed consent and plagiarism. Other ethical issues that were adhered to were privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. As a result, official permission was sought from the Pru Directorate of the Ghana Education Service to conduct the study in the District. The participants were also duly informed before they granted the interviews. Information from other writers and other members of the academia especially in the literature review were appropriately acknowledged. Not only was that, the anonymity of the participants also seriously protected.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a detail analysis of data and in-depth discussion of the findings from the study. It also contains the profile of the population. The basis for the analysis would be the research questions for the study. These questions are as follows:

1. What kinds of conflicts exist in Junior High Schools in Pru District?
2. What is Junior High School teachers' perception of conflicts in school in Pru District?
3. What are the causes of conflicts in Junior High School in Pru District?
4. How are conflicts managed in Junior High Schools in Pru District?

The researcher wanted to interact with the respondents in their natural context. This was to help the study delve deep into conflict management in the setting of the study. As a result, the researcher chose the qualitative framework for the purpose of the study.

Table 4.1: The profile for the study population is presented in table 4.1

	FREEQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
SEX		
Male	19	76
Female	6	24
AGE		
20-30	4	16
31 and above	21	84
TEACHING EXPERIENCE		
Newly Appointed Teachers	4	16
Experienced Teachers	9	36
Headteachers	7	28
Circuit Supervisors	3	12
Other GES officials	2	8
QUALIFICATION		
Diploma	12	48
Degree	9	36
Others	4	16
RANK		
Senior Superintendent II	4	16
Senior Superintendent I	5	20
Principal Superintendent	8	32
Assistant Director II	4	16
Assistant Director I	2	8
Deputy Director	2	8



Table 4.1 gives the profile and description of the study population. Some of the important variables on the table are gender, age and teaching experience. The rest are qualification and rank. The female participants of the study constituted slightly less than one third of the study population. The male respondents however were a little over two-thirds of the study population.

Sixteen percent of the study participants were between ages of twenty and thirty whereas eighty percent of the study population was thirty one years and above. Sixteen percent of the study participants were newly appointed teachers. A little more than one-third of the study population were teachers with very high experience in the teaching profession. Some of these individuals had taught Ghanaian schools as teachers for a little above three decades. Headteachers constituted less than one-thirds of the study population. Circuit supervisors and other Ghana Education service officials all put together constituted twenty percent of the study participants.

With respect to qualification, forty-eight percent of the respondents were Diploma holders. Slightly above, one-third of the respondents were Degree holders with sixteen percent holding other professional and academic qualifications.

In terms of rank, thirty-six percent of the study participants were Senior superintendent II and I.

Principal superintendents were made up of almost one- third of the study population . Assistant Director II on their part constituted sixteen percent of the study population whereas Assistant Director I was slightly less than one tenth of the study population. Deputy Directors also constituted eight percent of the study population.

4.2 What kinds of conflict Exist in Junior High Schools in Pru District

The data collect through the interview proved that conflicts do happen in schools in the Pru District. Some of these conflicts did occur between school pupils and teachers, others did occur between teachers and the District Directorate. It also emerged that some conflicts that some conflict did occur between teachers and their colleague teachers. Again conflicts occurred between school children and their fellow school children. The most important revelation from the interview data was conflicts between teachers and headteachers.

From the literature, Rodney and Meniffee (2010) posited in their explanation of conflict that, conflicts will arise in nearly all aspect of one's life. Hence, the outcome of this study was not surprising. There can be conflict on the job with a superior, a co-worker, a subordinate, a customer, or someone else in the business environment. These pieces of information from the literature review clearly corroborate with findings of the study. For instance, one headteacher recounted:

“I have lived greater part of life as a teacher. I started my teaching career in this particular district when I was a very young boy. I have taught in several schools across the district. In fact I have seen many things especially when it comes to issues you are interviewing me on. Apart from that, I have been a headteacher for close to ten years now. Day in day out issues of disagreements and misunderstandings come before me. Some of these issues are petty. Others are quite serious. What I can say is that, yes the school is a human institution and so it is only normal to have some of these ugly incidences from time to time. For me what I find worrying is the conflicts

between teachers and a Headteacher. This kind of conflict can seriously affect the teaching and leaning process. What is even more worrying is the fact that most headteachers that I have worked with when I was in the classroom use their authority as heads to bully the teachers even though the teacher may be right. My brother, it becomes worse when such issues get to the District office .Most often because the head teachers are the representatives of the District Director at the school level the District office in most cases support the headteacher. Sometimes the teacher may be transferred to a different school and location against his or her will .Yes I am a headteacher` but I will be honest with you, this is not fair. A female teacher also observed ``Gentleman! I have been around as a teacher in this District for close to ten years. I have come face to face with many conflicts. What I am telling you is my personal experience. I am not afraid at all to say it all. Even if you want me to give you my full name and other details I will do it without looking back. You know what? When I was posted to my first school, my headteacher immediately started making advance towards me. I told him in a very polite manner that I am not interested. This married middle age man took this issue so personal and started reporting me to the District office with the least offence. Eventually, the District Disciplinary committee invited me .Their ruling was that there have been so many reports against me and so they recommended that I should be transferred out of the school. In fact, I did not like it but had no option than to accept it. Such issues happen all the time. Let me tell you some of these unscrupulous male teachers even stoop to the level of the school girls and if they master courage to say no to them such girls are dealt with ,with the least provocation''

These support the idea which emerged from the findings of the study that , indeed there were very many kinds and forms of conflict in school in the Pru District . However the most disturbing one is the one that occurred between teachers and head teachers.

Furthermore it came out from the literature that there are always two or more parties involved in most conflict and conflicts situations. One educational officer confirmed this when he asserted that:

“As an officer at the District office there have been countless times that I have personally taken part in settlement of conflicts. In most of these instances, one can clearly see that there are parties to the conflicts. Either one party has greatly affected the interest of the other party or has greatly disabused or discriminated against the other party. These are the most common conflicts that come before us .I have to be quick to add that others are more personal in nature. With the experience that I have had over the years conflicts that border on personalities are the most difficult to settle if you ask me .This kind is no different from that which arise out of discrimination. In all these, though very difficult but we try to get the parties to come to the middle ground to ensure peace and tranquility at the work place to ensure that teaching and learning is not affected negatively.”

This response from the education officer indicates that personal conflicts were also rampant in the setting of the study and that it was quiet difficult to settle such conflicts.

The other aspect according to the quotation from the officer at the Ghana Education Service office is that personal conflicts can be liked to conflicts that come about as a result of discrimination.

One Deputy Director recounted:

“conflicts are part of the teaching profession. In my opinion it will remain so for a very long time .What is worrying for me as a senior officer in this job is the deliberate attitude of our young teachers which trigger confusion especially between the school and the community. My brother, some of these young lads especially the male ones stoop so low to have illicit relationship with the innocent school girls. You would agree with me that such acts will and can never foster good relationship between the school and the community .It becomes worse when the school girl is a daughter of an influential member of the community. The last talk about conflicts the better. We as professionals who are suppose to know better sometime trigger these conflicts.”

This response particularly affirmed an aspect of the literature which indicated that conflicts are processes that being when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected ,or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about.

It is important to note here that everyone’s interest is very important to him or her and so in matters like what the Deputy Director recounted teachers particularly would have to be circumspect in there dealing with such objects.

Again it emerged from the view of Robbins and Judge (2010) that conflict is a natural disagreement resulting from individuals or groups that differ in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs and choices. Conflict in this case is a natural event that forms part of nearly every working day. It starts off as nothing more than highly determined action to

achieve preferred outcome. This piece of information from the literature was corroborated by one circuit supervisor when he said that:

“Greater part of my work is in the schools. These schools are in the communities. It will interest you to know some of the things I hear on daily basis. As an officer I always try to calm down nerves and promise to settle the issues amicably. There are instances where teachers look down upon the community members by using abusive words to the extent of attacking the cultural values in the classroom or during school social gathering. When this comes to the attention of the community members through their children, some of them keep it and wait for an opportune time to attack. What I want to say in short is that, different people have different values and beliefs and so we as professionals should know better at all times”.

The comment from the officer is very critical, for it can either ensure good rapport between the school and the community or strained the relationship between the school and the community.

The teachers live in the midst of the community members so it is in the interest of the teacher to ensure good rapport with the community members at all times. This could be done by being conscious of the values, beliefs and norms of the community in which the teachers practice their profession.

4.3 What is Junior High School Teacher’s Perception of Conflicts in Pru District?

It came out clear from the literature that conflict is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceive opposition of needs, values and interests between people working together (Jones, 2006). One male teacher in affirming this had this to say:

“In my personal view, there are conflicts wherever you have two or more people working together or even living together in the case of family members. You know! A personal belief that conflict is a situation where two or more people who use to work or live together can no longer do so because of some misgivings or if you like misunderstandings. When people get to this level they even refuse to talk to each other or to see the other person eye to eye. In extreme cases such individuals may not want to belong to the same groupings like church or club. In the school situation, such things do happen. If you happen to have a grudge with a colleague teacher he or she may refuse to respond to your greetings. At meetings, there are two things whether they argue angrily over issues that ordinarily should not spark or they will refuse to talk at all. Let me conclude by saying the school is made up for different people with different background and so it will be rare for this or any other school for that matter to be without conflict. For me, what is important is how such rifts are managed.”

The response confirms that conflict is indeed a state of discord such that people who work together in the same workplace or institution will not want to have free flow communication which is so crucial for the success of the group with one another.

Another headteacher in responding to the interview questions recounted:

“Young man! As you can see, I have less than one year to retire. I have seen a lot. I look at conflict as situation where there are deep cracks in an institution like my school. You know! When something like this happen, it breeds factionalism in the school, if you call for meetings and one party perceives that the other party would

be at the meeting the first party may not show up. Sometimes they would hold their own meeting before they attend the meeting you called for. You understand what I am talking about. It has not been easy these very many years. Teachers are the most troublesome people one can find anywhere. The reason is simple; every teacher thinks he or she knows. If you are a headteacher and you do not act fast to mend such cracks, you may either resign or get transferred”

This response looks at conflict as sharp divisions among a group of people. Such division may not auger well for the success of the group. If it is allowed to linger for a long time it may lead to members of the group taking entrenched positions on matters to relating to the growth and development of the group and in this case the school .As indicated by Owens (1987), conflict is a process of antagonism that occurs when one person or organizational sub-unit frustrates the goal attainment of another. The findings confirmed this when one new teacher bitterly observed:

“Sir, I am a new teacher. I have been looking for a forum like this to talk about some of these issues. See! Times have changed and so quick. In olden days when some of us perhaps were not even born, it took many years down the line to become Senior Superintendent. The same cannot be said for the current dispensation. As soon as you pass out of the school successfully you begin with Senior Superintendent II. This alone is enough for the old folks in the profession to antagonise you, victimize you, frustrate you and do all manner of things against you. This in my opinion brings about hatred and animosity among members of the

same school who are supposed to be united to fight for the common good of the school. Is this situation fair?”

This finding clearly confirms the information provided by Owens (1987). Such antagonisms frustrations do not help anybody. In fact it will be better for people working together to have a united front to tackle the goals they set out to achieve head on. This will help such a school to attain greater heights. That is not all, Owens (1987) again pointed out that conflicts exist wherever incompatible activities occur.

Another new teacher corroborated this in his response to the interview question. He asserted that.

“Officer! Most often I get worried particularly in this school. I know that it is only a matter of time for an explosion to occur. Why am I saying this? We all know that school children are supposed to be taught in the classroom during instructional hours. However, in most instances these innocent children are engaged on farms and other private activities of some senior members of the staff. If you talk about it at meetings you become an enemy to such individuals. But if you put your ears on the ground you could clearly pick up intelligence that the community people are not happy about it. In the first place, they are not happy that you are competing with them apart from working as a teacher. The worse of it is that you use their children at the time when the children are supposed to be learning in the classroom. I am sure it will not be long for the community to strike. All of us are at risk.”

This activity clearly falls out of the jurisdiction and core mandate of the school. Teaching and learning is not related with this action in anyway. The parent of such children wouldn't have brought them to school in the first place if that is what they wanted the children to do. In fact one should not mince words by saying that it is the highest form of irresponsibility on the part of the individuals involved in it. It is just unethical.

4.4 What are the Causes of Conflict in Junior High Schools in Pru District?

The findings indicated that to a larger extent, all conflict is the product of poor communication. When team members' understanding of issues is unclear they often feel insecure and that can lead to conflict. Regular, but short, team briefings can help to keep the team informed of priorities, dispel rumours and muffle the grapevine. Free flow and movement of information helps to create a more open culture. Another circuit supervisor in responding to the interview questions had this to say.

“ I deal with teachers and headteachers on daily basis. What I find intriguing is the fact that most of the incidence of conflicts is either wrong information or no information at all. What happen therefore is that the affected parties use their own perception. You would agree with me that perception may not always be right. I always advice my headteachers particularly to ensure free flow of information at all times. My personal view is this, if you do not ensure free flow of information, rumours and even lies would thrive and these can easily foment trouble. One thing I have observed about teachers is that they always think the headteacher at one point or the other is hiding something from them especially issues concerning money. I

may be wrong but this is my personal observation. So when adequate and timely information is passed on to the teachers there will be no rancor or strife or any mutiny.”

The finding has said it all. Holding on too long to information may make the followers and in this case the teachers think that something of interest to them is about to be negatively affected or has already been affected. They will eventually rise up and fight for what they perceived to be due them and this may bring about confusion in the school. The finding corroborates with Robbins and Judge's (2010) assertion that conflict is a dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, lack of openness and trust between people, and the failure of manager's to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their employees.

One officer narrated

“Last year, we had a very ugly situation in one of our schools. The community members went to the school to attack the headteacher and teachers. The teachers had to run for their lives to a more safe location until calm restored. Their reason for perpetrating such an ungodly act was that the community has contributed enormously to get classroom accommodation and even

DEOC simply means District Education Oversight committee. No matter how hard and difficult an issue is it travels this full length it surely should see the light of day. So yes the GES has a comprehensive plan for conflict resolution.”

This verbatim quotation indicates that the Ghana Education service has institutionalized conflict management. What is also cardinal is the fact that there are various levels of conflict management in Pru District.

In a sharp rebuttal, one teacher observed:

‘my brother! There are nice conflict resolution mechanism in place in this District. But the question is do they work? In my candid opinion, I sometimes back hard a problem with my headteacher. If you look into the matter with an objective eye I was right but when the matter came before the district office the made it a useless case. At a point I had to stop following it. So for me there are no serious conflict management structure in place. Just pray that you do not entangle yourself in any trouble. That is’.

This responds is in shape contrast with the literature that indicated that conflict is inevitable because people do not see thing exactly the same way. An organization success is how well it deal with conflict. Managing conflict therefore means finding appropriate strategies to resolve it. If the occurrence of conflict is an everyday issue, the it’s management should be daily affair too.

This presuppose that’s merely having the structures for conflict resolution and management is not enough. The structures should be able to see each case that appears before it to its logical conclusion. It is said that managing conflict is common activity in

organization perhaps because of the frequent prevalence of conflict in all human institution.

(Mankoe, 2007) This is quite significant in conflict management process. One headteacher agreed with this when he said that:

“You know what? Some teachers in management position do not have any training. Let me come quite clear. I mean some headteachers. This makes them seriously deficient in heading conflict. I tell you if you hear some of this things they goes on in the school and the way some headteachers handle them with will amaze you. I personally believe that the school heads should be well equipped by building their capacity to be able to manage the school well. I think we can do better than the current state affairs.”

This statement support the observation Mankoe 2007 made that effective conflict management involves more than specific technique. The ability to understand correctly and diagnose conflicts is the first step in managing it.

In conclusion, the findings of the study have indicated clearly that conflict is daily occurrence in the school and that nothing can stop conflict completely. However what important is how well to manage them once they emerge. The finding also show that the mere presence of the structure for conflict resolution in the school of the district in the large context is not enough. *DEOC simply means District Education Oversight committee. No matter how hard and difficult an issue is if it travels this full length it surely should see the light of day. So yes the GES has a comprehensive plan for conflict resolution.”*

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This responds is in sharp contrast with the literature that indicated that conflict is inevitable because people do not see things exactly the same way. An organization’s success is how well it deals with conflicts. Managing conflict therefore means finding appropriate strategies to resolve it. If the occurrence of conflict is an everyday issue, then it’s management should be a daily affair too.

This presupposes that merely having the structures for conflict resolution and management is not enough. The structures should be able to see each case that appears before it to its logical conclusion. It is said that managing conflict is a common activity in organizations perhaps because of the frequent prevalence of conflict in all human institutions as posited by Mankoe (2007).

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“You know what? Some teachers in management positions do not have any training. Let me come quite clear. I mean some headteachers. This makes them seriously deficient in handling conflict. I tell you if you hear some of the things they go on in the school and the way some headteachers handle them it will amaze you. I personally believe that the school heads should be well equipped by building their capacity to be able to manage the school well. I think we can do better than the current state affairs”.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is the concluding chapter of the study. It focuses on the summary of the finding and conclusions drawn from them. Recommendations are also made on the basis of the findings and conclusions of the study with respect to the proper management of conflict in the study area. Finally areas for further study are suggested.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study participants emphasized that conflicts are part and parcel of everyday life activities including schools in the Pru District of Ghana. It also emerged from the findings that the most prevalent conflict in schools in the context of the study are those involving teachers and headteachers. Finally, the findings proved that there are mechanisms for resolving conflicts in the schools as well as the District Directorate as a whole however, these mechanisms alone are not enough and must be strengthened. The findings based on the research questions are as follows:

What kinds of conflicts exist in Junior High Schools in Pru District?

The most prevalent conflicts in Junior High Schools in the Pru District are conflicts between teachers and headteachers. Conflicts also existed between some schools and the communities in which the schools were located.

What is Junior High School teachers' perception of conflicts in schools in Pru District?

Teachers perceived conflicts to be misgivings that hinder peaceful coexistence. Teachers perceived conflicts to be cracks within the social fabric of a school that leads to factionalism. It also emerged that teachers perceived conflicts to mean antagonism that leads to unnecessary frustration.

What are the causes of conflicts in Junior High Schools in Pru District?

It emerged from the study that inadequate or no communication leads to most of the conflicts in the context of the study. Using school children for other purposes during instructional hours also emerged as one of the causes of conflicts. Disrespect for the cultural values and norms of the community in which the school is located was found to be among the leading causes of conflict. Disregard for academic performance of pupils.

How are conflicts managed in Junior High Schools in Pru District?

The study proved that the District Directorate had instituted structures at various levels for the purposes of managing conflicts. Parties that were not satisfied with the outcome of a particular situation could appeal to the next highest level for redress.

5.2 Conclusions

There, indeed cannot be any quality work and performance in schools if conflicts of various forms are not uprooted or reduced to the bearest minimum . From the responses gathered from the study participants, the dominant conflict in the Junior High

Schools in the Pru District was that between teachers and head teachers. The deduction from the study was that not until a desirable mechanism such as sensitization programs and capacity building workshops on conflicts and conflict management were organized for head teachers and teachers, conflict will still persist in schools in the Pru District.

Besides, the findings depicted that should a peaceful co-existence prevail between the school and the community, absolute respect needed to be accorded the cultural values and norms of the community. In fact, the findings from the study were a confirmation of previous research in so far as strategies or means of resolving conflicts were concerned .some of the studies were conducted in Ghana and others from across the word. The findings were similar to those found in literature .They brought in new and peculiar ideas found to be useful for a local condition such as those in the Pru District .On the whole, the findings of this study had brought home the various forms of conflicts, how they came about and the various strategies to be used in managing them appropriately for effective work delivery.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations would be made for effective management of conflicts in the study area: on the basis of the findings and conclusions drawn from them.

1. Headteachers should be taken through proper leadership training after their appointment as school heads to equip them with management techniques to avoid or reduce the conflicts between them and their teachers.

2. Teachers should be properly inducted after recruitment to enable them come to terms with the cultural values and norms of the society in which they would practice as teachers.
3. Punitive sanctions should be given to teachers who engage the services of school children during instructional hours so that they would desist from the act which is a major source of conflict.
4. The appropriate authorities specifically headteachers and District Education officers should ensure that conflict management mechanisms put in place actually work.
5. Community members should be encouraged to draw closer to the school administration should there be any grievance that calls for redress.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

The researcher wants to recommend that further research should be conducted to assess the challenges faced by bodies that are mandated to resolve conflicts in the setting of the study. This will give us a holistic understanding in dealing with conflicts in the setting of the study. This will guide policy makers to know how to resource such bodies to deal with conflicts on day to day basis to ensure that teaching and learning go on smoothly in a peaceful environment to achieve the desired goals for the general good of the larger society.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewer's Introduction

Dear Sir, Madam, my name is Jasper Kwasi Andoh, a final year MA (Educational Leadership) student in the University of Education, Winneba and I am conducting a study to assess the issue of conflict management in some selected Junior High Schools in the Pru District. Thank you for your time and willingness to be interviewed today. The information you will provide during this session will be kept confidential for the purpose of only this study.

SECTION A

Bio-Data

1. Sex: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 21 – 30 [] 31 and above []
3. Marital Status: Married [] Single [] Divorced [] Widow []
4. Highest Academic Qualification : Diploma [] Degree [] Others []
5. Position:
Teacher [] Headteacher [] Circuit Supervisor [] Others []
6. Rank:
Snr. Sup. II [] Snr. Supt. I [] Prin. Supt. [] Assist. Director II []
Assist. Director I [] dep. Director []

SECTION B

Junior High School Teachers perception of conflicts in schools in Pru District

1. Sir/Madam, could you please tell me about your personal understanding of conflict?
2. Please have you witnessed any conflicts in your school or other schools before?
3. Could you please tell me about some of them?
4. Sir/Madam, were these conflicts resolved?
5. Were the parties involved satisfied?

SECTION C

What kind of conflicts exists in Junior High Schools in Pru District?

1. Is conflict a problem in your school?
2. What are some of the possible consequences of the conflicts?
3. How do conflicts affect your work?
4. Sir/Madam, can conflict affect job performance?

SECTION D

Causes of conflicts in Junior High School in Pru District

1. What do you think the causes of conflicts in schools?
2. Is the headteacher a source of conflict in the school?
3. Are teachers a source of conflict in the schools?
4. Are students a contributing factor to conflicts in schools?
5. Do parents also stand as a source of conflict in schools?

SECTION F

Conflict management in Junior Schools in Pru District

1. How Sir/Madam, were some of the conflict in your school resolved?
2. Please, what are some of the means through which conflicts can be managed?
3. Can you please suggest or mention some measures that can be adopted to prevent conflicts in schools?
4. Are there any outlets where people can easily seek redress for their grievances?

