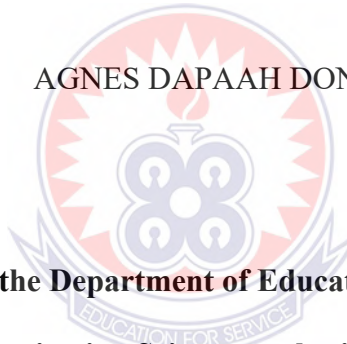


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE AHAFO-
ANO DISTRICT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL
ADMINISTRATION

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**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 award of the Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) degree**

SEPTEMBER, 2016

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, AGNES DAPAAH DONKOR, declare that this project report, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been all identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for any other degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: PROF. FRANCIS OWUSU MENSAH

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of this project has been materialized through the help of others who are too many to mention individually. First of all, I would like to thank Professor Francis Owusu-Mensah of U.E.W for his brilliant role as a supervisor. Without his constructive criticisms and excellent grasp of the topic this research would not have been a success.

It is my greatest pleasure to exhibit my profound gratitude and appreciation to him for his invaluable contribution. I again appreciate the management and staff of Tewa and Mabang S.H.S who took time off their busy schedule and gave me the needed attention and information to make this project a success. How can I forget Mr. Eric Boaponsem of the Ashanti Regional Education Office and Madam Barbara Offei of Tewa S.H.S whose words of encouragement gave me the strength to proceed with the course?

I finally say a very big thank you to Mr. Salifu Abubarkar Sadiq of Mankranso S.H.S who worked tirelessly to bring this project in to fruition. I sincerely say thank you and may the Lord increase your thresholds.

DEDICATION

To my love and ever caring and responsible father Mr. E.B. Donkor and my lovely and supportive sister Millicent Frimpomaa Donkor.



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ABSTRACT

The study investigated conflict management in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano District and its implications on educational administration. A sample size of 162 including head teachers and teachers and non-teaching staff were selected for the study. A descriptive survey design was employed which focused on the administering of closed ended questionnaires. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was Cronbach Alfa of 0.78. Data was analysed by means of descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages. The study established that autocratic style of leadership, poor communication, favouritism and power struggle were the main causes of conflicts in senior high schools. The study further revealed that conflicts can result in break in healthy communication, divisiveness and bitterness, finally, the study identified a range of strategies including regular staff meetings, free flow of information and the involvement of all teachers in decision-making which were employed by headmasters to manage conflicts. It is therefore recommended that the Ghana Education Service should organize In-service for teachers and heads of schools on conflict identification and management. Educational administrators should communicate transparently and practice fairness so that they can create trust and good relationships among staff. Finally, Heads should also encourage dialogue between and among conflicting parties.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Governments, whether in developed or developing nations, usually allocate huge sums of money in training appropriate manpower and providing the needed infrastructure for the smooth running of schools and therefore one of the last phenomena that one would expect to find in schools is conflict (Afful-Broni, 2012). Yet in today's complex and ever changing world conflict is a fact of life. Conflict, an outcome of behaviour (Pathak, 2010), is an integral part of human life and an inevitable part of any organisation. Wherever individual or groups come into contact socially, geographically, ideologically or politically, conflict is inevitable since they all have divergent views and goals. Loomis and Loomis (1965) believe that conflict is an ever-present reality in human relations, and that there is no known institution that is exempt from it.

Conflict occurs whenever more than one person is involved in any enterprise or endeavour. This is so because there are differences in opinion or deviation from standard norm (Afzal, Khan, & Ali, 2009), difference in goals, values and aspirations of the different stakeholders and these goals may be incompatible (Hotepo, Asokere, Abdul-Aeezi & Ajemunigbohun, 2010; Akpotu, Onoyase & Onoyase, 2008) among others. Conflict exists in organisations (Ongori, 2009) and in itself not a bad thing (Kapusuzoglu, 2010) and therefore must not be necessarily reduced, suppressed or eliminated, but managed to enhance organisational learning and effectiveness (Rahim, 2002).

Runde and Flanagan (2010) saw conflicts as perceived differences between two or more parties that result in mutual opposition and have both constructive and

devastating consequences. Ursing (2003) stated that conflict is the differences in perspectives, beliefs, actions or interests which are sometimes verbalized and sometimes they are not. When these differences are verbalized it is easier to become aware of it but when they are not verbalized the managers would have to observe the actions of those who perceive the conflict. These actions could sometimes be misunderstood which could compound the conflict. Mankoe (2007), also defined conflict as the pursuit of incompatible or at least seemingly incompatible goals, such that gains to one side come out of the expense of the other. Conflicts could be so destructive that, it can bring administrative work to a halt. Even though one can deduce that a conflict has some traces of goodness such as renewed commitment of the feuding parties, the consequential devastation could be overwhelming. According to Armstrong (2009) an optimal level of conflict in an organisation impacts positively on the performance of the organisation. Managing conflict constructively and developing its effective conflict resolutions procedures encourages the development of value, attitude, knowledge and civic standards in the institutions. Since conflict has both positive as well as negative consequences it must be analyzed and managed carefully. The conflict handling style of a manager also determines how conflict is managed (Armstrong, 2009).

Conflict in organisations occurs at different levels, is of different form and from different sources (Champoux, 2003). Some types of conflict may be less detrimental or even beneficial to group performance (Jehn, 1995) and thus may have either positive or negative effects on organisational performance depending on the nature of the conflict and the way it is managed (Armstrong, 2009). Conflict, a state of mind and therefore has to be perceived by the parties involved. There is therefore a

need for causes of the conflict to be diagnosed and managed effectively to avert conflict's consequential destructiveness.

For any organization to be effective and efficient in achieving its goals, the people in the organization need to have a shared vision of what they are striving to achieve, as well as clear objectives for each team / department and individual. Ways of recognizing and resolving conflict amongst people is needed so that the conflict does not become so serious that co-operation is impossible. All members of any organization need to have ways of keeping conflict to a minimum - and of solving problems caused by conflict, before conflict becomes a major obstacle to work. The absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Conflicts in themselves have a lot of goodness if well managed. They are sometimes healthy; for their absence may mean that, important differences among individuals are suppressed or covered up but if managed well, they promote creativity, innovation and improved performance since there would be renewed commitment. Conflict can be productive and in fact become a necessary part of positive interpersonal relationship, creating problem-solving and group cohesiveness to enhance leadership (Wilson as cited in Afful-Broni, 2012).

Poor management of conflicts, however, can lead to hostility, infighting, divisiveness and disintegration. McCarthy (2007) also states that destructive conflict undermines relationships, distracts team members from their common goals, and encourages them to give any conflict a wide berth in the future. When relationships are negatively affected as a result of conflict the possibility that productivity will be affected negatively is very high. This means that conflict should not be swept under

the carpet if it is perceived in the organization. Unresolved conflicts lead to pairing-of and clique-forming (Garner, 2012) which could mar or tarnish the reputation of the organization. These are all negative attributes that hamper institutional progress. Afzal, Khan and Ali (2009) further observed that when conflict is handled unskillfully and dissipatedly, it becomes bad but when it is handled morally and creatively, it ceases to be frightening and crippling, and it results in growth, maturity, and empowerment for individual, group and organization (Kigali, 2006).

Sagim as cited in Afful-Broni, 2012, points out that conflict resolution is the process aimed at resolving a dispute or conflict. Successful conflict resolution occurs by listening to and providing opportunities to meet the needs of all parties and to adequately address interests, so that, each party is satisfied with the outcome (Weaver, 2003). Conflict practitioner's talk about finding the win-win outcome for parties involved, versus the win lose dynamic found in most conflicts. While 'conflict resolution' engages conflict once it has already started conflict prevention' aims to end conflicts before they start or before they lead to verbal, physical, or legal fighting or violence.

It is obviously necessary for administration to be able to recognize conflict, to view its constructive as well as destructive potential, and to learn how to manage conflict and to apply conflict management styles in a practical way. Conflict management in any secondary school should be a priority of any school manager who engenders to have good performance. Success of any institution therefore depends on how well conflict is managed for the common good of everyone within the organization. With recent spate of conflicts in senior high schools in and its potential effects in Ghana, this study therefore investigates into the causes of conflicts in public

senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano District and the strategies adopted to manage them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Educational institutions have administrators who are charged with the responsibility of maintaining stability in order to achieve institutional goals. Conflicts in Ghanaian senior high school are on the rise in the recent past (myjoyonline.com, August 2, 2010).

According Mankoe as cited in Gyan & Tandoh-Offin (2014) government over the years has expressed concern over the disturbances in learning institutions where in some cases, students have destroyed property and even attacked teachers. In other instances teachers and head masters and even parents engage in one form of conflict or another. Some of the emergencies that arise as a result of conflicts include; arson attack, riots and violence which results in injury and loss of property and life.

The Ghana education service has various channels through which senior high schools could employ to address grievances and resolve conflicts. Of particular interest to the researchers is why in spite of this, conflicts situations are still poorly managed resulting in serious consequences on academic work.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate conflict management strategies of heads of public senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano District and its implications on educational administration.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the causes of conflict in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District.
2. assess the effects of conflict on senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District
3. explore the strategies adopted in managing conflict in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District; and to make appropriate recommendations.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What accounts for conflicts in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?
2. In what ways do conflicts affect senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?
3. How is conflict managed in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is of great significance as schools play important role towards the development of the human resource capabilities of the nation. First, findings from the study would unravel the various kinds of conflict and their causes which will create awareness among teachers and headmasters. This would help them create the needed environment to either avoid, or reduce conflict among their staff to the barest minimum. In addition the study would help equip heads of the schools as well as

teachers with the various appropriate strategies available for the management of conflict to ameliorate the conflict situations which are bound to arise. The study would assist the ministry of education and specifically the Ghana Education Service in developing a curriculum that can be used to enhance the capacity of the administrators, the teachers, and the students in handling conflicts in schools. This would help to reduce organizational school conflicts. The study is worthy because it addresses the causes of institutional conflict and be able not only to propose solution to improve stability in the educational institutions but also in other public organizations/sectors in Ghana prone to all sorts of conflicts. Furthermore, the findings of the study will provide useful information to guide the formulation and modification of policies related to conflict and its management in organisations in general and schools in particular. The findings would further help the Ghana Education Service (GES) to structure its training programmes to ensure teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge for effective conflict management. Lastly, results of the study will contribute to the existing limited literature on conflict and its management in schools.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to only Ghana Education Service (GES), specifically only headmasters, teachers and students in both Tepa and Mabang senior high school. The study would further focus on the management of conflicts.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The study had a number of limitations. First, the limitation of this study was related to the study area which was in only two senior high schools in one district. It is therefore difficult to generalize the findings to other districts.

Another limitation of the study is in terms of the generalizability of the results. The views of the respondents in this study may be different from others functioning in different contexts. Consequently, the results of this study may not generalize to other populations working under different conditions.

The study also relied solely on structured, closed-ended questionnaires as the main instrument for data collection. This was due to its convenience to both the researcher and the participants. The use of interview or observation in addition to the questionnaire could have helped obtain more insight into issues in the findings.

Another limitation was related to the sample of the population which consisted of mostly teachers and non-teaching staff. This meant that major stakeholders like parents and students were left out in the survey. Their inclusion could have immense impact on the study, and provide credible basis for the generalization of the results. This means that the findings of the study can only be generalized to the population of the study and not to senior high schools outside the study. In spite of these limitations, it could be said that the findings of this study are valid based on the responses to the questionnaire and the analysis.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters with their sub-headings. Chapter One provides a background to the study, states the problem and purpose of the study, and provides the research questions that guided the study. The significance of the

study is discussed as well as the delimitation and limitation. Chapter Two provides literature related to the study. It specifically focuses on the concept of conflicts, the effects of conflicts and the various strategies that are employed to manage conflict in senior high schools. Chapter Three provides the research design, describes the population as well as the sample and sampling procedure of the study. It also describes the instrument as well as the data collection procedure and how the data collected was analyzed. Chapters Four presents and discusses the results of the study and chapter Five, summarizes the findings of the study, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses literature relevant to the topic. It specifically addresses the concept of conflict, types and sources. It also highlights particularly the positive and negative effects of conflicts. It finally addresses the issue of conflict management and the various strategies or styles that are usually employed to manage conflicts especially in senior high schools.

2.2 Concept of Conflict

Several attempts have been made by various authorities at defining conflict in modern societies. However, no single definition stands out so clearly and distinct (Dzisi, 2014). Owens as cited in Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007) concludes that the literature on conflict indicates that there is no consensus on what constitutes a specific definition of conflict. Interestingly, most of the definitions perceive conflict to be synonymous with antagonism, opposition, disagreement, discord, combat, competition and encounter. For Sagimo (2002), conflict connotes a stressful, unhappy, distressing, depressing, annoying and frustrating state of affairs. Wilmot and Hocker (2011) define conflict as a felt struggle between two or more independent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals or differences in desires for esteem, control and connectedness. Runde and Flanagan (2010) saw conflicts as perceived differences between two or more parties that result in mutual opposition and have both constructive and devastating consequences. Again, Robbins and Judge (2011) on their part explained conflict as a 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. Awedoba (2009) also described conflict as a relationship between two or more parties that centres on differences, disagreements on issues of common interest or concern, divergence, incompatibilities, clash of wills and the like. It may involve antagonism and opposition. Adesanya (2005) further expatiated on the description to mean an expression of animosity, arguments, disputes, confrontations, unrests, war, chaos or venting of other forms of hostilities over irreconcilable differences. These descriptions portrays the fact that conflict as a process, incubates the capacity to slowly or speedily graduate into a complex phenomenon when wrongly handled. Mankoe (2007), also defined conflict as the pursuit of incompatible or at least seemingly incompatible goals, such that gains to one side come out of the expense of the other. According to Bekoe and Quartey (2013), conflict is the expression of disagreement over something important to both or all sides of a dispute. This clearly shows that conflict could be between two or more individuals or groups. Afful-Broni (2012) describes conflict as a disagreement or incompatibility in wants, values and aspirations of two or more persons or groups. It may also entail differences in people's opinions, beliefs and priorities. According to Ashby and Neilson, "Conflict is concerned with an opposition between two individuals, and is characterized by events in which one person resists, retaliates, or protests the actions of another" (Ashby & Neilson-Hewett, 2012, p. 145).

Conflict also consists of the actions that we take to express our feelings, articulate our perceptions, and get our needs met in a way that has the potential for interfering with someone else's ability to get his or her needs met (Mayer, 2001). The author observes that this conflict behaviour may involve a direct attempt to make something happen at someone else's expense. It may be an exercise of power. It may be violent. It may be destructive. Conversely, this behaviour may be conciliatory,

constructive, and friendly. But, whatever its tone, the purpose of conflict behaviour is either to express the conflict or to get one's needs met (Mayer, 2001).

Conflict may be viewed as occurring along cognitive (perception), emotional (feeling), and behavioural (action) dimensions. This three-dimensional perspective can help us understand the complexities of conflict and why a conflict sometimes seems to proceed in contradictory directions (Mayer, 2001). As a set of perceptions, conflict is a belief or understanding that one's own needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with someone else's. There are both objective and subjective elements to this cognitive dimension. Conflict also involves an emotional reaction to a situation or interaction that signals a disagreement of some kind. The emotions felt might be fear, sadness, bitterness, anger, or hopelessness, or some amalgam of these. And in conflicts, it does not take two to tango. Often a conflict exists because one person feels in conflict with another, even though those feelings are not reciprocated by or even known to the other person. The behavioural component may be minimal, but the conflict is still very real to the person experiencing the feelings. Uline (2003) views conflict as a natural part of collective human experience. He goes on to say that conflict can be avoided and suppressed. Conflict in schools can be identified by specific indicators, such as poor discipline, low morale, few staff meetings, communication breakdown and interpersonal friction (Tshigwane, 2008).

Regardless of how the conflict is defined, it is possible for anyone to change his or her conflict behaviours because these behaviours are not inborn but rather developed repertoire of skills and communication practices that we can learn, refine, and practice (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). The perceptions and attitudes of parties in a

conflict are crucial elements that can influence a conflict to manifest functionally or dysfunctionally in organisations, especially in a school setting.

2.3 Sources of Conflict

Conflict is almost synonymous with human life. Wherever individual or groups come into contact socially, geographically, ideologically or politically, conflict is inevitable since they all have divergent views and goals (Dzisi, 2014). Conflict can be traced to several sources. Nelson and Quick (2005) and Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012) indicated that essentially the causes of conflict can be classified into two namely, structural and personal factors. According to them, the structural factors include specialisation, interdependence, common resources, goal differences, authority relationship, status inconsistencies and jurisdictional ambiguities. The personal factors include skills and abilities, personalities, perception, values and ethics, emotions, communication barriers and lastly cultural differences. Amuhaya (2010) suggests that individuals have styles, values, beliefs, principles and slogans in life and these determine their choices and objectives. When these choices and objectives contradict, it means people are interested in different things and this can create conflict. He added that conflict might arise when two individuals or groups interact in the same state of affairs but these individuals see the issue from different perspectives because of different sets of settings, awareness, background, disposition, reason or outlook, and this may cause conflict to arise.

Nyamajiwa (2000) has identified some causes or sources of conflict within an organization. These include inadequate information, role conflict/collision, and differences in goals, values, and competition for limited resources, responsibility, personnel, space, tools and equipment, access to superiors. In an organization such as

a school, a number of these sources of conflict could be applicable to school heads and class teachers. Other causes of conflict in educational institutions at different levels include communication gap between authorities and other workers, rules, procedures and policies (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012), sharing of limited resources (Ongori, 2009; Talmaciu & Maracine, 2010), lack of communication and disagreements (Talmaciu & Maracine, 2010), and work interdependence (Amuhaya, 2010). Additionally, other possible causes of conflict are ambiguously defined responsibilities (Salleh & Adulpakdee, 2012), different target goals among teachers, and difference in perception (Ramani & Zhimin, 2010; Amuhaya, 2010).

Furthermore, inadequate welfare package for staff; forceful and compulsory retirement/retrenchment of employees; administrative incompetence of heads; personality clashes; role conflict; unimpressive conditions of service; favouritism; misunderstanding of motives and non-involvement of students in the administration of the school, lack or inadequate knowledge about management of conflict by administrators together with the absence of laid down procedures for the management of conflicts in schools (Okotoni & Okotoni, 2003) are all causes of conflict. (McNamara, (2007) is also of the opinion that determinants of conflicts in most of the educational institutions can be traced to various leadership styles and variation in school organizational structure,

Owens as cited in Dzisi (2014), classified causes of conflict into three basic types: competition for scarce resources, autonomy and goal divergence. Competition for scarce resources is where resources available to an organization are too insufficient to meet the requirements of the subunits to do their work and this makes the units struggle over the meagre resources especially when it comes to budgetary allocations. He went on to explain autonomy as when one party seeks to control

activities “belonging” to another unit and the second unit seeks to fend off such “interference”, that is, the second unit attempts to protect its autonomy; while goal divergence occurs when two parties in an organization must work together but cannot agree on how to do so.

Afful-Broni (2007) could not agree more when he outlined eleven solid origins of conflict which are worthy of note especially as they relate to educational institutions. His first focus was on choice of administrative personnel as a source of conflict. In any given organization, the appointment of leadership will be met with some resistance from certain quarters. There may be instances when some individuals anticipated having a particular person chosen, appointed or elected to the vacant leadership position and where that may not materialize, the new administrator may not find co-operation with these individuals. In such a situation, there is bound to be conflict whenever the new leader proposes, recommends and sends out a directive.

There are also tribal differences as a source of conflict. Within every community, there are sub-communities or sub cultures whose beliefs and practices vary from one another. The third source he outlines was Earlier Entrants. In almost every institution, one is most likely to find certain individuals or a group who were perhaps part of or close to the era of the pioneering working team but may find themselves at the lower section of the organogram due to low academic qualification. Another source of conflict is competition for scarce resources. There are times when within a financial organization, the cause of conflict can be traced to various units, departments or individuals struggling for the same scarce resource. For example, it is possible for two workers to have a seriously furious argument over who has the priority to use particular office equipment or the departments only laptop or television for a particular programme.

Additionally, Afful-Broni (2007) talks of economic circumstances as a cause of conflict. The rich and the poor have always lived in contact with each other and usually hold each other in unspoken disdain. In a particular bank, there could be tension among the staff because of the perception by some that, others who are rich are attempting to look down on them. Such a situation can also persist among clients. In furtherance to the afore-mentioned, differences in ideologies or politics abound in any given society and financial institutions are no exception. As societies grow to be more democratic and people begin to find their voices and regain confidence, individuals like staff members would want to have a say in how administrative decisions are made and implemented which may promote conflict. Afful-Broni (2007) also specified that age difference which is also referred to as 'generation gap' can be a source of conflict in the banking community. Since people of the same age groups are likely to get along more easily than those of different generation, it is important that when conflicts arise, people look beyond the real issues at stake to possible differences in belief, values, preferences and attitudes which are usually age-related.

Furthermore, Afful-Broni (2007) outlined power struggle as another major cause of conflict in almost every organization. Power has been described as one of the greatest aphrodisiacs of all time and to hold on to it at all cost, becomes strong and can create conflict especially when the administrator decides to implement a certain decision in a particular way at all cost in disagreement with his subordinates. Finally, social injustice and exclusion can easily create conflict in financial institutions. Even though such institutions are formal organizations in which membership and their upgrading are based on qualification, levels of operation and performance, there are some informal and traditional realities that creep into the educational institutions and can be the root of conflict. In educational establishments, when some individuals are

always relegated to the background in the decision-making and implementation processes, conflict will definitely arise.

Afful-Broni (2012) suggests that while the choice of the leadership of a community can be the source of conflict, religious, tribal or ethnic differences are also some major causes of conflict in almost any heterogeneous community in Ghana and elsewhere. He further stated that in some cases, generation or age differences, either in birth or membership of the institution can be a source of conflict. It has also been discovered that the struggle for power and the competition for the available scarce resources could serve as grounds for conflict (Botchwey as cited in Afful-Broni (2012).

Nyamajiwa (2000) cites several sources of conflict including goal incompatibility, unavailability of resources, performance expectations and organizational structures. Goal incompatibility occurs when there is a lack of agreement concerning the direction of evaluating task accomplishment. This source of conflict is said to be the most frequent in an organization. In an organization such as the school, individual teachers may bring with them different time and goal orientations that may create a state of high differentiation.

Further to that, Nyamajiwa recognises that conflict within an organization can be caused by competition for limited resources. He asserts that at a school for instance books and furniture are mostly in short supply. Another source of conflict is activity or performance of one person in a group that affects the subsequent performance of other members. In other words, one member's work cannot begin until another member provides some needed information. In many organizations, the structure or role is a potential source of conflict. There can be function conflict in a functional

structure and division conflict in a product structure. In a school, this type of conflict can be seen in the relationship between the head and the teachers. The problem lies in the view points of each member and their roles in schools.

Opeloye as cited Alimba and Fabunmi (2014) attributes the causes of conflict in schools to rumour mongering, domineering attitudes of principals, communication breakdown, resources problem and lack of opportunities for promotion. Cetin and Hacifazlioglu as cited in Alimba and Fabunmi (2014) concludes that poor management behaviour of principals, religious fanaticism, misunderstanding, communication breakdown, violation of school rules and regulations, unclear definition of responsibilities, and gossiping as some of the triggers to conflicts in senior high schools.

2.4 Types of Conflict

The issues about types of conflict seem quite controversial since they attract varied opinions from various authorities across the world. Ikeda et al (2005) identifies two types of conflict in organizations, namely: interpersonal conflicts with supervisors or colleagues and inter-group conflicts which is within different sections of an organization. This clearly shows that wherever there is human interaction there is the likelihood of conflict. Mankoe (2007) also identifies four types of conflict, namely: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intra-group and inter-group conflicts. By Mankoe's exposition, it does not necessarily need two individuals or groups for conflict to prevail. An individual can even be engulfed by conflict sometimes out of indecision. This presupposes that humanity and conflict are inseparable. Hoy and Miskel cited in Afful-Broni (2007), also classified conflict under four major types,

such as: conflict about goals, conflicts about opinions, interpersonal conflicts and procedure conflicts.

Afful-Broni observes that conflict about goals arises when the desired end of a project is not agreed upon by various stakeholders within a given environment like the school. Conflict about opinion, on the other hand, relate to situations where individual opinions vary tremendously with each holding on strongly to what they have come to discover as facts, while interpersonal conflicts result from differences in personal characteristics. Procedural conflicts arise where people differ in the procedures that they believe ought to be used in achieving set goals or disagreements over how to handle issues. Hotepo *et al.* (2010) on the other hand, postulate two essential types of conflict in organisations that is, vertical and horizontal. To them, vertical conflict occurs in groups of different hierarchical levels for example conflict between an administrator and person(s) over whom the former has authority or oversight responsibility; whereas the horizontal conflict occurs between or among people of the same status as far as authority and power are concerned. DeCenzo (1997) also identified four major types of conflict such as Role, Power, Crisis and Maintenance conflicts. He sees role conflict as a situation where the institutional head in his ambition to meet the demands of the institution's mission statement, may have to squeeze the organizational budget and in the process censor some motivational needs of the staff. He is likely to incur the displeasure or wrath of the staff under such circumstance. Power conflict is a psychological confrontation that depends largely on the personalities involved and it relates to power-play. Crisis conflict, on the other hand, refers to spontaneous situations that are often suddenly dumped on the manager whereas the maintenance conflict reflects the kind of conflict arising out of attempts to resolve a prevailing precarious situation. DeCenzo's (1997) opinions establish the

fact that, conflict is unassuming and can erupt at any time so long as a human institution like the bank exists and operates.

According to Kirkwood as cited in Afful-Broni (2012), various types of conflict that exist in organizations include data conflicts, structural conflicts, relationship conflicts, and interest conflicts. Conflicts can lead to disputes, grievances, lawsuits, complaints, strikes, and disciplinary actions. Conflict can occur at a number of levels of human functioning. Conflict in your head between opposing motives or ideas is shown by your “internal dialogue” and is at the intrapersonal level. Beyond that, the primary concern here is with social conflict, that is, conflict between people whether they are acting as individuals, as members of groups, or as representatives of organizations or nations.

Interpersonal conflict: occurs when two people have incompatible needs, goals, or approaches in their relationship. Communication breakdown is often an important source of interpersonal conflict and learning communication skills is valuable in preventing and resolving such difficulties. At the same time, very real differences occur between people that cannot be resolved by any amount of improved communication. “Personality conflict” refers to very strong differences in motives, values or styles in dealing with people that are not resolvable. For example, if both parties in a relationship have a high need for power and both want to be dominant in the relationship, there is no way for both to be satisfied, and a power struggle ensues. Common tactics used in interpersonal power struggles include the exaggerated use of rewards and punishments, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail, and flattery or ingratiation. Unresolved power conflict usually recycles and escalates to the point of relationship breakdown and termination (Fisher, 2000).

Role conflict: This involves very real differences in role definitions, expectations or responsibilities between individuals who are interdependent in a social system. If there are ambiguities in role definitions in an organization or unclear boundaries of responsibilities, then the stage is set for interpersonal friction between the persons involved. Unfortunately, the conflict is often misdiagnosed as interpersonal conflict rather than role conflict, and resolution is then complicated and misdirected. The emotional intensity is often quite high in role conflict since people are directly involved as individuals and there is a strong tendency to personalize the conflict (Fisher, 2000).

Inter-group conflict: This type of conflict occurs between collections of people such as ethnic or racial groups, departments or levels of decision making in the same organization, and union and management. Competition for scarce resources is a common source of inter-group conflict, and societies have developed numerous regulatory mechanisms, such as collective bargaining and mediation, for dealing with inter-group conflict in less disruptive ways. Social-psychological processes are very important in inter-group conflict (Fisher, 1990). Group members tend to develop stereotypes (oversimplified negative beliefs) of the opposing group, tend to blame them for their own problems (scape-goating), and practice discrimination against them. These classic symptoms of inter-group conflict can be just as evident in organizations as in race relations in community settings. Inter-group conflict is especially tense and prone to escalation and intractability when group identities are threatened. The costs of destructive inter-group conflict can be extremely high for a society in both economic and social terms.

Multi-party conflict: This type of conflict occurs in societies when different interest groups and organizations have varying priorities over resource management and

policy development. These complex conflicts typically involve a combination of economic, value and power sources. This complexity is often beyond the reach of traditional authoritative or adversarial procedures, and more collaborative approaches to building consensus are required for resolution (Cormick et al., 1996).

International conflict: This type of conflict occurs between states at the global level. Competition for resources certainly plays a part, but value and power conflict are often intertwined and sometimes predominate. The differences are articulated through the channels of diplomacy in a constant game of give and take, or threat and counter threat, sometimes for the highest of stakes. Mechanisms of propaganda can lead to many of the same social psychological distortions that characterize interpersonal and inter-group conflict (Fisher, 2000).

2.5 Effects of Conflict

Conflict is like a double-edged sword and so has equally positive and negative implications. Mankoe (2007) confirms this opinion when he claims that, in everyday life, there has traditionally been emphasis on the negative and dysfunctional aspects of conflict. He explains that, the definition of conflict as the existence of incompatible goals, thoughts or emotions, may portray at once that all conflicts are bad and therefore exert negative impact on organizational effectiveness. Conflict can be positive or negative.

2.6 Negative Effects of Conflicts

Even though it may be obvious that conflict often comes with a cost, what may not be known is the extent to which this cost can go. Experts in the field of

conflict have, however, established that, it has a devastating impact on any given society.

Apreko (2002) identified the effects of conflicts as mutual suspicions and distrust, destruction of life and property, destruction of infrastructure, general insecurity, internal displacement and destruction of the economy. Apreko's point was buttressed by Mintah-Afari (2008) who contended that, conflict may lead to the destruction of lives and properties, displacement of people, dissipation of resources, poverty, slow pace of development and hatred. Afful-Broni (2007) contents that conflict is inimical to organizational growth and progress. Afful-Broni observes that the negative effect of conflict include break in communication, suspicion and mistrust, weakening of family spirit, loss of valuables, divisiveness and bitterness, needless tension, apathy and development paralysis.

Further, Mankoe (2007) observes that, frequent and powerful conflicts can have a devastating impact upon the behaviour of people in organizations. He further explains that conflict often develops into hostility which also causes people to withdraw physically and psychologically. A further exposition on this assertion is that, in the case of educational institutions, physical withdrawal takes the form of absenteeism, tiredness and negative turnover which is often written off by administrators as laziness on the part of workers. Psychological withdrawal on the other hand, takes the form of alienation, apathy and indifference.

The following are known to be some of the classic outcomes of conflicts: break in healthy communication, suspicion and mistrust, weakening of family spirit, hatred and the desire to cause harm even to hitherto loved ones, loss of valuables, divisiveness and bitterness, needless tension, apathy and development paralysis (Di Paola & Hoy, 2001; De Drue, 1997; Thomas, 1977).

Also, a poorly managed conflict will produce outcomes inimical to the progress, growth and development of organisations, including schools. This is based on the idea that conflicts ineffectively handled will divert energy from the real task; destroys morale; polarizes individuals and groups; deepens differences; obstructs cooperative action; produces irresponsible behaviour; creates suspicion and distrust; and decreases productivity (Lippitt, 1982).

Schools where conflicts have not been properly managed will demonstrate ineffectiveness and inefficiency, as not only personnel and students will be affected dysfunctionally but also the system in general. That is, negative conflicts have the capacity, if unchecked, to snowball into perpetual decline in the productivity of school personnel and consequently low quality of education in a country. Many in school have also ended in anarchy on campuses; some disorganize timing of school activities, destruct life and properties and in most cases, render school environments completely insecure for serious academic activities (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011). In addition to these, many known school conflicts have resulted in protracted disharmony in school staff interpersonal relationship, increased indiscipline among students, disarmed school authorities, clogged channel of progressive communication and rendered institutions of learning ungovernable (Agbonna, 2009; Alabi 2002; Oguntuase 1999).

Van der Bank (1995) posited that if educators in a school are willing to disagree but fight too much without resolutions, objectives may not be met and the school's performance will diminish thus contributing to the collapse of the school.

A critical examination of the above submissions portrays conflict as an unworthy course and should not be entertained by any serious minded human being.

Even though its positive characteristics have been well established, the repercussions far outweigh the positives and are so devastating.

2.7 Positive Effects of Conflicts

The situation in which the impression is created that conflict has only negative and devastating repercussion is just unfortunate (Dzisi, 2014). Hellriegel as cited in Mankoe (2007) contends that, conflicts in organizations can be a positive force. Afful-Broni (2007) outlines some ways in which conflict impacts positively on organizations such as the school. For him, a section or department which may have been overlooked over certain issues could use conflict to call attention to their plight. It also produces changes in the established ways of doing things thereby enhancing group restructuring. Conflict further presents opportunities for issues to be clarified, re-defined and sharpened. He further explained that, conflict improves the decision-making processes in financial institutions; as stakeholders who were not formerly involved in deliberations or in the taking of decisions that affect their lives may now be included.

In support of the positive elements of conflict, Zikmann (1992) writes that, effectively managed conflicts can help identify previously undetected problems and attitudes. They can also help clarify uncertainties and improve overall cooperation. Conflict can therefore be deemed to be a vehicle or tool by which an organization like the school can effectively galvanize previously undetected human resource for its progress march. Conflicts in themselves have a lot of goodness if well managed. They are sometimes healthy; for their absence may mean that, important differences among individuals are suppressed or covered up but if managed well, they promote creativity, innovation and improved performance since there would be renewed commitment.

Some of the known positive effects of conflicts are that they help to gain recognition for a group, be it large or small; conflicts are sometimes responsible for group restructuring, the definition and sharpening of community agenda, improvement in decision-making, and the strengthening of group cohesion (Alimba & Fabunmi, 2014).

It could be deduced that conflicts, no matter what they do, and how they come about, need to be well handled, so that their effects do not overwhelm a community, including and especially the leadership. It is also critical to state that not all conflicts can be resolved completely, and not all of them can be handled without a lot of tact (Sagimo, 2002).

Conflict can cause unimaginable havocs when ignored or allowed to escalate unabated in a school. Conflict has the capacity to destabilize any organisation, if the mechanisms for containment are ineffective (Alimba & Fabunmi, 2014). Hacifazlioglu, (2004) admonishes leaders and organizations to effectively manage conflicts so as to help stimulate people towards greater work efforts, cooperation and creativity.

2.8 Conflict Management

Conflict management refers to the deliberate intervention by managers to stimulate and encourage beneficial or helpful conflict and to resolve, suppress or prevent harmful conflict (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2007). According to Tshigwane (2008) conflict management is a process that takes cognizance of the stages of its unfolding, from potential conflict situations to outbreaks that might require conflict resolution strategies. Conflict management implies a pro-active approach of expecting that there will be conflict and then focusing on how to manage it (Heystek 2004).

Dzisi (2014) refers to conflict management is the process of planning to avoid conflict where possible and organizing to resolve conflict where it does happen, as rapidly and smoothly as possible. For any organization to be effective and efficient in achieving its goals, the people in the organization need to have a shared vision of what they are striving to achieve, as well as clear objectives for each team and individual. Ways of recognizing and resolving conflict amongst people is needed so that the conflict does not become so serious that co-operation is impossible. All members of any organization need to have ways of keeping conflict to a minimum - and of solving problems caused by conflict, before conflict becomes a major obstacle to work.

According to Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007: 78) conflict management refers to the deliberate interventions by managers to stimulate and encourage beneficial or helpful conflict and to resolve, suppress or prevent harmful conflict. Conflict management has become part of an effective management style. As a result of its effectiveness as management style, conflict management can no longer be ignored by education leaders and they should make provision for handling and solving conflict within the context of the school (Loock 2003). Conflict management strategies in secondary schools entail assembling, coordinating, planning and monitoring all the organizational activities within a school set-up, especially in the sense of a conflict management process (McNamara, (2007).

Successful conflict management occurs through listening to and providing opportunities to meet the needs of all parties and to adequately address varied parties' interests, so that, each party is satisfied with the outcome of their dispute (Lawal as cited in Mbiti (2014). Conflict management strategies that involve finding a win-win outcome among two or more parties are successful. However, win lose dynamic

conflict management strategies are also suitable in peculiar disagreement cases (Eregha, (2006).

Ramani and Zhimin (2010) stated that from the perspective of administrators, there are five major approaches in managing conflict in schools. These include having regular meetings for the upset individuals or groups to air their grievances; inviting resource people from the education office; and dialogue with the parties involved in the conflict with the school guidance department. Others are consultation with prefects on regular basis to identify areas of conflict; and punishing those involved in conflict by assigning them with harsh tasks, corporal punishment and suspending the parties involved.

From another perspective Obasan (2011) stated that managers of organisations prefer using compromise, problem solving and dominating strategies to minimise the occurrence of conflict in organisation. Rahim as cited in Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), on his part stated that five different conflict styles are available for handling conflict and these are integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. They added that there is no one best style since each has its strengths and weaknesses. Hanson as cited in Obuobisa-Darko (2014) identified six conflict management strategies. These range from avoidance, non-attention, physical separation, limited interaction, compromise and confrontation. Some of the conflict management strategies have been discussed below;

Integrating (Problem solving) style: When using the Integrating (Problem solving) style, Kreitner and Kinicki as cited in obuobisa, (2004) stated that parties in the conflict confront the issues and supportively identify the problem, come up with alternative solutions and choose the most suitable one. Integrating strategy focuses on gathering and organizing information; at the same time, it encourages creative

thinking and welcomes diverse perspectives. This strategy enable parties involve in conflict to pool all their information together, put their differences on the table and examine them along with any data that might contribute to a resolution. This leads to the development of alternative solution which addresses all parts of the conflict, other than the initial solutions of the parties. What this imply in the school system is that, both the school authority and students must be able and willing to contribute time, energy, and resources to finding and implementing a solution. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) indicated that even though this style is suitable in addressing complex issues related to misunderstanding it is not suitable when dealing with issues rooted in opposing value systems. The main advantage according to them is, there is a long lasting impact of outcomes since the fundamental problems are identified and addressed. The weakness is, more time is consumed to arrive at a solution as compared with other styles.

Accommodating Style: The adoption of Obligation (Smoothing) style described by Robbins and Judge (2009) as accommodating Style. Accommodating results in the individual neglecting his/her own concerns and interest to enable him/her satisfy the needs or concerns of the other party. It focuses on playing down interests and focusing on commonalities (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). This style, according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), is appropriate and efficient to use when you are likely to get something in return ultimately. Thus, when using accommodating, teachers/heads allow other teacher/head to have their way at the expense of their preference. The advantage one gets is, it encourages cooperation but the disadvantage is that it does not deal with the causal problems. However, accommodating is not likely to be a suitable long-term conflict approach in a committed relationship.

Competing Style: The competing style has been described as a situation when one party in conflict has a high concern for self and a low concern for others when dealing with a conflict situation then the individual has adopted the dominating style (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004, and Robbins & Judge, 2009). It is a way of ignoring the needs and expectations of the other party in the conflict and pursuing one's own interest using forceful tactics (Rahim, 2002) and relies on formal authority to force compliance (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004).

Avoidance Style: The avoidance style has been explained by Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) and Robbins and Judge (2009) that, one party passively withdraws from the problem or actively suppresses the issue. The avoidance style is one in which the administrator withdraws or waits and see with the hope that it is not disruptive or that the situation will eventually resolve itself in time (Beluaye & Kulo, 2014). In other words, conflict avoidance occurs when one party in a potential conflict ignores the conflicting issues or denies the significant of the conflict to his life. Ike (2012) stated that it is characterized by inaction and passivity as well allows problems to foster out of control. It is a way of not addressing the conflict, or a tactical way of postponing the conflict for a better time, if at all such time will come. In this, neither of the parties involved is able to address the conflict but rather individuals simply pretend the conflict does not exist and hope it will 'die a natural death'. Note that in this situation, the principal or teacher is unassertive, and uncooperative. There is no intention to pursue one's own needs or the needs of the school. It connotes, the process of withdrawing from conflict situations in the school that might cause unpleasantness for the principal or teacher. Avoiding a conflict neither effectively resolves the conflict nor eliminates it and therefore ultimately, the conflict will have to be tackled. However, under certain conditions, avoidance may be the most appropriate temporary

alternative. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) indicated that this style is efficient and appropriate to adopt when dealing with issues that are trivial and inappropriate for difficult and worsening issues.

Compromising Style: Compromise reflects splitting the difference or giving up something to get something (Hanson, 1996). Compromising involves flexibility and negotiation (Robbins & Judge 2009). This style deals with sharing, the willingness to give up something to help make decision that are acceptable to both. There is no distinct winner or loser, and the decision arrived at is likely not to be ideal for either of the groups. Thus, it is give and take where parties are concerned for both self and other (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). Compromizing strategy is a middle of the road strategy that gets every one talking about issues and moves one closer to each other and to a resolution. In compromise, each person has something to give and something to take. In the school system compromise is more effective when issues are complex and parties in conflict looking for middle ground, and willing to exchange concessions. Hence, negotiation and bargaining are complementary skills. This style, according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), is appropriate when parties in the conflict situation have opposite goals or possess equal power. Bradford, Stringfellow and Weitz (2004) stated that in compromise, parties seek solutions to a conflict situation by typically ‘splitting the difference’ and ‘meeting the partners halfway’. Results from a study carried out by Blay (2006) indicated that school administrators are more likely to adopt avoiding and compromising strategies than teachers are. He added that both administrators and teachers in private schools have a tendency to use compromising, avoiding and competing strategies than their counterparts at the public schools. Compromise is generally effective when the conflicting groups are relatively equal in strength. In situations where one of the groups is significantly stronger or in a better

position than the second group, a compromise strategy would not work because the stronger group would hold out for a one-sided solution.

Collaborating Style: Collaborating conflict management style is the situation where the people involved want to satisfy fully the other party's concerns. It has to do with the 'win-win' approach in which each party to a conflict wins by becoming a problem solver and a collaborating conflict participant (Ike, 2012). The approach involves exploring and coming up with integrative, win-win solution to issues related to conflict. This approach involves the use of open lines of communication, information sharing and the consideration of each party's goals (Bradford et al., 2004). The objective of parties involved is to address the problem by clarifying differences rather than accommodating different points of view (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Both individuals involved in the conflict honestly look for the most accurate ways to solve the conflict. An important feature is information sharing which enables all stakeholders to identify the common goals and potential solutions that satisfy all (McShane & Von-Glinow, 2000).

The strategies discussed above have been agreed upon across institutions, especially among those engaged in conflict management. Conflicts should not be denied but rather identified and admitted as being in existence (Thomas, 1977). Conflict situations need to be objectively studied; effective communication ought to be developed; dialogue and deliberation must be encouraged; and members of any community need to be helped to recognize conflict as part and parcel of life (Hoy & Miskel, 2005).

2.9 Challenges in Managing Conflicts

Effective conflict management is very critical to the progress of every educational establishment. However, the process is daunting and most often confronted challenges. Toku (2014) maintains that one of the major challenges of conflict management is that, some of the conflict management styles usually turn out to be time consuming and this may cost the institution so much. In choosing the appropriate style for a particular conflict situation, a time consuming approach may be required and much of productive time would have to be forfeited in order to effectively employ a particular conflict management style. De Drue and Weingart (2003) also showed consistency with this argument on conflict management style. Also, managers may get carried away by the conflict management process such that, they may not realize it is eating into normal working hours.

According to Mitroff and Featheringham as cited in Toku (2014)), one of the challenges that could be encountered in managing conflict is the occurrence of some form of errors. One of such errors is the probability of solving a wrong problem. The authors further contend that, this error usually occurred when there is lack of proper diagnosis of the problem and where there is inadequate understanding of the nature and cause of the conflict leading to the application of the wrong intervention to the problem.

Another challenge that could be encountered is lack of cooperation on the part of the two parties involved in the conflict (Toku, 2014). When either of the parties or both parties are reluctant to take active part in the conflict management process, the success of the entire style may not be achieved. One of the parties or both parties may refuse to take part in the conflict management process when they probably feel so hurt about the problem. According to French and Bell (1999), for a conflict management

practice to succeed, the parties involved should be willing to take active part in the entire conflict management process. Back and Back (1994) were also consistent with the statement made by French and Bell (1999).

According to Cronin and Weingart (2007), conflict between or among people is associated with emotions. When the person handling the conflict does not have the professional skills needed to deal with the problem, he/she may end up worsening the situation. Conflict cannot just be managed by anybody. There are some technicalities required in managing conflicts. Choosing the appropriate conflict management style could be very challenging as suggested by Euwema, Van de Vliert and Bakker (2007). But managers still need to jump this heddle and manage the problem. When a wrong approach to handling a particular problem is adopted, the end results could be disastrous (Brooks, 2009). It takes a professional to identify and choose the appropriate conflict management style to solve the right problem.

Another challenge in handling conflict has to do with the two dimensions of conflicts, namely; affective and substantive conflict. According to De Drue as cited in Toku (2014), affective conflict which is also known as relationship conflict deals with incompatibilities relating to interpersonal relationships while substantive conflict also known as task conflict deals with incompatibilities associated with group members. Substantive conflict was considered as good conflict while affective conflict was considered as bad conflict (De Church & Marks, 2002). Rahim (2002) in his studies drew a conclusion that, there was a positive correlation between the two dimensions of conflict and this is considered as a challenge. Simmons and Petersons (2000) in their studies also drew a conclusion similar to Rahim's conclusion when they reported a positive correlation between the two dimensions of conflict which were around 0.34

and 0.88. However, some few researchers concluded in their studies that there was rather a negative correlation between affective and substantive conflict.

2.10 Summary

From the literature conflict connotes a stressful, unhappy, distressing, depressing, annoying and frustrating state of affairs. It is seen as struggle between two or more independent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals or differences. The literature also points out that conflict is like a double-edged sword and so has equally positive and negative implications. Positively, conflicts are sometimes responsible for group restructuring, improvement in decision-making, and the strengthening of group cohesion. Negatively, conflict can lead to break in communication, suspicion and mistrust, weakening of family spirit, loss of valuables, divisiveness and bitterness, needless tension, apathy and development paralysis. Conflict management strategies generally include avoidance, compromising, competing and integrating. In secondary schools conflict management entails assembling, coordinating, planning and monitoring all the organizational activities within a school set-up. Successful conflict management occurs through listening to and providing opportunities to meet the needs of all parties and to adequately address varied parties' interests, so that, each party is satisfied with the outcome of their dispute. Conflict management strategies that involve finding a win-win outcome among two or more parties are successful. However, win-lose dynamic conflict management strategies are also suitable in peculiar disagreement cases.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details how the research was conducted and analyzed. It describes the methodology that was used in the study. It includes an account of the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collections procedure, pilot test, data processing and analysis.

3.2 Methodology

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004), the research methodology is the tool and procedure that is applied by the researcher to find answers to the questions raised. When choosing a research method, Yin (2009) observes that the type of research question posed and the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events should be considered. The research methodology is influenced by the researcher's general orientation to life or philosophy of life (Best & Kahn, 2003). For the purpose of this study the quantitative approach was used. After thorough consideration, the decision was taken to utilise a survey design to shed more light on the general issues of conflicts in senior high schools.

3.3 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design as the researcher is interested in gathering information on conflict management as it exists in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District. A descriptive survey attempts to describe

characteristics of subjects or phenomena, opinions, attitudes, preferences and perception of persons of interest to the researcher. Kombo and Tromp, (2007) further observe that descriptive approach is designed to obtain information concerning the current phenomenon and wherever possible to draw valid general conclusions from facts discussed. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) remind us that survey research involves collecting data to answer questions concerning the phenomenon under study, and is used to describe the nature of existing conditions, identify standards against which existing conditions can be compared, and/or investigate the relationships that may exist between events. Yieri (2006) on his part asserts that descriptive survey involves collection of data in order to answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. Descriptive research according to Babbie (2012) has the capability of putting into perspective the context in which a problem exists.

The research design is therefore descriptive survey as it only seeks to report on the perception of participants without influencing it in anyway. It is on the basis of the foregoing reasons that the design was found suitable for this study.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population of study was made up of all headmasters, teachers and non-teaching staff in senior high Schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District. These schools included Tapa Senior High School and Mabang Senior High School. It is estimated that the two senior high schools have a staff population of 269, with 174 teachers and 95 non-teaching staff.

3.5 Sample

Sampling is indispensable to the researcher because usually time, money and effort involved in the research do not permit the researcher to study all the possible members of the population (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) the key concept in sampling is representativeness. On this account, a sample size of 162 was selected which comprised of headmasters, assistant headmasters, teachers and non-teaching staff from a population of 269. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan Table for determining sample size. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), when the population size is 270, the required sample size is 159. Therefore, for best results a sample size of 170 was selected for the study.

3.6 Sampling Technique

The study employed two sampling techniques to select a sample size of 180. First purposive sampling technique was utilized to select a sample size of 12, comprising two headmasters, four assistant headmasters, four senior house masters/mistresses, and two Guidance and counselling co-ordinators. This technique was deemed appropriate because this category of the population have rich experience in managing conflict on daily basis. Purposive sampling involves the researcher deliberately selecting participants or locations for the study in order to fully comprehend the problem and/or answer the research question (Creswell, 2009). Gall, Borg, and Gall (2003), opines that in purposive sampling. “the goal is to select cases that are likely to be information rich’ with respect to the purposes of the study” (p. 165). In other words, the researcher chooses specific cases to maximize the potential

for learning from those cases (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 2005).

Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers and non-teaching staff of 110 and 40 respectively for the study. Simple random sampling is a sampling procedure where each and every item in the population is given equal chance of inclusion in the sample (Orodho, 2009). Sindhu (2000) argues that the simple random sampling technique remains the most trustworthy method of securing representativeness of the whole population

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

Data collection is a deliberate, conscious, systematic process that focuses on both the data and the process of the research activities so that others may comprehend how the study performed and can judge its adequacy, strength, and ethics (Rossmann, 2003). To achieve the objectives of the study, a 28-item questionnaire was used to determine the conflict management in Senior High school in the Ahafo-Ano District. The questionnaire was made up of two main parts. The first part (section A) consists of five (5) items of general demographic nature (such as age, gender, etc.). The second part of the questionnaire that sought to determine conflict management and implications for educational administration was grouped in four areas: (a) causes of conflict (b) effects of conflict in senior high school, and (c) strategies used in managing conflict in senior high school. The survey utilized a Likert type scale. Likert scales typically ask for the extent of agreement with an attitude item (Gall et al., 2003). The use of a Likert scale allowed me to obtain more information of the respondents' perspectives that is beyond simply asking for an agree/disagree response (David & Sutton, 2004). The questionnaire was used because, it allows respondents

to remain anonymous when they answer the questions (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003), respondents can also complete a questionnaire at a time when it is convenient for them (David & Sutton, 2004), and the answers are much easier to code and analyze (Sindhu, 2000).

According to O' Leary (2004:182-183), a good survey has the potential to reach a large number of respondents, generate standardised, quantifiable, empirical data and offer confidentiality/anonymity. The close-ended type of questionnaire was used for the study. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) contend that the use of the self-completion questionnaire has a low response rate and usually requires extensive follow up plans to increase the response. For David and Sutton (2004), a rate of 50% or less can be the norm.

3.8 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on ten teachers from Mankranso Senior High School as a way of finding out whether the questionnaire would be able to elicit the right information. A pilot study is conducted prior to embarking on the full-scale research investigation (Kumar, 2005). According to Welman (2005), the pilot study essentially administers the questionnaire instrument to a limited number of subjects from the same population as that for which the eventual project is intended. In the view of Cresswell (2003), pilot testing is important to establish the face validity for an instrument and to improve questions, form and the scale.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

A key issue for any investigative enquiry is its credibility - the extent to which the data that have been obtained are both relevant and valuable. To make this

assessment, it is necessary to consider how reliable and valid the data are (Anderson, 2004).

Validity refers to the degree to which the sample of the test represents the content that the test is designed to measure (Orodho, 2009). In order to maintain consistency and relevance to the problem, questionnaire items were formulated around aspects of the problem being investigated. Donald and Pamela (2001) posit that content validity is determined by expert judgment. For this reason, my supervisor scrutinized the instrument to ensure that it addresses all the possible areas that it is intended to measure, as well as its appropriateness, completeness and accuracy.

A data collection instrument must be reliable. This means it should have the ability to consistently yield the same results when repeated measurements are undertaken of the same individuals under the same conditions (Orodho, 2009). O'Leary (2004) describes reliability as being concerned with internal consistency; that is, whether data collected, measured or generated are the same under repeated trials. To determine the reliability of the research instruments, the researcher conducted a test of the questionnaire through piloting which yielded a Cronbach's 'alpha' of 0.78 indicating a high level of reliability suggesting that a similar level of reliability might be achieved in another setting.

3.9.2 Data collection procedure

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher to respondents in their various schools. With the permission of the headmasters, respondents were guided as to how to complete the questionnaire. A total of 170 questionnaire were administered and out of which a 162 representing 95.3% were returned.

3.9.3 Analysis of data

Glatthorn and Joyner (2005) refer to data analysis as being a three-step procedure consisting of (1) reducing the data (2) reporting and displaying the data, (3) interpreting the data. According to Heather (2003), quantitative analysis of the question responses obtained from the questionnaire need to be summarised and portrayed clearly. The data gathered was subjected to descriptive analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form and helps to simplify large amounts of data in a sensible way (Patton, 2002). Before the actual data analysis, the gathered data was validated, edited and then coded. During the validation process, the questions were checked to determine whether an accurate or acceptable sample was obtained in terms of proportion of the issued questionnaire. They were also checked to verify completeness. Shamo and Resnic (2003) maintain that if a researcher is concerned with answering research questions he/she should use descriptive statistics such as percentages, mode, mean, and several other procedures. It was against this background that from Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) computer software programme, frequency counts and percentages as well as pie charts were collected for the analysis. Martin and Acuna (2002) observe that SPSS is able to handle large amount of data, and given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences, it is quite efficient. Swift and Piff (2005) observe that in any study, it is imperative that an appropriate analytical technique be adopted that brings out the quantitative meaning of the data.

3.9.5 Ethical considerations

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) explain that ethical considerations and ethical behaviour are as important in research as they are in any other field of human activity. The questionnaire will always be an intrusion into the life of the respondent,

be it in terms of time taken to complete the instrument, the level of threat or sensitivity of the questions, or the possible invasion of privacy (Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007).

In this study, every precaution was used to ensure the confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of the data and the participants involved as ethically as possible. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and that participation was voluntary. They were also made aware that they could decide on which question to respond to and that they could also decide to withdraw from participating in the study if they felt so without any consequences.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and analysis of the study. The results are presented based on the sequence in which the information was elicited. The first aspect dealt with the background information. The second dealt with the causes, effects of conflicts and the measures employed to manage conflicts in senior high schools.

4.2 Analysis of background Data

Background data of respondents covered are sex, age, highest educational qualification and working experience.

Respondents were required to indicate their sex

Table 4.1: Sex Distribution of the Respondent

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	97	59.9
Female	65	40.1
Total	162	100%

Source: Survey data (2016).

Table 4.1 showed that majority 97(59.9%) of the participants in the study were males, while females constituted 65(40.1%). This reflects the sex composition of many educational institutions in Ghana and therefore an indication from the findings that gender was fairly distributed in the sample population.

The respondents were requested to indicate their age in the questionnaire. The results were as presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 30	10	6.2
31-40	92	56.8
41-50	38	23.4
Above 50	22	13.6
Total	162	100%

Source: Survey data (2016).

Majority of the respondents (56.2%) were within the age bracket of 31 to 40 years followed by the age bracket of 41 to 50 years (23.4%), above 50 years (13.6%) and the lowest were in the age bracket of 30 years and below (6.2%). It appeared therefore that majority of the teachers in secondary schools in Ahafo-Ano North District were aged 41 to 50 years; an indication that the respondents were mature with enough experience in their various areas of work and hence better understanding of conflict issues in school setups.

The respondents were requested to indicate their work experience in the questionnaire. The results were as presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Work Experience of the Respondents

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Below 2 years	6	3.7
3 to 4 years	14	8.6
5 to 7 years	110	67.9
More than 7 years	32	19.6
Total	162	100.0

Source: Survey data (2016).

The analysis of the results on Table 2 indicated that 110(69.9%) respondents had a work experience of between 5 to 7 years, 32(19.6%) had worked for more than 7 years, 14(8.6%) had worked for 3 to 4 years while only 6(3.7%) had worked for less than 2 years. This indicated that most of the teachers and non-teaching staff had a long experience in senior high schools and had experienced organizational conflict and how it was managed. It was however not clear whether their experience impacted positively on their understanding of conflicts.

Table 4.4: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
WASSCE/'O' LEVEL	31	19.1
Higher National Diploma holders	7	4.3
Bachelor's degree	87	53.7
Master's degree	16	9.9
Total	162	100.0

Source: Survey data (2016).

The educational levels of the respondents especially the teachers were considered quite impressive, as they ranged from WASSCE/'O' level to Master's degree in various educational disciplines. From Table 4.4, respondents with Bachelor's degree ranked highest with 87(53.7%) followed by WASSCE/'O' level 31(19.1%) and Master's degree holders 16(9.9%). Higher National Diploma holders constituted the least with 7((4.3%). This shows that respondents are knowledgeable and well trained enough to understand the concept of conflict management.

4.3 Analysis of Result Based on Research Questions

4.2.1 Research Question One

1. What accounts for conflicts in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

In relation to this question, eight causes of conflicts in Senior High Schools were presented. Respondents were required to select the factor that caused conflicts "Very often", "Sometimes" and "Rarely". Table 4.5 presents information on the factors that caused conflicts in senior high school

Table 4.5: Causes of Conflicts

Causes of conflicts	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely
Autocratic style of leadership	94(58.0%)	51(31.5%)	17(10.5%)
Poor communication	88(54.3%)	53(32.7%)	21(13.0%)
Favouritism in appointments to key positions	87(53.7%)	66(40.7%)	9(5.6%)
Power struggle	83(51.3%)	57(35.2%)	22(13.6%)
Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities.	36(22.2%)	81(50.0%)	45(27.8%)
Personality clash	30(18.5%)	36(22.2%)	96(59.3%)
Competition for common but scarce resources	29(17.9%)	58(35.8%)	80(49.4%)
Laxity among teachers	45(27.8%)	55(34.0%)	62(38.2%)

From Table 4.5, four factors including autocratic style of leadership, poor communication, Favouritism in appointments to key positions, power struggle were believed to be the main factors responsible for conflicts in senior high school. For example, on the issue of autocratic style of leadership, while majority 94(58.0%) of the respondents claimed it very often led to conflict, 51(31.5%) said it was sometimes and only 17(10.5%) responded that it rarely led to conflicts. Similarly, majority 88(54.3%) of respondents were on the view that poor communication contributed very often to conflicts in senior high schools in Ahafo-Ano South District. However, 51(31.5%) and 23(14.2%) of the respondents rejected this claim as they responded sometimes and rarely respectively.

On the issue of favouritism in appointments to key positions, Table 4.6, showed that majority 87(53.7%) of the respondents asserted that very often it caused conflict. On the contrary, 66(44.7%) of the respondents observed that it sometimes caused conflict while 9(5.6%) suggested it is rarely. Power struggle was also found to cause conflicts very often in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano South District as claimed by majority 83(51.3%) of the respondents. However, 57(35.2%) said it was sometimes and 22(13.6%) said it was rarely.

Personality clash, Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, and Competition for common but scarce resources were found to contribute least to cause conflicts in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano South District. From the results, on Table 4.5, while half 81(50.0%) of the respondents observed that Personality clash sometimes caused conflicts, 45(27.8%) claimed it rarely caused conflicts and 36(22.2%) observed it very often caused conflicts. On Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, nearly half representing 49.4% argued that it sometimes caused conflicts, while 58(35.8%) observed that it was very often and 29(17.9%) claimed it

rarely caused conflicts in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano South District. Finally, Table 4.5 clearly showed that Competition for common but scarce resources and Laxity among teachers ranked list among the causes of conflicts. This was claimed by 95(58.6%) and 62(38.2%) of the respondents respectively.

Research Question 2. In what ways do conflicts affect senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

Table 4.6: Effects of Conflicts on Schools

Effects of conflicts on schools	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Break in healthy communication	97(59.9%)	37(22.8%)	23(14.2%)	5(3.1%)
divisiveness and bitterness	93(57.4%)	29(17.9%)	26(16.9%)	14(8.4%)
mutual suspicions and mistrust	86(53.1%)	31(19.1%)	30(18.5%)	15(9.3%)
Helps to raise and address problems	83(51.2%)	24(8.0%)	38(23.5%)	17(10.5%)
promotes effective decision-making	38(23.5%)	20(12.3%)	67(41.4%)	37(22.8%)
Strengthening of group cohesion/unity	19 (11.7%)	23(14.2%)	86(53.1%)	36(22.2%)
promotes creativity	21 (13.0%)	26(16.0%)	82(50.6%)	34(20.8%)
disruption of timing of school activities	17(10.5%)	22(13.6%)	45(27.8%)	72(48.1%)

Source: Survey data (2016).

From Table 4.6, break in healthy communication, divisiveness and bitterness, mutual suspicions and mistrust and helping to raise and address problems were identified as effects of conflicts on senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano South District. For instance, majority 97(59.9%) and 37(22.8%) either strongly agreed or

agreed that conflict can result in break in healthy communication, however, 5(3.1%) and 23(14.2%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed to the assertion. In relation to divisiveness and bitterness, while majority 93(57.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 37(22.8%) simply agreed. On the contrary, while 14(8.4%) strongly disagreed, 26(16.9%) disagreed. Similarly, with respect to divisiveness and bitterness, while majority 86(53.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion, 31(19.1%) agreed. However, 15(9.3%) and 30(18.5%) either strongly disagreed or agreed to the statement. On the issue of helping to raise and address problems, Table 4.6, showed that 83(51.2%) strongly agreed to the claim, while 17(10.5%) and 38(23.5%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

On the issue of Strengthening of group cohesion/unity, while majority 86(53.1%) of the respondents disagreed, 23(14.2) of them held a contrary view. Similarly, majority 82(50.6%) of the respondents disagreed that conflict can promote creativity while 34(20.8%) strongly disagree to the assertion. On the contrary, 26(16.0%) of the respondents agreed and 21 (13.0%) strongly agreed. Results from Table 4.6 further showed that majority of the respondents 67(41.4%) and 37(22.8%) either disagree or strongly disagreed that conflict promotes effective decision-making. However, 38(23.5%) strongly agreed and 20(12.3%) agreed to the assertion. similarly, more three quarters 116(71.4%) of the respondents claimed largely disagreed that conflicts can promote creativity. Finally, Table 4.6 showed that while 72(48.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 45(27.8%) disagreed. However, 17(10.5%) strongly agreed and 22(13.6%) of the respondents agreed.

Research Question Three: How are conflict managed in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

Table 4.7: Strategies of Managing Conflicts

Strategies of Managing Conflicts	Very often	sometimes	Rarely
Regular staff meetings	110(68.0%)	33(20.4%)	19(11.7%)
Open and effective communication	96(59.3%)	28(17.3%)	38(23.4%)
Involvement of all teachers in decision-making	84(51.9%)	56(34.6%)	22(13.6%)
Establishment of Grievances Procedure	35(21.6%)	102(63.0%)	25(15.4%)
Fairness in dealing with all staff members	46(28.4%)	93(57.4%)	23(14.2%)
Ignore conflict whenever it occurs	43(26.5%)	85(52.5%)	34(21.0%)
Acts as a mediator	25(15.4%)	39(24.1%)	98(60.5%)
dialogue with conflicting parties	37(22.8%)	33(20.4%)	92(56.8%)

Source: Survey data (2016).

From Table 4.7, Regular staff meetings, free flow of information to staff Members and Involvement of all teachers in decision-making ranked high as the strategies employed by heads of senior high schools to manage conflicts. From the results on Table 4.7, majority of the respondents 110(68.0%) said Regular staff meetings was used very often, while 33(20.4%) claimed this was used sometimes. Only 19(11.7%) of the respondents observed it was rarely used. Open and effective communication, 96(59.3%) of the respondents claimed this was used very often, while 28(17.3%) of the respondents said sometimes. However, 38 of respondents which represent 23.4% claimed it was rarely used. The results further showed that majority

84(51.9%) of the respondents were on the view that involvement of all teachers in decision-making was used very often, while 56(34.6%) believed it was sometimes.

Table 4.7 further showed that senior high school heads sometimes use Grievances Procedure to address conflict, demonstrate fairness in dealing with all staff members or ignore conflict whenever it occurs. From Table 4.7, majority of the 102(63.0%) claimed the headmasters sometimes use Grievances Procedure to manage conflict, 35(21.6%) said it was used very often and 25(15.4%) claimed headmasters rarely use this strategy.

With respect to ignoring conflict whenever it occurs, 85(52.5%) observed that it was used sometimes, while 43(26.5%) of the respondents claimed it was used very often. However, 34(21.0%) of respondents said it was rarely used. The challenge of conflict lies in how one chooses to deal with it. Ignoring or avoiding conflict is an ineffective attitude for problem solving. The inability to deal with conflict respectfully, constructively and in a timely manner will quickly undermine the leaders credibility and the progress of an organization.

In relation to Acting as a mediator, 98(60.5%) of the respondents believed the headmaster rarely acts as a mediator in conflicts in the school. However, 39(24.1%) of the respondents pointed out that it was used sometimes, while 25(15.4%) of the respondents claimed it was rarely used. Similarly, 92(56.8%) of the respondents were on the view that school heads rarely promote dialogue as a way of managing conflicts.

4.3 Discussion of Results

Research Question One: What Factors Account for Conflicts in Senior High Schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

From Table 4.5, autocratic style of leadership, poor communication, favouritism in appointments to key positions and power struggle were ranked high as the factors responsible for conflicts in senior high school. On the issue of autocratic style of leadership 94(58.0%) of the respondents claimed it contributed to conflict very often. The findings of this study concur with Johdi and Apitree (2012) that autocratic tendencies by school heads are a common cause of conflict with teachers. Autocratic heads tend to fail to achieve purposeful cooperation and collaboration among teachers hence conflicts. McNamara, (2007) is of the opinion that determinants of conflicts in most educational institutions can be traced to various leadership styles. Table 4.5 further showed that majority 88(54.3%) of respondents were on the view that poor communication contributed very often to conflicts in senior high schools in Ahafo-Ano South District. Clearly, when communication is lacking, misunderstood, untrue, or withheld, conflicts tended to worsen. The same is true if people feel they are not being heard or listened to. Alimba and Fabunmi (2014) opines that the ways in which messages are framed and employed influence the nature of responses that will be elicited. The authors argued that where harsh words or foul talks dominate the course of interaction, if left unchecked, the consequences will be hostile reactions and conflict will invariably emerge. Communication, therefore, becomes a central issue in conflict generation, escalation and de-escalation. Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012) who observe that when there is too little communication, associates do not know enough about each other's intentions, goals, or plans.

Coordination becomes difficult, and misunderstandings are more likely to occur, which can result in conflict.

The findings of the study as reflected in Table 4.5 also show that favouritism in appointments to key positions is the third highest factor driving conflict as attested to by 87(53.7%) of the respondents. This is in line with Kipyego as cited in Tshuma, Ndlovu and Bhebhe (2016) who posit that school heads sometimes favour some teachers at the expense of others and this fosters a sense of resentment, anger and hatred. He contends that it is this resentment that brews rumours, jealousy and conflict at work place. Power struggle was also found to cause conflicts very often in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano South District as claimed by majority 83(51.3%) of the respondents. This study corroborates a study by Afful-Broni (2012) which found that conflicts sometimes arise through the struggle to have control over power or authority. He notes that sometimes within the school, it is common to find especially the old and new staff or those with the highest qualification and those with the least qualification seeking to outdo each other in order to have control of authority. This inevitably leads to conflict. Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities were found to occasionally cause conflict in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano South District.

Finally, Table 4.5 clearly showed that personality clash and competition for common but scarce resources ranked least among the causes of conflicts. This was claimed by 30(18.5%) and 29(17.9%) of the respondents respectively. The results of this study contrasts with the earlier findings of Henry (2009), which stated that employees compete in organization because of limited resources. This competition can take the form of financial, promotion, manpower, equipment, etc. Dowling and Osborn (2001) also reported in their conflict study that resources are available assets which may include time, money and material possessions and affects the incidences

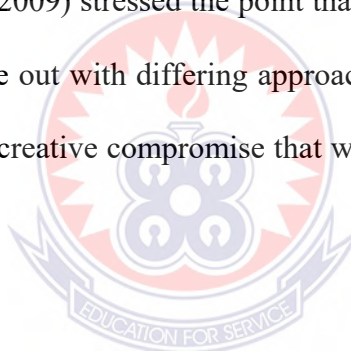
of conflict to a large extent. Meeks, Heit and Page (2005) confirmed that conflict may arise when there are insufficient available resources in a groups or organizations. In this instance, individuals try to have their share of the available limited resources and most likely step on each other's toes in the course of the struggle or competition resulting in the emergence of conflict

Research Question 2: In what ways do conflicts affect senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

From Table 4.7, break in healthy communication, divisiveness and bitterness, mutual suspicions and mistrust and helping to raise and address problems were identified as effects of conflicts on senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano South District. For instance, majority 97(59.9%) and 37(22.8%) either strongly agreed or agreed that conflict can result in break in healthy communication, In relation to divisiveness and bitterness, majority 93(57.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, Similarly, with respect to divisiveness and bitterness, more than half 86(53.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion, On the issue of helping to raise and address problems, Table 4.6, showed that 83(51.2%) strongly agreed to the claim. This results confirms the position of Afful-Broni (2007) who contents that conflict is inimical to organizational growth and progress. He outlines the negative effect of conflict to include break in communication, suspicion and mistrust, divisiveness and bitterness, needless tension, apathy and development paralysis.

Afful-Broni (2007) argues that conflict impacts positively on organizations such as the school. For him, conflict further presents opportunities for issues to be clarified, re-defined and sharpened.

On the issue of strengthening of group cohesion/unity, majority 86(53.1%) of the respondents disagreed. Similarly, majority 82(50.6%) of the respondents disagreed that conflict can promote creativity and 34(20.8%) even strongly disagreed to the assertion. On the contrary, 26(16.0%) of the respondents agreed and 21 (13.0%) strongly agreed. Results from Table 4.6 further showed that majority of the respondents 67(41.4%) and 37(22.8%) either disagree or strongly disagreed that conflict promotes effective decision-making. Similarly, more than three quarters 116(71.4%) of the respondents largely disagreed that conflicts can promote creativity. This finding is inconsistent with the position of Griffin (2012) who argues that moderate levels of conflict can have a positive influence on the team and the organization. Anderson (2009) stressed the point that conflict can stimulate creativity. Team members can come out with differing approaches on achieving goals so that at the end the decision is a creative compromise that was not obvious before (Anderson, 2009).



Research Question 3: How is conflict managed in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

From Table 4.7, regular staff meetings, open and effective communication and involvement of all teachers in decision-making ranked high as the strategies employed by heads of senior high schools to manage conflicts. From the results on Table 4.7, majority of the respondents 110(68.0%) claimed regular staff meetings was used very often. For open and effective communication, 96(59.3%) of the respondents claimed this was used very often. Johdi and Apitree (2012) contend that perhaps the easiest way to prevent conflict is to ensure regular meetings. The school head therefore needs to constantly meet with all sectors of the institution to speak out and set the record

straight to avoid distortions that may lead to conflict. Winfield (2010) argues, the reality is that the root cause of most conflict is born out of poor communication or the inability to control one's emotions. For him, clear concise, accurate, and timely communication of information will help to ease both the number and severity of conflicts. The results further showed that majority 84(51.9%) of the respondents were on the view that involvement of all teachers in decision-making was used very often, while 56(34.6%) believed it was sometimes. Kiboss and Jemiryott (2014) note that when staff is made to participate in decision-making, it generates a sense of ownership by the staff in the pursuit of organizational goals, nurtures the generation of ideas, and helps build trust and respect.

Table 4.7 further showed that senior high school heads sometimes use grievances Procedure to address conflict, demonstrate fairness in dealing with all staff members or ignore conflict whenever it occurs. From Table 4.7, majority of the 102(63.0%) claimed the headmasters sometimes use grievances procedure to manage conflict, 35(21.6%) said it was used very often and 25(15.4%) claimed headmasters rarely use this strategy.

Kazimoto (2013) notes that grievance procedures creates opportunity for the concerns and complains of staffs to be dealt with promptly. This can prevent bad feelings from festering and growing into resentment and bitterness. The failure of school heads to resort to established grievance procedures could make conflict management difficult.

With respect to ignoring conflict whenever it occurs, 85(52.5%) observed that it was a strategy that was used sometimes, while 43(26.5%) of the respondents claimed it was used very often. However, 34(21.0%) of respondents said it was rarely used. This confirms the assertion of Mankoe (2007) that some managers deliberately

avoid conflicts as a way of dealing with it. The challenge of conflict lies in how one chooses to deal with it. Ignoring or avoiding conflict is an ineffective attitude for problem solving. The inability to deal with conflict respectfully, constructively and in a timely manner will quickly undermine the leaders credibility and the progress of an organization. Uline *et al.* (2003) supported that conflicts that are avoided and poorly managed can wreak havoc on both individuals and organizations. Conflict can cause unimaginable havocs when ignored or allowed to escalate unabated in a school. Conflict has the capacity to destabilize any organisation, if the mechanisms for containment are ineffective (Alimba & Fabunmi, 2014). Hacifazlioglu, (2004) admonishes leaders and organizations to effectively manage conflicts so as to help stimulate people towards greater work efforts, cooperation and creativity.

In relation to Acting as a mediator, 98(60.5%) of the respondents believed the headmaster rarely acts as a mediator in conflicts in the school. However, 39(24.1%) of the respondents pointed out that it was used sometimes, while 25(15.4%) of the respondents claimed it was rarely used. Similarly, 92(56.8%) of the respondents were on the view that school heads rarely promote dialogue as a way of managing conflicts. This shows that heads do not encourage dialogue and deliberation to manage conflicts. The results of this study contradicts that from Afful-Broni (2012) who in a similar study found that dialogue is one of the key to approaches employed by school administrators handle conflicts conflict management. This useful approach is not exploited by heads to manage conflicts in their schools. Hoy and Miskel (2005) admonished that to deal with conflicts, dialogue and deliberation must be encouraged.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter which provides a brief overview of the study, highlighting major findings to draw conclusions and to suggest recommendations. This chapter is categorised into three sections for which the first part dealt with the summary of the study, the second section discussed the conclusion and the third dealt with recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the Study

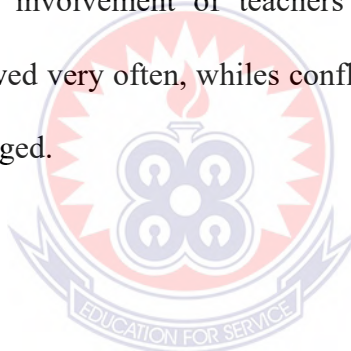
The purpose of this study was to investigate the conflict management in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano district and its implications for educational administration. Hence, three objectives were set out and these were to 1. Examine the causes of conflict in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District; 2. Assess the effects of conflict on senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District; 3. Explore the strategies adopted in managing conflict in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District; and to make appropriate recommendations. To achieve these objectives, the descriptive research design was employed with questionnaire around the following three research questions: 1. What accounts for conflicts in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District? 2. In what ways do conflicts affect senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District? 3. How are conflicts managed in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District?

Main Findings

1. The first research question examined the causes of conflict in senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano North District. The study revealed that conflicts in senior high schools were caused primarily by autocratic style of leadership, poor communication, favouritism in appointments to key positions and power struggle. This was attested to by majority of the respondents. Contrary to expectation the study revealed that personality clash and competition for common but scarce resources ranked least among the causes of conflicts.
2. The second research question asked the participants to identify the effects of conflicts in senior high schools. Majority of the participants identified break in healthy communication, divisiveness and bitterness, mutual suspicions and mistrust as well as helping to raise and address issues as the main effects of conflicts. However, participants rejected nearly all the items that portrayed conflict as positive.
3. The third research question asked what strategies heads of senior high schools employ to manage conflicts in their schools. This study revealed several strategies heads use to deal with conflicts. From the results on Table 4.7, majority of the respondents said regular staff meetings, open and effective communication and the involvement of all teachers in decision-making. The study however found that grievance procedures are sometimes employed and most of the time headmasters ignore conflicts or reluctant to encourage dialogue and deliberation to manage conflicts.

5.3 Conclusion of the Study

The study indicates that the major causes of conflicts in senior high school are autocratic style of leadership, poor communication and favouritism in appointment to positions. Head of schools are not well-trained in effective leadership skills and conflict management. This has the potential to affect the proper management of schools. Conflict is generally viewed negatively by both teachers and non-teaching staff in senior high schools hence their failure to appreciate the positive value of conflict in terms of improving creativity and proper decision-making. The study also revealed that the most used means of managing conflict among head masters of senior high school in the Ahafo –Ano district are regular staff meeting, open and regular communication and the involvement of teachers in decision making. Grievance procedures are not followed very often, while conflicts are either ignored or avoided and dialogue not encouraged.



5.4 Recommendations

Having analyzed the collected data, the presented findings on chapter five and conclusion, this part of the research report presents the proposed recommendations of the findings as outlined below:

1. The Ghana Education Service should organize In-service for teachers and heads of schools on conflict identification and management to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills in dealing positively with conflicts in the schools.

2. It should also organize seminars and workshops aimed at improving rapport between heads of schools and their staff and building good working relations between them.
3. The Ghana Education Service should organize workshops for heads of school to enable them acquire or improve their leadership skills so as to improve their managerial effectiveness.
4. It is also recommended the teacher education curriculum include courses on conflict resolution and management as a form of preparation for future teachers for the real world of teaching after training.
5. Educational administrators should communicate transparently, practice fairness and transparency so that they can create trust and good relationships among staff.
6. Efforts should be made by the managers to occasionally stimulate conflict by encouraging divergent views and rewarding staff and unit/department for outstanding performance.
7. Proper grievances procedures should be put in place to resolve conflict. For instance, when any disagreements arise among the employees, it should be reported to the management and then management should get statements from the parties involved, brainstorm the issue and make recommendation on how to resolve the conflict.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI

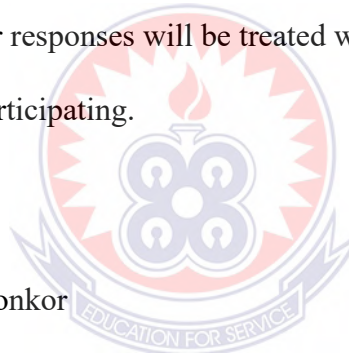
QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information on the study of the conflict management strategies of heads of public senior high schools in the Ahafo-Ano District and its implications on educational administration. The information being sought is meant to be used for only academic purposes. Please you are kindly requested to respond to the questions as frankly as possible. All your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you for participating.

Agnes Dapaah Donkor



(M.A. Educational Leadership Student)

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR FRANCIS OWUSU MENSAH

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Listed in this section are four items on background information. For each item, kindly tick (✓) in the appropriate box as applicable to you.

1. Sex: Male Female

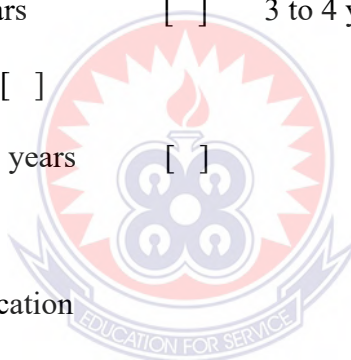
2. Age: Below 30 31 – 40 41 – 50
 Above 50

3. Working experience:

Below 2 years 3 to 4 years 5 to 7
years
More than 7 years

4. Highest qualification

WASSCE/'O' LEVEL HND Bachelor Degree
 Master's Degree



SECTION B: CAUSES OF CONFLICTS

This section seeks to find out the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as causes of conflicts in senior high schools. Please, tick (✓) the appropriate column that most adequately reflects your opinion with respect to the given statements. Scale of answers 1= Very often, 2= Sometimes, and 3= rarely.

Causes of conflicts	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely
Power struggle			
Competition for common but scarce			
Favouritism in appointments to key positions			
Laxity among teachers			
Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities.			
Personality clash			
Resources poor communication			
Autocratic style of leadership			

SECTION C: EFFECTS OF CONFLICTS ON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

This section seeks to find out the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as effects of conflicts in senior high schools. Please, tick (√) the appropriate column that most adequately reflects your opinion with respect to the given statements. Scale of answers 1= strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=disagree and 4=strongly disagree

Effects of conflicts on schools	strongly agree	Agree,	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Strengthening of group cohesion/unity				
divisiveness and bitterness				
mutual suspicions and mistrust				
disruption of timing of school activities				
promotes effective decision-making				
break in healthy communication				
promotes creativity				
Helps to raise and address problems				

SECTION D: STRATEGIES OF MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

This section seeks to find out which of the following measures are used in dealing with acts of indiscipline in Senior High Schools.

Please, tick (✓) the appropriate column that most adequately reflects your view in relation to the given statement

Measures of Maintaining Discipline	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely
Establishment of grievances procedure			
Dialogue with conflicting parties			
Involvement of all teachers in decision-making			
Acts as a mediator			
Fairness in dealing with all staff members			
Ignore conflict whenever it occurs			
Open and effective communication			
Regular staff meetings			