UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SENIOR HIGH

SCHOOLS IN THE AKUAPEM SOUTH MUNICIPALITY OF EASTERN

REGION OF GHANA

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BY

ARMSTRONG KWASI ANTWI

Dissertation submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for award of Masters' Degree in Educational Administration

MAY 2013

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:……………………………………   Date……………

Name: Armstrong Kwasi Antwi

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature:……………………………   Date………………

Name: Rev. K. Arko-Boham

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the conflict management practices of headmasters in senior high schools in the Akuapem South District. The specific objectives of the study were to : find the common types of conflict in the schools, causes of conflicts and how the headmasters managed conflicts that occurred in the schools. The study further sought to examine the effective techniques applied by the headmasters in resolving conflicts in the schools. Five senior high schools were studied in the Akuapem south Municipality. In all 214 respondents were involved in the study. The research design used in this study was descriptive survey. Data was collected using questionnaire and a follow-up interview schedule. The statistical methods used in the analysis were frequencies and percentages.

The major findings of the study were the following: communication gap and subordinates shirking their responsibilities were the main causes of conflict between the headmasters and their staff in the Municipality. The win-win, co-operative and confirming approach to conflict resolution were mostly administered by the headmasters. The approaches contributed greatly in reducing conflict in the schools. Headmasters and teachers must collaborate and co-operate greatly to create congenial and moderating work environment for improved, effective and efficient work performance in the senior high schools in the Municipality. Such environment would minimize or eliminate undue tension, rivalry, biases as well as mistrust and suspicious tendencies among staff members.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my wife Cecilia and two Children Michael and Rebecca.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Over the past decade or more, the focus of instruction has been evolving to make classrooms more conducive to student empowerment. If we want students to develop into responsible adults who can work cooperatively and constructively with others we must teach the interpersonal skills required and give students opportunities to practise these skills. Many educators searching for ways to enhance constructive interpersonal skills have discovered that school-based conflict management and mediation programmes can provide a structure for students to acquire these skills.

The senior high school is a social unit that fosters a lot of interaction between superior and subordinates. As a human institution though, its interaction processes may generate conflict. Thomas (1978) and Thomas and Schmidt (1976) view the issue of conflict management in organizations as important and relevant topic in organizational behaviour. The Common Wealth Secretariat (1993) intimates that "there is no society, community, organization or interpersonal relationship, which does not experience conflict at some time or another as part of daily interactions. Communities and societies are plagued with issues such as chieftaincy, religious, differences in goals or objectives, competitions for power,

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status and prestige, creating conflict" (p. 24). Owen (1970) agrees with the view that conflict is pervasive in all human experience and for that matter, an important aspect of an organizational behaviour in education. Conflict in senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality is no exception. Conflict in schools is eminent, for a school has diverse interest groups, including professionals, non-professionals, non-teaching staff and students. Conflict may arise between teachers and the headmaster, teachers and students, teachers and non-teaching staff, students and the headmaster. The headmaster faces the challenge of resolving and managing conflict if the goals of the school are to be adequately met.

Having taught for ten years in two senior high schools, I obtained through informal relations with colleagues from the same school and other schools that most teachers jealously talk negatively about their heads which seems to tarnish their image. Nevertheless, they seem to be unwilling to discuss their differences openly with the heads for amicable resolutions. Such conflict manifested at the least instance of provocation and possibly accounted for a lot of internal conflicts in schools. Findings made by the researcher on visit to the senior high schools within the Akuapem South Municipal to establish the background to the study showed various situations of conflict in the schools.

One of the conflict situations relate to failure to be appointed as an Assistant Headmaster of Saint Martin's Senior High School for the 2008/2009 Academic year after attending an interview for the recent post, the senior house master had summoned the headmaster at CHRAJ for being the cause of his

inability to assume the role of assistant headmastership. The development had marred the relationship between the Headmaster and the Senior Housemaster giving room for frequent manifestations of conflict. The issue was still pending at CHRAJ when the researcher was collating data on the background to the study.

Another relates to cases of mistrust and suspicion of abuse of office created a conflict situation in one of the Senior High Schools in the Municipality during the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in May, 2009. In this case students of the Visual Arts Department alleged the school authorities charged examination fees higher than the approved fee and that the excess amount should be refunded to them. Students then charged on the authorities when they wrote their last paper. The police finally restored peace in the school. Subsequently, the headmaster blamed the head of department of the Visual Arts of instigating the students to behave the way they did. The case was reported to the Municipal Director of Education in the Akuapem South who intervened and the tutor has been relieved of his post as the head of department. The relationship between the headmaster and the head of department has since been cordial, for the school's PTA executives took up the matter and resolved it.

Another factor that is most likely makes the senior high schools prone to conflict is the writing of lesson notes. In one of the senior high school almost at the end of every academic year teachers are requested to fill a form for release. Apparently teachers who did not feel comfortable writing lesson notes leave the school. In another School also in Aburi in 1999 it became evident, as reported to the researcher that the teaching staff and the non-teaching staff on occasions

argued on factional basis at joint-staff meetings. Blasé (1991) attributes conflicts in the schools system to different culture co-existing and interacting. Waller (as cited in Blase) observes that teachers experience a variety of tensions between organizational and personal aspects of teaching: interference with demands for solving societal ills, anger of having to comply with policies made by people who are non-practitioners and the perception that teaching is low status. These situations tended to breed conflict in the schools.

Religion apparently was not quite unifying in all respect in the senior high schools in the municipality because of the existence of denominational differences. Some conflicts therefore seemed rooted in religion. In 2007 in one of the Senior High Schools in the Municipality, an English tutor who is also a priest was appointed the headmaster of the school after successfully attending an interview. Some aggrieved teachers in the school alleged that rankings in the Ghana Education Service disqualifies him to hold that post but for being a priest he was still appointed. In the same institution, the Senior Prefect, for instance was by tradition appointed from a particular church even if it meant sacrificing competence for that matter. In a similar development, heads of Presby Senior Technical and Aburi Girls Senior High School, must be staunch or adherents of the Presby Church.

Also a significant dimension of conflict in the senior high schools related to students. Schools have traditionally been expected to teach children academic skills. Schools are also places where students interact with one another, their teachers, and educational administrators. Many educators believe students'

behavior affect academic achievement; therefore, negative behavior, such as truancy, has always been a concern to educators. In the last decade, the concern about student behavior has escalated to alarming proportions (Boothe, Bradley, Flick, Keough & Kurk, 1993). Negative interactions may lead to learning problems because students who spend time arguing and fighting have little time or energy for academic pursuits. The following were cases in point in some of the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. In May 2007 five senior students of Saint Martin's Senior High School broke into the school's computer laboratory and stole six lap-top computers and their accessories. Investigations carried on by the police led to their arrest and the case was therefore settled by the school's PTA. In February 2004 four senior students of Adonten Senior High school broke bounds by leaving the school without permission. Their house master punished them and on the night after the punishment when there was "light out" stones were hurled onto the roof-top of the housemaster's residence possibly by the irate students proving vindictive.

Reportedly, at Aburi Girls Senior High School, Aburi, in 2004, a National Service personnel was caught red-handed fondling unsuspecting girls. This must happen in a conflict situation.

Lately teachers' motivation fee paid by the parents for additional teaching after the normal classes hours has become a source of worry and conflict. The heads of the institutions insist that the fee is termed "Staff incentive" according to the Director General of Ghana Education Service and as such non-teaching staff should also benefit. But teachers on the other hand resist the move, for they argue

that the teaching is actually done by them. At Adonten Senior High School for instance, it is alleged that the headmaster vetoed that part of the motivation fee be used in funding water project in the school. It incurred the displeasure of some teachers.

Tribal factors also seemingly stimulated conflict in some of the schools. In 2001, the then headmaster of Nsawam Senior High School was reported to have said that he would balance the equation of the Ewes as against the other tribes for the Ewes constitute about 80% of both teaching and non-teaching staff in the school. Similar situation also existed in Saint Martin's Senior High School at Adoagyiri-Nsawam. This assertion is manifested during internal appointment of housemasters, form masters, and the head of department where particular ethnic group dominates and the other ethnic groups disapproves even though it is an official appointment.

Factors external to the schools also gave rise to the conflict in the schools. This assertion was corroborated by the following instances: In 2001, the then PTA executive members of Nsawam Senior High school wrote to the regional Director of education demanding the reinstatement of the acting Head master as the substantive one when the position became vacant. Also it was alleged that the current headmaster of Saint Martin's Senior High School was then a principal superintendent hurriedly attended interview for promotion to Assistant Director due to the influence of the highest catholic hierarchy.

Conflict management in the administrative processes at the schools flowed upwards from students to the staff and to the administrators. It flowed literally

among professionals and non-professionals, parents and other agents internal and external to the school. Conflict management practices of the senior high schools therefore called for the heads of the schools to realize their educational objectives. Johnson and Venable (1986) approached the issue of managing conflict in the school situation when they suggested that additional knowledge was needed about how the principal should perform such important role functions of administering the rules and regulations of the school while simultaneously gaining the co-operation of the teachers. Conflict practices in the administration of the senior high schools needed to be studied and clearly understood.

As the job market has become more and more competitive, Senior High School graduation has become a minimum requirement for all students. Academic skills are judged as important but the ability to work cooperatively and constructively with peers and supervisors has become important. A growing body of research suggests that although many students do not possess the social skills necessary to interact cooperatively and constructively, these skills can be taught (Goldstain, 1988). Educators searching for a way to reduce negative interactions and increase positive ones are finding that school based conflict management and mediation programmes can provide a structure for student to acquire positive interaction skills (Van Slyck & Stern, 1991). Improved social skills can help students achieve success at school and in the market place.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict in institutions range between heads of institutions and teachers, administrators and non-teaching staffs, administrators and students, teachers and

students, non-teaching staff and students and a host of others. As people come together to satisfy a wide range of emotional needs, social, relationship in general are swamped with conflict. Lenski (1991) states that "every social system generates conflict" (p. 304). Conflict is a source of much discomfort for individuals within organizations. It often leads to insbility between superordinates and subordinates and among peers to work effectively. Consequently, conflict is believed to be an important basis of organizational ineffectiveness. The other side of conflict is that it is often necessary for creativity, innovation and decision-making. The way a conflicts are handled determines whether its outcome will be functional or dysfunctional.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to find out how school authorities especially headmasters manage these inevitable conflicts in order to ensure progress in their schools. In other words, do all headmasters in the Akuapem South Municipality have the ability to manage conflict effectively in their schools so as to reduce tensions associated with them and induce efficiency and high productivity? Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To identify the main causes of conflict between the headmasters and staff of the senior high schools.

2. To find out the conflict management practices adopted by the headmasters of the senior high schools in the Municipality and

3. To determine the effectiveness of conflict management practices of the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality.

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Research Questions

The Study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of conflict are common in the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality?

2. What are the causes of conflict between the headmasters of the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality and their staff?

3. How do headmasters in the Municipality resolve conflicts that arise in their schools?

4. How effective are conflict management practices of headmasters of the school?

Significance of the Study

The study expects to be of importance to the school authorities particularly, headmasters of the senior high schools and all educational administrators in the Akuapem South Municipality. The outcome of the study is expected to enhance cohesion of the organizational practices of the senior high schools. Additionally, the findings of the study would also sensitize the headmasters to the types of conflict prevalent in the schools so that they could take preventive measures. Again, the research might assist in preparing the minds of prospective school administrators and teachers towards the various conflict situations they could face in their administrative and teaching tasks. Thus they might be better disposed to discharge their professional responsibilities. For the school staff, less time would be spent on settling students' disputes, reduce

tension among students and staff and foster better staff/student relationships which would lead to improving school climate.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was carried out in the Public Senior High Schools in the Akuapem South Municipal of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The research was restricted to identifying common types of conflicts, causes of conflict between school authorities and staff (teaching and non-teaching) of the schools and how effectively such conflicts were managed by the headmasters. Conflicts analyzed in terms of "approach" and "avoidance" concepts were left out of the study. These types of conflict are highly subjective and individualistic in nature. They could be the focus of a separate study. For the same reasons the management of students conflict has been excluded from the study.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by time, finance, fatigue and material resources. This made the researcher sample only the public senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. The Likert scale method adopted for the study has some limitations. It may not adequately measure the variables in the study with the expected accuracy. The "Very Frequent and Frequent" may not fit into "Frequent" category among others. However, true careful construction of the scale supported with relevant literature and expect appraisal the validity was enhanced. Further the Likert scale is considered appropriate notwithstanding its

limitations. Hence the findings from the study can be generalized to other schools (private) in the Akuapem South Municipality

Operational Definition of Terms

Conflict: Tension between two or more social entities (individuals, groups, or larger organizations) that arise from incapability of actual or desired responses (Raven &Kniglanski, 1970).

Administrator: The head of a senior high school.

Approach–approach conflict: The uneasiness felt in making one choice at the expense of the other because either choice is useful.

Avoidance approach: A method of conflict management which results in a deadlock as people involved withdraw from discussing issues.

Competitive approach: Managing conflict by persuading or coercing others into submission.

Constructive conflict: The type of conflict that tends to yield favourable results.

Cooperative approach: Managing conflict to achieve mutual goals of the group concerned.

Confrontation: A physical or verbal attack used to solve a conflict.

Conflict resolution skills: Skills needed to identify and deal with conflict constructively.

Destructive conflict: The type of conflict that tends to yield negative results and impedes progress.

Headmaster: The person in control of a senior high school organization at the institution level. The term as used in the study also implies headmistress.

Human Relations: The manner in which a person deals with others.

Lose–Lose: A situation of resolving conflict, where both parties engaged in the conflict lose in the deal.

Non-teaching staff: Support staff or workers in the senior high schools with official tasks other than teaching.

Staff: The teachers and other workers in senior high schools under the headmaster.

Subordinates: The staff of the senior high schools serving under the hierarchy of the institution, which has the headmaster as the highest.

Superordinates: The headmaster of the senior high schools.

Teaching Staff: Employees of the senior high schools exclusively engaged in teaching.

"**Win–lose**:" Where one party wins while the other loses in resolving a conflict.

"**Win-win" solutions**: Resolving conflicts in ways that address and meet the needs of all conflicting parties.

Organization of the Rest of the Study

Chapter Two is focused on the review of relevant literature whilst Chapter Three was devoted to the methodology of the study. The Methodology focuses on population, sample, design, instruments, and data collection procedure and data analysis. Chapter Four focuses with the results and discussion of the findings of the study. The last chapter which is Chapter Five entails the summary of the study, summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations. Chapter Five also provided suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conflict management has attracted the attention of many discerning scholars owing to its repercussion on society. There are a number of literatures dealing with the subject. In this chapter some of the relevant related literature is reviewed to form the theoretical framework of the study. This review of the literature is presented under the following subheadings:

1. Definition of conflict

2. Types of conflict

3. Theories of conflict

4. Causes of conflict

5. Conflict management

6. Conflict prevention approaches

7. Studies on conflict management

8. Personal styles of conflict resolution

9. Guidelines for coping with conflict situations

Definition of Conflict

Conflict is a term that lends itself to different interpretations. Undoubtedly, scholars have attempted to give meaningful and acceptable explanations of the concept conflict. To start with, Knesburg (1973) defines

conflict as a relationship between two or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals. Deutsch (1973) states that conflict exists whenever an action by one person or group prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures or in some way makes less likely the desired action of another person or group.

Additionally, Procter (1996) also defines conflict as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinion or principles. This implies that there is conflict when one behaves contrary to the expectation s of another person or others. Negben (1978) also defines conflict as any situation in which two or more parties are incompatible. The definition emphasizes differences as the underlining factor in explaining conflict. Odetola and Ademola (1985) explain conflict as usually involving a measure of confrontation and sometimes leading to violence. Conflict by this explanation corroborates the understanding of student disturbances in schools.

By inference therefore, in the senior high schools situation, discontentment with leadership performance could lead to tension and confrontation between the headmaster and his subordinates. This illustrates a state of conflict. Similarly poor human relations may also result in conflict. In this study, the definition by Deutsch (1973) as quoted above shall be adopted.

Types of Conflict

The multi-faceted nature of conflict has led to the identification of different types of conflict by scholars. Barlay (1971) identified three types of conflict situations. He says these are subordinate conflict, super-ordinate conflict

and lateral conflict. He notes that subordinate conflict is between the administrator and a person or group over which he has authority or responsibility. He explained that super-ordinate conflict is between the administrator and a person or group which has authority over him (the administrator). Bailey adds that lateral conflict is between persons or groups who have equal authority.

Cridir, Goethals, Kavanaugh and Solomon (1983) agreed with Huffman, Vernoy and Vernoy (1994) in identifying three basic types of conflict namely:

1. Approach - approach conflict,

2. Avoidance-avoidance conflict, and

3. Approach-avoidance conflict.

Cridir, Goethals, Kavanaugh and Solomon (1983) explain that in an approach-approach conflict a person must choose between two or more favourable alternatives. Thus no matter what choice is made the result will be desirable. However one goal can be obtained only by giving up the other. Therein lies conflict. For example, a student girl may have to choose between accepting the proposal of a young well to-do man and pursuing a promising academic interest. Either choice will be desirable to her.

They continued that an avoidance- avoidance conflict involves making a choice between two or more unpleasant alternatives that will lead to negative results, no matter which choice is made. For example, a headmaster may have to choose between retaining an irresponsible teacher at post and effecting his/her release from the staff, only for affected classes to remain without a vital subject teacher for a term or longer. Clearly neither alternative is favourable. Huffman,

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Voney and Vorney (1994) pointed out that this conflict leads to a great deal of ambivalence.

In the view of Cridir, Goethals, Kavanaugh and Solomon (1983) the approach-avoidance conflict is experienced, where a person is both drawn to and repelled by a goal or cause of action. For example, a student may be willing to register for a planned educational tour but at the same time be scared by a recent disastrous motor accident on the route to be taken. The student may be confused and unhappy because of this conflict. On his part, Deutsch (1973) contended that a conflict, whatever its reality is usually about one or another of several types of issues. He describes three basic types of issues which have control over resources, preferences and nuisances, values, beliefs and the nature of the relationship between the parties. They are explained as follows;

In the view of Deutsch (1973), control over resources such as space, money, property, power, prestige, food among other things may be viewed as non-sharable. He notes that if two or more parties are seeking exclusive use of a resource or a given part of it, conflict is apt to occur between them. Deutsch continued that preferences and nuisances is another source of conflict. Deutsch explains that many conflicts arise because the activities or taste of one person or group impinge upon another's preferences, sensitivities or sensibilities. He identified values as another source of conflict. Deutsch argues that one person may prefer a system of government that emphasizes individual liberty. He says that it is not the differences per say that leads to conflict but rather the claim that

one should dominate or be applied generally, even by those who hold different values.

Deutsch (1973) identified beliefs as another type of conflict. Deutsch observes that many conflicts are over what "is" over fact, information, knowledge or belief about reality. He says that not all discrepancies in belief lead to conflict, unless one of the parties or both decide that his or her belief should dominate and be accepted by the other. The nature of relationship between the parties can also bring about conflict. Deutsch maintains that two people may be in conflict because of opposing views and desires in their relationship. He says both may want to be dominant, or both may desire to be dominated; one may want more "togetherness" than the other and so on. He notes further that another useful distinction among conflicts is that between destructive and constructive conflicts. He observes that a conflict has destructive consequences if its participants are dissatisfied with the outcomes and feel they have lost as a result of the conflict. He continues that a conflict has productive consequences if the participants are all satisfied with their outcomes and feel they have gained as a result of the conflict.

On his part, Nnadi (1997) identified two main types of conflict. Nnadi referred to them as intra-personal conflict and inter-personal conflict. Nnadi argued that the intra-personal conflict is the type of conflict exists within an individual having various needs. For instance, an individual is faced with needs, which the resources available cannot meet and the individual becomes torn between which of the needs to satisfy at that time. The school head for example, may be at conflict with how to disburse his organizational grants which is not

adequate to suffice the vital needs of the school at the time. The inter-personal conflict, in the view of Nnadi is the type of conflict manifests in the following forms:

1. Conflicts between individuals or groups.

2. Conflict between individuals like a head of department and his subordinates, headmaster and his assistant headmaster or two teachers teaching the same subject.

3. Group having conflict against an individual for example, the non-teaching staff against a teacher.

4. Group verses group for example, students against the teaching staff.

Another important type of conflict resembling the intra-personal conflict identified by Rose, Glazer and Glazer (1978) is role conflict. They explained the role conflicts play when different roles of persons make opposing demands, which can also occur within a role. For example, student prepares to attend a biology revision class as his final external examination closes in when he heard about his father being admitted to a hospital for a surgical operation and feels like visiting him. This situation is an example of a role conflict, a situation in which the behavior that is expected of one role comes into conflict with the bahaviour expected of another role. In this case the role of a student conflicts the role of a son.

Rose et al. (1978) explains further that role conflict can also consist between conflicting expectations of the same roles. For example, if a headmaster has to appoint one mathematics teacher to fill a vacancy in his school. One of the

two applicants, a male, is an experienced examiner in the subject. The other, a female, not as experienced, could double as a house mother for the female students who have none. Since one expectation of the headmaster's role is to show interest in academic and boarding life of the students, he will experience much role conflict in carrying out the recruitment in this regard. According to Rose et al. (1978) we are expected to behave differently as a family member, friend, student, consumer and voter. We are expected to play a role that fits each status we occupy. They asked "what happens when the role conflict" (p. 78).

The various types of conflict notwithstanding, conflict can be categorized into two. These are destructive conflict which refers to the type of conflict that hampers goal attainment, waste resources, produces tension and hatred and constructive conflict which refers to the type of conflict that leads to change, innovation and decision-making. In the view of Deutsch (1973), conflict can have functional or dysfunctional consequences for organizational members, and it often depends on the communicative strategies that are used to manage disagreement.

Theories of Conflict

Various theoretical stand points on conflict are considered below in other to understand how the concept of conflict applies to the school management. Views identified are the traditional, behavioural, interactionist, Marxist, functionalist and the conflict school of theory. Robbins (1974) identified three views about conflict in organizations: traditional, behavioural and interactionist (current thinking). The traditional view of conflict was that conflict was unnecessary and harmful. Conflict, it was believed would develop only if

managers failed to apply sound management principles in directing the organization or if managers failed to communicate to employees the common interests that bind management and employees together. If these failures were corrected according to the traditional view, the organization should operate as a smoothly functioning integrated whole.

The behavioural view of conflict is that conflict is a frequent occurrence in organizational life. Organization members are human beings after all, with needs and interests that can often clash. Heads of different departments, for example, may have conflicts over priorities and resource allocations. Subordinates may argue with superiors over whether or not work can be completed in the allotted time. Behaviourists also see conflict mainly as something harmful to be resolved or criminate once it arises.

The interactionist view (current thinking) about conflict is that conflict in organizations is inevitable and even necessary. This view suggests that much conflict is dysfunctional; it can harm individuals and can impede the attainment of organizational goals. But some conflict can also be functional because it can make organizations more effective. For example, one functional aspect of conflict is that it leads to a search for solutions. Thus, it is often an instrument of organizational innovation and change.

The Marxist perspective of conflict has been expressed in a seminar paper (International Education and Exchange Service (IEES), 2001) as follows: "Conflict is necessary and inevitable for change, growth and development in any organization and it must be generated for progressive enhancement of society. It

is not pathological and social scientists and individualists must even encourage it. Conflict therefore must be must be managed as one of the resources of the organization" (p. 13).

IEES (2001) argues that the functionalist perspective of conflict is undesirable and must be seen as disruptive and pathological, and be resolved as early as possible. The conflict school of theory, according to Odetola and Ademola (1985) arose as a critique of the structural functionalist approach. They stated that (a) while the notion of functional unity is logical it is not always correct or real (b) relationship are not harmonious all the time and often relationships are in conflict. The view holds that conflict relations are normal and should not be looked upon as unlawful. That is, it is not possible that a system is always geared towards equilibrium.

Odetola and Ademola (1985) argues that conflict can be normal in the sense that the harmony we see on the surface of human activity is far more apparent than real. Thus the normative structure which we all perceive is not the real level at which action takes place. To illustrate this view point with a school situation, it can be said that in the school community, it is wrong for a teacher to have an amorous relationship with a student. However it is possible that where a male teacher and a female student are seriously attracted to each other, the norm of avoiding entering into any illicit relationship may not operate all the time. If the school authorities or some others find out then conflict arises. Hence at the level of real human action conflict is endemic. Hale (1990) stated that "the psychoanalytic forces of trend draw attention to strong rebellious forces deep

within the human personality which are at best only partially restrained by internalized social values" (p. 29).

School norms discipline and conflict come under consideration when Hale (1990) contended that evidence of a consensus of values supporting existing institution cannot simply be accepted at face value as support for the system, for such consensus may be more a reflection of manipulated public opinion than values that are genuinely felt by the majority of people. Articulating the view of functionalist and conflict theorists on conflict in social life, Zanden (1988) offered the following contrasts: While functionalists conceive of conflict as an indication of breakdown, conflict theorist see it as a source of change. While functionalists focus on social order and stability, conflict theorists scrutinize social life and find disorder and instability. While functionalists view consensus as the basis of social unity, conflict theorists contend that social unity is an illusion resting on coercion (p. 33). However, Dahredorf and Lenski (as cited in Zanden, (1988) observed that functionalists and conflict theorists are simply studying two faces of the same reality. In the view of Schmidt and Kochan (1972) conflict is inherently neither functional nor dysfunctional. It simply has the potential for improving or impairing organizational performance, depending on how it is managed. This raises the question as to why conflict is in any case functional in school administration.

Causes of Conflicts

The cause of conflict can be either disagreement or fear. Conflict can arise within employees when they feel that they are not working up to their values; or

there is a discomfort from the fear of lack of fulfilment by the organization. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993), the outset of a conflict situation is often perceived as a single event, but this is seldom the case. It says that conflicts do not simply erupt, rather they develop through stages and in each of these stages certain factors contribute to the possibility of conflict. It notes that peoples' feelings and attitudes towards each other and the particular cause of conflict will further affect their eventual behaviour. It concludes that confrontation will occur leading to either conflictive situations or problem-solving.

In their study, Newhouse and Neely (1993) observe that the manner in which questions about goals, interest and other questions about the school are answered determines in part, the nature of the conflict which will arise. They note that in any conflict there may be antecedent conditions which are the root of the initial dispute. They argue that these conditions may not cause the full blown conflict but they may be strong enough to start the process on its way. They mention a few of them as ambiguous roles, conflicting interests, communicating barriers, dependence on one party and unresolved prior conflict. They contend that on the other hand, the lack of certain conditions can also cause conflict. They say, possibilities are lack of trust, of integrity of benefit of information and of clarity.

Wolman (1973) traced the basic cause of conflict to emotion. He referred to Dewey's conflict theory of emotion which states that "an emotion is a state of conflict" and argues that "without a conflict there is no emotion with it, there is in

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(p.755). Broom and Selznick (1963) believed that conflict is a result of poor communication and that conflict arises because people do not understand each other. However they admitted that "increased contact and improved communication may intensify conflict by making groups aware of their differences increasing their fears, and revealing opposing interest of which they were unaware" (p.34). They also stated that conflicts are caused by mutually inconsistent needs and aspirations of groups.

In the view of Fisher (1981), every conflict that arises has its own special character. He says a conflict cannot be separated from individuals, the particular organization and the unique circumstances in which the problem occurs. He maintains that there are however, certain general characteristics of organizations that produce conflict. He notes that knowing these can sharpen ability to identify conflict and spot situations that have potential for conflict. He mentions win-lose situations and concerns about status and authority as typical among the sources of conflict. Win-lose solutions: Fisher contends that sometimes two people or groups have goals that cannot be obtained simultaneously. He says that win-lose conflicts are frequent where resources are limited.

Concerns about status and authority: Fisher states that issues of status and authority take several forms. He says some of the more common ones are individual desire for autonomy and inconsistency between authority and prestige differences. He observes that personal desires for autonomy lead to conflict in many ways. He argues that conflict can come up around peoples desire to have increased control over their work and share in decision making. He continues that

if frustrated, the desire for autonomy can lead to active resistance. Fisher concludes that conflict is much more likely when demands are made on a group by another whose status is seen as inferior.

Nnadi (1987) attributed the causes of constant confrontation and conflicts in an institutional environment like the senior high school to its diversity of interest groups including professionals, semi-professionals, skilled, unskilled and technical as well as student populations, parents and government officials attempting to focus on policies and objectives.

Nebgen (1978) identified communication problems, structural factors within an organization, human factors and conflict promoting interactions as possible causes of conflict. The communication problems identified by Nebgen (1978) have to do with semantic differences in language usage. She explained that words mean different thing to people and varying connotations can distort and impede communication. She added that insufficient exchange of information also contributes to communication problems since it may have ambiguities in points of view. On structural causes of conflict, Nebgen (1978) explained that the size of organization for example, has been found to correlate with amounts of conflict; thus, the larger the school, the greater the number of conflicts and the higher the intensity. Robbins (1983) agreed with Nebgen, claiming that the larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the likelihood of conflict. He added that reward systems too are found to create conflict when one member's gain is at another's expense. On human factors, Robbins (1983) stated that personality types like authoritarian and dogmatic individuals create conflict. He

further noted that value differences explain prejudice and disagreement with one's contribution to the group. Hampton, Sumer and Webber (1978) held the view that conflict may arise from an individual's effort to promote his or her own interests, such as making more money by breaking the group's norms on permissible production. In the view of Lindelow and Scott (19989) human factors can only be managed but they cannot be eliminated as causes of conflict because of differing values and goals of individuals. Nebgen (1978) stated that conflict promoting interactions are those that involve competition, domination and provocation. She explained that in a competitive interaction each side is trying to gain something that the other wants. She also noted that when interaction involves dominance one party is attempting to control the behavior of the other party. She finally contended that in provocation intentional or unintentional harm is inflicted on one person or group by another.

Waltton and Dulton (1969) have found that if rewards emphasize the separate performance of each department rather than their combined performance, conflict increases. On his part, Nge (1973) observed that overloading subordinates with tasks can result in intentional or unintentional ignoring of needs and rights of others, and can lead to conflict. In more elaborate terms (IEES 2001), the causes of conflict in schools pertaining to students, teachers and students, teachers and heads, and heads and non-teaching staff are discussed as follows:

Conflict Management

Research has shown various approaches to conflict management. School administrators should be aware not only of the wide variety of techniques but also

their likely consequences in order to select the appropriate strategy for a given situation. For instance, Robinson and Clifford (1974) advocate that managing conflict towards constructive action since a conflict can seldom be completely resolved. They continued that when conflict arises, we need to be able to manage it so that it becomes a positive force, rather than a negative force threatening to disrupt the group or community. Parker (1974) also notes that conflict not managed will bring about delays, disinterest, lack of action and in extreme cases a complete breakdown of the group. Unmanaged conflict may result in withdrawal of individuals and unwillingness on their part to participate in other groups or assist with various group action programmes.

In discussing the methods of ending conflicts, Boulding (1962) mentioned avoidance, conquest and procedural resolution of some kind including, including reconciliation and/or compromise and/or award. Boulding also notes that the biggest problem in developing the institutions of conflict control is that of catching conflict young. Conflict situations are frequently allowed to develop to almost unmanageable proportions before anything is done about them, by which time it is often too late to resolve them by peaceable and procedural means. Avoidance in a particular situation might conceivably be the best answer but this step must be made only after conflict is explicitly recognized and alternative ways to manage it is examined.

Conquest or the elimination of all other points of view is an approach seldom applicable to community development programmes. It is mentioned here only as a recognized approach. Boulding third method of ending conflict-

procedural resolution by reconciliation and/or compromise is generally the method most appropriate in community development programmes. There are several means to reach a compromise. Various practitioners and academics theorize as to the best means available. In reality, the means for conflict resolution by reconciliation is dependent on the situation. No one type can apply to all situations. There are always risks involved when dealing with hostilities or conflict. Research indicates that accepting these risks will result, when the conflict is managed (even in varying degrees), in stronger more cohesive groups. Ignoring or openly fighting the opposition can greatly weaken group structure and group action (Parker, 1974). Compromise involves adjustments and modifications with regard to the territories, values, goals and/or policies of the involved parties. For example a possible strategy for reducing conflict over how to reach an agreed-upon goal might be to redefine the situation in terms of new means toward the acceptable goals – a new bond issue rather than depleting existing funds.

Barker, Tjosvold and Andrews (1988) identified four approaches to conflict management namely, cooperative, confirming, competitive and avoiding. The cooperative approach emphasizes mutual group goals, understanding others views and compromising to create mutually useful solution. The competitive approach sees conflict as a win-lose battle in which others must be persuaded or coerced into submission. The avoiding approach occurs when people withdraw from discussing issues. It includes non-response and reaching a deadlock.

Strategies for Conflict Resolution

Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) describes conflict resolution strategies in terms of "win" and "lose". The possible outcomes of conflict resolution could be 'win-lose' where the outcome of this strategy is that one party loses and one wins. In all probability the conflict erupt at a later stage. Another possible outcome of conflict resolution is the 'Lose-lose'. In this case both parties lose in the deal. Usually a third party is involved, who tries to help the parties reach a compromise that is seldom acceptable to either party. Finally, the outcome of conflict resolution can be 'Win-win' where both parties in this respect are satisfied with the outcome, and the focus is on solving the problem but defeating each other. In sum, a conflict situation can have mutual advantages and benefits if approached in the right manner and in the right attitude towards a possible resolution.

In the view of the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) striving for a win-win strategy so that both parties can be satisfied with the outcome is the ideal route for a school head to follow. Conflicts should be solved democratically. A mediator should be made use of when necessary (p. 54).

Not all conflict is bad and not all co-operations is good", according to Robinson (1972). People tend to view conflict as a negative force operating against successful completion of group or community goals. Conflict can be harmful to groups but may also serve some potentially positive functions, depending upon the types of groups within and among which it occurs. Not every type of conflict may benefit groups, and conflict may not serve such functions for

all groups. Coser and Rosemberg (1964) argued that conflict could be productive and could have positive effects on groups. Three of these positive conflicts are: improving the quality of decisions, stimulating involvement in the discussion, and building group cohesion. Sides form on an issue, arguments and positions are clarified, and people can more easily distinguish between two different points of view. Conflict can improve the quality of decisions suppose your group is discussing the issue of "student enrollment at your school. You and another member disagree about the number of students attending your college. What would you do? Would you continue affirming your position or would you walk to the telephone and call the registrar's office to request the enrollment information contained in its records? Most group members will look for more information to resolve task conflict. Expression or conflicting news generates need for additional information that is imperative to the decision-making process. Conflict among groups may increase unity and cohesion within each group as members unite in a common purpose.

Mack (1969) suggests that conflict may define, maintain, and strengthen group boundaries, contributing to the group's distinctiveness and increasing group solidarity and cohesion. He added that conflict promotes the functioning of a group, and also destroy. Internal social conflicts which concern goods, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions upon which the relationship is founded tend to be positively functional for the social structure. Such conflicts tend to make possible the readjustment of norms and power relations within groups in accordance with the felt needs of its individual members or sub-groups.

Internal conflicts in which the contending parties no longer share the basic values upon which the legitimacy of the social system rests threaten to disrupt the structure.

One of the most obvious "side effects" of task and procedural conflict is excitement although some of the feelings generated by conflict may be negative, they are evidence of involvement. That is, a group member may be angry but at least he or she is involved in the group discussion. Thus a good argument may be an effective antidote to apathy. An individual involvement helps groups become mere cohesive. Conflict may lead to alliances with other groups, creating bonds between loosely structured groups or bringing together different individuals and groups in a community as they unite to fight a common threat. Obviously, building group unity through interpersonal conflict is difficult at times. Suppose, for example, that you become extremely angry during an already heated discussion and call another group member. If individual and group trust exists and members do not take remarks as personal rejection, the group can grow through the confrontation. Group members learn that together they can confront even personality clashes and as a group work to solve them. In the words of Fisher (1980) the group that fights together stays together. What this implies was that conflict should be managed, however, before it becomes verbal assault and irreparable damage to individual egos occurs (Barker et al 1987).

Studies on Conflict Management

Sheriff (1958) conducted an experiment to show that inter group conflict can be minimized by the introduction of super ordinate goals. In the experiment

Sheriff created two independent groups with their norms and hierarchies. Conflict was produced between the groups by having them engaged in activities that allowed only one winner. The result was the development of unfavourable attitudes and stereotypes toward members of the opposite group. Researchers noted that after instituting super ordinate goals there was a decrease in hostilities.

Blake and Monton (1964) demonstrate that the first casualty of group interaction is objectivity. In an experiment they gave 20 groups a policy problem to indicate group effectiveness as a problem solving unit. The result indicated that loyalty to group distorted comprehension. The study showed that members of a group perceived points they share in common with a competitor as distinctly their own. They stress that the determining factor is loyalty to the group.

Canon (1969) in his survey of routine staff conflict in 28 public schools selected some organizational characteristics as his variables; Structural differentiation, participation by subordinates in the authority system, regulating procedures and stability and interpersonal structure. The survey conclusions reinforced traditionally accepted beliefs about the connection between organizational complexity and conflict. He concludes as the school becomes more structurally differentiated both the rate of authority problems and administrators increases. He notes that conflict between these groups also increase with school populations. The study reveals that minor disputes increase and major disputes decline with teachers' participation in authority system. From this, Canon theorized that regular facility participation prevents aggravation of minor disputes into major ones. Canon finally concludes that the variable of size, structural

differentiation and staff heterogeneity contribute to organizational strain, while cohesive power relations and participation in authority system increase conflict if it is already present.

Personal Styles of Conflict Resolution

Prime Training and Development Consultants (PTDC), (2001) identified the following personal styles of conflict resolution:

1. The tough battler sacrifices others feeling to win.

2. The friendly helper seeks acceptance by others.

3. The lose/leave styles avoids conflicts and considers it as hopeless.

4. The compromise style looks for workable solutions for all concerned – win/win advocate.

5. The problem solver (a) sees conflict as natural and helpful, (b) demonstrates trust in others and candidness with others, (c) feels that everyone's attitudes and positions need to be aired, (d) sees everyone as having an equal role in resolving the conflict, and (e) does not sacrifice anyone for the good of the group (p. 33).

Guidelines for Coping with Conflict Situations

The following guidelines for coping with conflict situations were offered by (PTDC, 2001).

1. Always avoid fighting (verbal or otherwise)

2. Avoid petulance and impatience

3. Control your temper

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4.   Remember to try to do what is best for all concerned.

5.   Do not ignore emotional attitudes of other people.

6.   Do not minimize any problem that seems important to someone else.

7.   Do not use surprise tactics (communicate: What? When? Why?)

8.   Do not expect too much from others

9.   Do not render judgment. (Describe situations without giving opinions about them. Avoid statements like "You are wrong"…It's improper when you do this that way…etc).

10.   Do not generalize

11.   Work only with workable items.

12.   Avoid we/they distinctions.

13.   Depersonalize the issue.

14.   Focus on what you want to do (your key task). (p.32 - 330)

Summary

This chapter, which constitutes the theoretical framework of the study, is summed up as follow. Conflict, by cited definitions, entails disagreement, opposition, and incompatibility. Types of conflict include approach-approach, approach-avoidance, avoidance-avoidance, intra-personal and role conflicts which have implications for administrators, staff and students. Destructive conflict produces negative results but constructive conflict leads to change and progress. Conflict theorists hold the view that conflict is normal and inherent in social life but functionalist focus on social unity and see conflict as strange and affecting

functional unity. Conflict theorist and functionalist are however considered to be studying two face of the same reality.

Causes of conflict are identified as pertaining to organizations, schools, teachers, staff and heads/administrators. Approaches to conflict management are identified as the co-operative, confirming, competitive and avoiding approaches. Conflict reduction approaches in the school situation hinge on personal considerations and a display of qualities such as fairness, tolerance, respect, transparency, interest and confidence. The strategies of conflict resolution include the principles of win-lose, where one party wins and one loses, lose-lose, where both parties lose and win-win, where both parties are satisfied with the conflict outcome. Conflict resolution, thus brings about merits and demerits to the parties involved. Furthermore, approaches to conflict prevention are stated as having to do with control of personal thought, emotions and actions.

Finally, personal styles of conflict resolution are stated in terms of sacrificing feelings, seeking acceptance, adopting the 'lose/leave or compromise style' and problem solving attitudes. Some guidelines for coping with conflict stressed patience, control of emotions, good reasoning and concern for others (PTDC, 2001).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The Study was pursued to examine conflict management practices by school authorities in the administration of senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. This chapter considers the procedure adopted to undertake the study.

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. According to Babbie (2001), descriptive survey is useful for generalizing from a sample of population so that inferences can be made about the characteristics, attributes or behaviours of the population. Basically, descriptive survey design assesses the current state of a phenomenon existing at the time of study. Descriptive survey design has numerous advantages. The design provides a more accurate and meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain peoples' perception and behavior on the basis of data gathered at a particular time (Fraenkel & Wallen 2000). This allows for in-depth follow-up questions and items that are unclear to be explained. The main advantage of descriptive survey design is that it has the potential to provide a lot of information from quite a large sample of respondents. (Fraenkel & Wallen 2000). Notwithstanding the advantages, the descriptive survey design has some disadvantages.(Fraenkel & Wallen 2000) argue that there is the difficulty in

ensuring that the questions answered using the descriptive survey design is clear and not misleading. This is because survey results can vary greatly due to the exact wording of questions. Hence it may produce unreliable results and there is difficulty obtaining adequate number of questionnaire completed and return for meaningful analysis to be made in some cases.

Regardless of these disadvantages, the descriptive survey design was deemed most appropriate for the study. It would assist the researcher collect accurate data on the headmasters, teaching staff and non-teaching staff on variables underlying the study for concrete conclusions to be made. Thus the survey information was collected at one point in time. It depended on direct contact with those persons whose characteristics or behaviours were relevant for the specific investigation. The survey technique was used in the hope of obtaining the desired information more easily and less expensively.

Population

The study was carried out in five senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. The population of the study was made up of 267 teaching staff (headteachers and teachers) and 222 non-teaching staff making a total of 489. The headmasters of the five schools were included because of their role in conflict resolution in their schools. Thus the respondents were the headmasters, the teaching, and the non-teaching staff members. The names of the schools involved are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Staff Population of the Schools

School	Teachers	Non-Teachers	Headmasters	Total
		Population		
Aburi Girls SHS	74	81	1	156
Aburi Presby SHS	39	32	1	72
Adonten SHS	69	54	1	124
Nsawam SHS	31	19	1	51
Saint Martin's SHS	49	36	1	86
Total	**262**	**222**	**5**	**489**

The sample for the study is drawn from Aburi Girls Senior high School, Aburi Presby Senior High Technical School, Adonten Senior high School, Nsawam Senior High School and Saint Martin's Senior High School. Table 2 present the distribution of the sample by institution and position.

Table 2: Sample Size of the Population

School	Teachers	Non-Teachers	Headmasters	Total
		Sample		
Aburi Girls SHS	44	48	1	93
Aburi Presby SHS	10	9	1	20
Adonten SHS	33	26	1	60
Nsawam SHS	6	4	1	11
Saint Martin's SHS	16	13	1	30
Total	**109**	**100**	**5**	**214**

Out of a total staff population of 489 a sample size of 214 was proportionately selected. Moreover the sample size of 214 was chosen in line with (Krejcie, & Morgan 1970) guideline on sample size.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size of 214 was made up of 109 teachers, five headteachers and 100 for non-teaching staff. This was done in proportional representation of the total sample size of 214 selected. Besides including the headmaster of the schools purposively in the sample, the selection of both the teaching and the non-teaching members was done through the lottery technique of the simple random sampling. "Yes or No" were written on pieces of paper of the total number of teaching and non-teaching staff in the sample and kept in a container for each staff member to pick. All those who picked "Yes" were the one who responded to the questionnaire. This was on departmental basis in the case of the non-teaching staff because of the varied job content and experience in the sector. Each individual in the sample groups had an equal probability of being selected. The headmasters were purposively chosen to respond to a structured interview. Furthermore, two staff members (Teaching and Non-Teaching) from each school were also purposively interviewed.

Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instruments were the questionnaire and the structured interview. The questionnaire was provided with closed-ended questions to keep respondents committed to the scope of the study while saving them time as they

attended to the entire questionnaire. The basic structure of the questionnaire was based on the five-point Likert-type scale as described by Best and Kahn (1995). It was a self-designed instrument made up of five parts namely; section A, B, C, D, and E.

Section A of the questionnaire was designed to record the personal attributes of respondents such as age, gender, academic and professional qualifications. The relevance of the section was to provide the background information about the kind of respondents whose views were expressed in the study.

Section B of the questionnaire deals with information on the types of conflict common in the schools in the Akuapem South Municipality as perceived by respondents. The purpose of the section was to determine the prevalence of intra-personal and inter-personal conflicts in the schools. Under the sections, a five-point Likert-type scale was used. Respondents were required to show the extent to which they perceived the prevalence of the items listed in their respective schools. They were to indicate their perception of the prevalence of conflicts by ticking on a rating scale, one of "Very Frequent", "Frequent," "Sometimes", "Rare" and "Never".

Section C of the questionnaire required information from respondents on causes of conflict between the headmaster and staff of their respective schools. On a five-point Likert-type scale, respondents were to identify the causes of conflict in their schools by ticking one of "Very often", "often", "Occasionally", "Seldom", and "Never" on a rating for itemized possible causes. Section D of the

questionnaire was to tap information from respondents on conflict management techniques employed by the headmasters of the schools in the Municipality. Respondents were to indicate their perceptions by ticking appropriately on a rating scale from 'Very often' to 'Never'. Some techniques of conflict management practices were scaled accordingly.

Finally, section E of the questionnaire provided items dealing with the effectiveness of conflict resolution techniques of the headmaster. On a rating scale from "Yes", "Often" to "No", respondents were to show the extent to which the techniques employed by the headmaster to resolve conflict in the school were effective. The descriptive research techniques used were the questionnaire and the interviews. The questionnaire was to ensure a broad analysis of the social phenomenon under study, and the interview schedule used to make up for the inherent feed back to the questionnaire and permit follow-up leads and more complete data. The questions were carefully framed with consideration for relevance and clarity which are basic to the validity of a questionnaire. All terms were clearly explained so as to have the same meaning to all respondents.

The interview schedule was to obtain certain types of confidential information that the respondents might be reluctant to put across in the columns for optional writing under each section of the questionnaire. Besides, the schedule was meant to throw light on the outcome of the questionnaire. Thus, it was not analyzed in terms of means, frequencies, percentages, etc. Open-ended questions were asked in the interview schedule. The respondents were encouraged to answer in their own words and it gave the researchers a greater depth of understanding

the pattern of responses from the various schools. It also became possible to explore areas not anticipated in the questionnaire through the interview schedule.

Pilot-Testing of Instrument

The questionnaire was pilot-tested at Nsaba Community Senior High School. The testing was important in establishing the face validity of the instruments. It led to the improvement of the questionnaire format and the scale used. The school was chosen because of proximity and homogeneity. The school of pilot testing is in the same municipality as the schools in which the research was carried out. The environment of the schools and their personnel background in terms of qualification and experience were similar. Twelve teachers including the headmaster and five non-teaching staff voluntarily responded to the questionnaire for the pilot testing. This helped to determine the clarity of the instruments (questionnaire, structured interview), the problem to be encountered in the main administration, and the reliability of the instruments. Personal interaction between the researcher and respondents during the piloting and the analysis of the pilot testing reassured the researcher about the study.

To ensure validity of the study the self-developed questions was submitted to the researcher's supervisor for appraisal. This made him give a face and content related evidence to the items and examine whether the items related to the research questions comparatively cover the dimensions of the study. Suggestions made were factored into the instruments to refine the content and improve the questionnaire before the final administration. Reliability is important to social researchers. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronch's

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Alpha measure of internal consistency. This statistic provides an idea of the average correlation among all of the items that make up the scale of the instrument.

In the view of Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990), the Cronch Apha, measure of internal consistency is useful when measures have multiple scored items such as attitudinal scale. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was determined after correlating the results from the data collected for the study. The statistical package for social sciences (version. 12.0) was used for the calculations. The final instruments for the headmasters, teachers and non-teaching staff had Chronbach's alpha co-efficient of .74, .76 and .73 respectively.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) of the University of Cape Coast. (see Appendix C) The introductory letter assisted the researcher to get the needed cooperation from the Akuapem South Municipal director of Education. Permission was then granted by the Municipal Director of Education. Initial contact took place between the researcher and the headmasters of the schools in the municipality. The purpose and significance of the study were discussed with them. Their permission for the assignment was also sought.

In each school the researcher either pre-arranged with the headmaster to attend the staff meeting or requested a meeting with the staff at which members of staff were briefed about the study. That enabled the investigator to establish the necessary rapport with the respondents and to earn their co-operation. The staff

list and the departmental lists in each school in the case of the non-teaching staff were obtained from which the sample was selected.

Respondents from each school were met at fixed times to entertain their questions concerning the completion of the questionnaire. The researcher allowed three weeks time lapse before visiting the schools to collect the completed questionnaire. Some respondents returned the completed questionnaire after many requests by the researcher. After the survey, interviews were granted to the headmasters and two respondents of both teaching and non-teaching staff from the five schools.

Data Analysis

The study adopted the descriptive survey approach. The return rate of the questionnaire was 100%. All the 214 copies of the questionnaire and the interview schedule retrieved, the record of each respondent was scored. The scoring was based on the Likert-type scale as described by Best and Kahn (1995). Each item was scored according to the "weight" of the ratings. The unit of analysis was the individual headmasters, teachers and non-teaching staff of the five schools.

Tally cards were prepared for each school on which responses of each of the respondents were scored. These were used by the researcher to calculate the percentages used for the analysis. But in analyzing the items, percentage responses of the two outside categories were merged. That is 'very frequent' and 'Frequent' were combined and labeled "Frequent". In the same way, the two categories "Rare" and "Never" were combined and labeled "Rare". This was done in line with the suggestion by Best and Khan (1995). They note that when

analyzing a five-point Likert Scale, combining the two outside categories using three responses are preferable to the usual five.

Thus, the category "frequent" was interpreted as of high prevalence because the respondents considered the item mostly present in the schools. The category "sometimes" was interpreted to mean the item at times occurred in the schools that are it was on the average prevalence in the schools. The category "rare" was interpreted to mean that respondents considered it hardly occurring in the schools.

The percentage response recorded to a category determined the extent of prevalence of the item. Thus, if the category "frequent" recorded the highest percentage response, the item was considered to be of high prevalence and therefore common in the schools. However, if the category "rare" recorded the highest response, the item was considered to have low prevalence rate and therefore uncommon in the schools. But if the item "sometimes" recorded the highest response, then the item was considered to have average occurrence, thus, neither of high or low occurrence in the school. The interview data constituted the headteachers' responses for the discussions. The data was obtained from the structured was also presented with tables to support the discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the results and discussion of the findings from the study. The analysis and discussions dealt with common types of conflict, causes of conflict, conflict management techniques and the effectiveness of conflict resolution techniques. In addition, the results of the interview guide that I administered to the five headmasters, two teachers and two non-teaching staff from each school; were jointly discussed with the response to questionnaires.

Research Question 1: What types of conflict are common in the Senior High schools in the Akuapem South Municipality?

This section relates to Research Question 1. It covers questionnaire item 9 to 18. Data on teachers' response to common types of conflicts in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Responses on Common Types of Conflicts in the Senior High Schools

Item	Very Frequent N(%)	Frequent N(%)	Sometimes N(%)	Rarely N(%)	Never N(%)
Conflict within oneself in making choices between school demands	3(2.5)	18(16.4)	61(56.6)	19(17.2)	8(7.2)
Conflict due to scarcity of resources	1(0.8)	27(24.6)	37(34.4)	30(27.9)	14(12.3)
Conflict between headmaster and teaching staff.	6(5.7)	21(8.9)	55(50.00)	22(20.5)	6(4.9)
Conflict between the headmaster and non-teaching staff.	5(4.1)	23(21.3)	53(48.4)	22(20.5)	6(5.7)
Conflict between headmaster and students	5(4.1)	7(6.6)	35(32.0)	48(44.3)	14(13.1)
Conflict among teachers on the staff.	2(1.6)	3(3.3)	40(36.9)	54(49.2)	10(9.0)
Conflict among non-teaching staff.	5(4.9)	3(2.5)	44(40.2)	48(44.3)	9(8.2)
Conflict between teaching and non-teaching staff	1(0.8)	12(10.7)	28(26.2)	45(41.0)	23(21.3)
Conflict between the teaching staff and the students.	3(2.5)	5(4.1)	35(32.0)	42(39.3)	24(22.1)
Conflict between non- teaching staff and students.	3(3.3)	5(4.1)	21(19.7)	48(43.4)	32(29.5)

As shown in Table 3, within oneself in making choices between school demands was the most common type of conflict 61 (56.6%) this was followed by conflict between headmasters and teaching staff 55 (50.0%). Barley (1971) identify three types of conflict situations. He says these are subordinate conflict, superordinate conflict, and lateral conflict. He notes that subordinate conflict is between the administrator and a person or group over which he has authority or responsibility. He again explained that superordinate conflict is between the administrator and a person or group which has authority over him (the administrator). It was however observed that, the least common type of conflict responded to by the teachers 80 (72.9%) the schools have conflict between non-teaching staff and the students. A teacher from one of the schools stated in the interview scheduled that the headmaster only trust those who feed him with information about others. It can be seen that conflict among teaching staff and among non-teaching staff have the same frequency of sometimes and rarely occurring. Teaching staff having 40(36.9%) and 54(49.2%) respectively and non-teaching staff having 44(40.2%) and 48(44.3%).

Data on headmasters' response to common types of conflict in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 4

Table 4: Response on Common Types of Conflict in the Senior High Schools

Item	Very Frequent N(%)	Frequent N(%)	Sometimes N(%)	Rare N(%)	Never N(%)
Conflict within oneself in making choices between school demands.	0(0.0)	1(20)	3(60)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Conflicts due to scarcity of resources to satisfy school work conflicts.	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflicts between the headmaster and teaching staff.	1(20)	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflicts between the headmaster and non-teaching staff.	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflicts between the headmaster and the students.	1(20)	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict among teachers on staff.	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(60)	2(40)	0(0.0)
Conflict among non-teaching staff.	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(40)	2(40)	1(20)
Conflict between teaching and non-teaching staff	0(0.0)	1(20)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict between the teaching staff and the students.	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(40)	2(40)	1(20)
Conflict between non-teaching staff and students.	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(40)	2(40)	1(20)

From the headmasters point of view conflict due to scarcity of resources to satisfy school or work conditions was the most prevalent in the schools 2(40%). The headmasters also agreed that conflict within oneself in making choices between school demands sometimes exist and 3(60%). These responses agree with Nnachi (1997) who identified two main types of conflict, which are intra-personal and inter-personal. He explained that intra-personal conflict is the type of conflict that exists within an individual having various need. For instance an individual is faced with needs, which the resources available cannot meet and the individual becomes torn between which of the needs to satisfy at that time. The school head for example may be of conflict with how to disburse his organizational grants which is not to suffice the vital needs of the school at the time. A teacher from one of the schools, responded during the follow-up interview that due to inadequate staff bungalows, allocation of the bungalows to the staff are done by the headmasters according to seniority and responsibility. On the other hand, the headmasters in almost all the schools responded that conflict among non-teaching staff 3(60%) conflict between teaching staff and students 3(60%) and conflict between non-teaching staff and students rarely occurred.

Data on non-teaching staff response to common types of conflict in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 5.

Table 5: Response on Common Types of Conflict in the Senior High Schools

Item	Very Frequent N(%)	Frequent N(%)	Sometimes N(%)	Rare N(%)	Never N(%)
Conflict within oneself in making choices between school demands.	0(0.0)	37(36.6)	41(41.5)	2(2.4)	20(19.5)
Conflicts due to scarcity of resources to satisfy school work conflicts.	0(0.0)	29(29.3)	44(43.9)	7(7.3)	20(19.5)
Conflicts between the headmaster and teaching staff.	0(0.0)	27(26.8)	51(51.3)	7(7.3)	15(14.6)
Conflicts between the headmaster and non - teaching staff.	0(0.0)	22(22)	50(48.8)	14(14.6)	14(14.6)
Conflicts between the headmaster and the students	5(4.9)	17(17.1)	20(19.5)	36(36.5)	22(22.00)
Conflict among teachers on staff.	10(9.8)	5(4.9)	29(29.3)	39(39.0)	17(17.1)
Conflict among non-teaching staff.	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	41(41.3)	44(43.9)	15(14.6)
Conflict between teaching and non-teaching staff	0(0.0)	12(12.5)	37(36.6)	31(31.6)	20(19.5)

Results from Table 5 revealed that a higher number of non-teacher 5(51.3%) responded from the schools that, the common type of conflict was between the headmasters and the teachers. This response is almost similar to the response given by the teachers in Table 3, i.e. 55(50%). The headmasters however responded that conflict sometimes exist between them and the teachers i.e. 2(40%) in Table 4. Having identified by the three respondents conflict actually exists between the headmasters and the teachers, Deutsch (1973) contended that a conflict whatever its reality is usually about one or another of several types of issues. He describes some basic types of issues which have control over resource preferences and nuisances, values, believe and the nature of the relationship between the parties. Deutsch states that many conflicts arise because the activities or taste of one person or group impinge upon another's preferences, sensitivities or sensibilities. As illustrated in Table 5, the least common types of conflict responded by the non-teaching staff in the schools was 78(78.1%) between the non-teaching staff and students. They, however, admit that there exists conflict among them and among teaching staff as well but not frequent. According to the frequency figures, conflict between them 29(29.3%) is more frequent than the teaching staff 41(41.3%). This may probably be because they hear about conflicts among themselves more than among the teaching staff.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of conflict between the headmasters of the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality and their staff? Data on teachers' response on causes of conflict in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 6.

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Table 6: Response on Causes of Conflict by Teachers in the Senior High Schools

Item	Very often N%	Often N%	Occasionally N%	Seldom N%	Never N%
Conflict caused by communication barrier.	15(13.9)	22(20.5)	46(42.6)	20(18.0)	6(5.0)
Conflicts by use of intemperate language by the headmaster.	11(10.7)	13(11.5)	35(32)	34(31.0)	16(14.8)
Conflict caused by conflicting goals of special interest groups on the staff.	6(5.7)	18(16.4)	49(45.1)	27(24.6)	9(8.2)
Conflict caused by dominance; the headmaster attempting to control behavior of subordinates.	19(17.2)	21(19.7)	37(33.6)	21(19.7)	11(9.8)
Conflict caused by rewards systems provided by the headmaster for individuals or groups.	13(11.5)	16(14.8)	40(36.9)	32(29.5)	8(7.4)
Conflicts caused by the headmaster promoting his personal interest at the expense of the school.	14(13.1)	19(17.2)	32(29.5)	29(26.3)	15(13.9)
Conflict caused by overloading subordinates with tasks.	14(12.3)	14(13.1)	35(32.0)	37(34.4)	9(8.2)
Conflict caused by strict supervision of subordinates work.	10(9.0)	19(17.2)	41(37.7)	27(24.6)	12(11.5)
Conflict caused by headmaster's human relationship.	13(12.3)	22(20.5)	34(31.1)	27(24.6)	13(11.5)

Table 6 Continued

Item	Very often	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
	N%	N%	N%	N%	N%
Conflict caused by subordinates using school facilities to promote personal interest.	7(6.6)	3(2.5)	39(3.60)	41(37.7)	19(17.2)
Conflict caused by subordinates shirking their responsibilities.	7(6.6)	14(13.1)	50(45.9)	27(24.6)	11(9.8)
Conflict caused by subordinates flouting the code of ethics.	4(4.1)	4(4.1)	54(49.2)	36(32.8)	11(9.8)
Conflict caused by subordinates perceiving that the head does not appreciate their effort.	14(12.3)	24(22.1)	41(37.70	23(21.3)	7(6.60)
Conflict caused by teachers resenting to the head's admission policy.	12(10.70)	14(13.1)	47(43.4)	21(18.9)	15(13.9)
Conflict caused by subordinates seeing the headmaster as submitting to the control of the bursar.	6(4.9)	8(7.4)	14(13.0)	39(36.1)	42(38.6)

Table 6 showed that higher percentage 54(49.2%) of teachers responded that conflict caused by subordinates flouting the code of ethics is a factor for conflict in the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. This was followed by conflict caused by subordinates shirking their responsibilities 50(45.9%). Conflict caused by communication barrier according to the teachers 46(42.6%) also prevails, only 6(5.0%) objected. This affirmation means subordinates flout the code of ethics, shirks their responsibilities and also there is a communication barrier that caused conflict in the schools. Negban (1978) identified communication problems, structural factors within an organization, human factors and conflict promoting interactions as possible causes of conflict. The communication problems identified by Negban (1978) have to do with semantic differences in language usage. She explained that words mean different thing to people and varying connotations can distort and impede communication. On structural causes of conflict, Negban (1978) explained that the size of organization for example, has been found to correlate with amounts of conflict; thus the larger the school, the greater the number of intensity. In one of the schools, a teacher who gave a response to the interview schedule stated that staff members who were involved in such offenses as absenteeism, lateness, laziness etc were given verbal warning followed by written query if the offence is repeated. However, conflict caused by subordinates seeing the headmaster as submitting to the control of the bursar, seldomly 81(74.7%) existed.

Data response by headmasters on causes of conflict in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: Response of Causes of Conflict by Headmasters in the Senior High Schools

Item	Very Often N(%)	Often N(%)	Occasionally N(%)	Seldom N(%)	Never N(%)
Conflict caused by communication barrier.	1(20)	2(40)	1(20)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Conflicts by use of intemperate language by the headmaster.	1(20)	1(20)	0(0.0)	2(40)	2(20)
Conflict caused by conflicting goals of special interest groups on the staff.	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict caused by dominance; the headmaster attempting to control behavior of subordinates.	2(40)	0(0.0)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict caused by rewards systems provided by the headmaster for individuals or groups.	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Conflicts caused by the headmaster promoting his personal interest at the expense of the school.	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict caused by overloading subordinates with tasks.	2(40)	0(0.0)	2(40)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Conflict caused by strict supervision of subordinates work.	2(40)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)

Table 7 Continued

Item	Very often N(%)	Often N(%)	Occasionally N(%)	Seldom N(%)	Never N(%)
Conflict caused by headmaster's human relationship.	2(40)	0(0.0)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict caused by subordinates using school facilities to promote personal interest.	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict caused by subordinates shirking their responsibilities.	1(20)	1(20)	2(40)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Conflict caused by subordinates flouting the code of ethics.	1(20)	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict caused by subordinates perceiving that the head does not appreciate their effort	2(40)	0(0.0)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)
Conflict caused by teachers resenting to the head admission policy.	1(20)	1(20)	2(40)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Conflict caused by subordinates seeing the headmaster as submitting to the control of the bursar.	0(0.0)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)

Table 7, shows that most of the respondents 3(60%) shared the sentiments that conflict caused by reward system provided by the headmasters for individual or groups often occurred in the schools. It was also revealed that conflict caused by overloading subordinates with tasks 2(40%), subordinates shirking their responsibilities 2(40%), also subordinates flouting the code of ethics 2(40%) very often and occasionally existed in the schools. Nye (1973) observed that overloading subordinates with tasks can results in intentional or unintentional ignoring of needs and rights of others, and can lead to conflict. On the contrary, 3 (60%) of the headmasters responded that conflicts caused by strict supervision of subordinates work seldomly existed in the schools. In the same vain they also responded that seldom did conflict caused by use of intemplate language by the headmasters create conflict in the schools. Most of the headmasters 3 (60%) responded during the follow-up interview that their relationship with their subordinates was cordial. Their reasons were that, they were open, gave opportunity for subordinates to express their views and involve them in decision making. But a teacher from one of the schools wrote that, their relationship with the headmaster is cordial to some extent. The reason being that the headmasters are free with some staff and others not. "They think some are trustworthy and hardworking whiles others are not.

Data response by non-teaching staff on causes of conflict in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 8. The greater percentage 39(39%) of the respondent perceived that conflicts in the schools was due to the headmaster's human relationship.

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Table 8: Response of Non-Teaching Staff on Causes of Conflict in the Senior High Schools

Item	Very Often N(%)	Often N(%)	Occasion N(%)	Seldom N(%)	Never N(%)
Conflict caused by communication barrier.	3(2.4)	29(29.3)	49 (48.8)	7(7.3)	12(12.2)
Conflicts by use of intemperate language by the headmaster.	3(2.4)	17(17.1)	46(46.3)	14(14.6)	20(19.5)
Conflicts caused by dominance, the headmaster attempting to control the behavior of subordinates.	12(12.2)	29(29.3)	39(39.0)	8(7.3)	12(12.2)
Conflict caused by rewards systems provided by the headmaster for individuals or groups.	5(4.9)	15(14.6)	46(46.3)	15(14.6)	19(19.5)
Conflicts caused by the headmaster promoting his personal interest at the expense of the school.	2(2.4)	29(29.3)	34(34.1)	20(19.5)	15(14.6)
Conflict caused by overloading subordinates with tasks.	12(12.2)	15(14.6)	39(39.0)	22(22.0)	12(12.2)
Conflict caused by strict supervision of subordinates work.	7(7.3)	27(26.8)	46(46.3)	10(9.8)	10(9.8)
Conflict caused by headmaster's human relationship.	7(7.3)	32(31.8)	31(31.7)	15(14.6)	15(14.6)

Table 8 Continued

Item	Very Often N(%)	Often N(%)	Occasion N(%)	Seldom N(%)	Never N(%)
Conflict caused by subordinates using school facilities to promote personal interest.	7(7.3)	5(4.9)	42(41.5)	27(26.8)	19(19.5)
Conflict caused by subordinates shirking their responsibilities.	3(2.4)	0(0.0)	51(51.2)	29(29.3)	17(17.1)
Conflict caused by subordinates flouting the code of ethics.	2(2.4)	5(4.9)	54(53.7)	20(19.5)	17(17.1)
Conflict caused by subordinates perceiving that the head does not appreciate their effort	5(4.9)	22(22.0)	46(46.3)	12(12.2)	15(14.6)
Conflict caused by teachers resenting to the head admission policy.	12(11.9)	11(11.3)	41(41.1)	20(19.6)	16(16.1)
Conflict caused by subordinates seeing the headmaster as submitting to the control of the bursar.	2(2.4)	0(0.0)	37(36.6)	34(34.1)	27(26.8)

As shown in Table 8, 53% of the non-teaching staff responded that conflict caused by subordinates flouting the code of ethics existed. Again it can be seen from the Table that 51(51.2%) of the respondents were of the view that occasionally conflict caused by subordinates shirking their responsibilities existed in the schools. A non-teaching staff in one of the schools, stated during the follow-up interview that his headmaster gives unnecessary open release and averse to couples on the staff. However, the results from the Table showed that 61 (60.9%) of the non-teaching staff from the schools seldomly agreed that, conflict is caused by the headmaster submitting to the control of the bursar. This affirms the headmasters' response on the code of ethics which the subordinates usually flouted. It is quite surprising that even though 3(2.4%) of the non-teaching staff agree that it happens very often and 51(51.2%) agree that occasionally conflicts are caused by subordinates shirking their responsibilities; none of them perceived that it often happens.

Research Question 3: How do headmasters in the Municipality resolve conflicts that arise in their schools?

Responses for the various conflict resolution techniques studied are provided in Tables 9, 10 and 11. The literature on conflict management strategies and resolution was also investigated. To create an in-depth understanding of the respondents, the researcher integrated the two categories, "very often" and "often in often". Similarly the other two categories "rarely" and "never" were combined into rarely. The category "sometimes" was maintained as a mid-point between "often and rarely". Data of teachers' response on conflict resolution technique in the senior high schools as indicated in Table 9.

Table 9: Response on Conflict Resolution in the Senior High School

Items	Very Often %	Often %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %
The headmaster tries to bring the parties involved to compromise.	9(8.2)	32(29.5)	39(36.1)	26(23.8)	3(2.5)
Headmaster engages staff members in resolving conflicts stressing mutual respect.	5(4.9)	35(32.0)	45(41.0)	22(20.5)	2(1.6)
Headmaster tries to persuade or coerce one party into submission.	6(5.7)	18(16.4)	33(30.3)	38(34.4)	14(13.1)
The headmaster leaves conflict to die out with time.	4(3.3)	4(3.3)	41(37.7)	37(34.4)	23(21.3)
The headmaster tries to settle the conflict without consulting the other party	6(5.7)	10(9.8)	27(24.6)	37(33.6)	29(26.3)
The headmaster helps the parties to reach a compromise that is seldom acceptable to either party.	5(4.9)	14(12.3)	29(26.2)	39(36.1)	22(20.5)
The headmaster focuses on solving the problem but not defeating each other (both parties are satisfied with the outcome.)	7(6.6)	36(32.8)	37(33.6)	19(18.0)	10(9.0)
The headmaster ensures that the disputants explain and support their claims before a third party from outside the staff.	3(2.5)	15(13.9)	45(41.0)	27(25.4)	19(17.2)
The headmaster resolves conflicts in favour of one party.	3(2.5)	14(13.1)	24(22.2)	30(27.9)	8(34.4)

As revealed in Table 9, majority of the teaching staff respondent 39(39.4) that, the headmaster often use the win-win approach in resolving conflicts. This was followed by the co-operative approach which often recorded 41(37.7). It can also be observed that the headmaster sometimes use the confirming approach in resolving conflicts. The approach implies involving staff members and stressing mutual respect in resolving conflict. On the contrary, it is shown in the table 9 that, the headmasters rarely 68(62.3%) use the win-lose approach in resolving conflicts that arose in their schools. Barker, Tjosvold and Andrews (1988) identified four approaches to conflict management namely, co-operative, confirming, competitive and avoiding. The co-operative and confirming approaches agree with the teachers' response in the management of conflict in the schools.

The win-lose approach has the potential of generating other conflicts of complex nature and consequently stifling the business of the school. In cases where this approach is used, proper follow up should be done in the form of counseling so that other conflicts do not arise. According to Barker et al. (1988), cooperative approach emphasizes mutual group goals, understanding others views and compromising to create mutual useful solution. A teacher in one of the schools stated during the follow-up interview that the management technique employed by his headmaster was quite simple and impressive, we could at least accommodate or tolerate each other, and there was no bias. Data of headmasters' response to conflict resolution technique in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 10.

Table 10: Response on Conflict Resolution Technique in the Senior High School

Item	Very Often N(%)	Often N(%)	Sometime N(%)	Rarely N(%)	Never N(%)
The headmaster tries to bring the parties involved to compromise.	0(0.0)		2(40)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Headmaster engages staff members in resolving conflicts stressing mutual respect.	1(20)	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)
Headmaster tries to persuade or coerce one party into submission.	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(20)	3(60)	1(20)
The headmaster leaves conflict to die out with time.	1(20)	0(0.0)	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)
The headmaster tries to settle the conflict without consulting the other party.	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(20)	2(40)	2(40)
The headmaster resolves conflicts in favour of one party.	0(0.0)	1(20)	0(0.0)	1(20)	3(60)
The headmaster helps the parties to reach a compromise that is seldom acceptable to either party.	0(0.0)	1(20)	0(0.0)	1(20)	3(60)
The headmaster focuses on solving the problem but not defeating each other (both parties are satisfied with the outcome.	2(40)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(20)	2(40)
The headmaster ensures that the disputants explain and support their claims before a third party from outside the staff.	-	1(20)	2(40)	1(20	1(20)

As revealed in Table 10, most of headmasters 3(60%) used the co-operative approach in resolving conflict in their schools. Sometimes they are compelled to use the "confirming approach" 3(60%) in resolving conflicts. In other words, the headmaster engages staff members in resolving conflicts stressing mutual respect. But 2(40%) rarely objected to this approach of resolving conflict. The Common Wealth Secretariat, (1997), broadly described the win-win approach as both parties in this respect are satisfied with the outcome and focus is on solving the problem but defeating each other. Striving for a win-win strategy so that both parties can be satisfied with the outcome is the ideal route for a school head to follow. On disciplinary procedures adopted by the headmasters in resolving conflicts by subordinates who were involved in such offences as absenteeism, lateness, laziness etc. when they responded to the follow-up interview, indicated that they follow due process by first given verbal warning, followed them with written queries if the offences were repeated. Finally, if it continues, subordinate is issued with a released letter. Coincidentally four 4(80%) of the headmasters rarely used both the domination and win-lose approaches in resolving conflicts in their school as indicated in the table.

Data on Non-teaching staff response to conflict resolution technique in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 11.

Table 11: Response on Conflict Resolution Technique in the Senior High Schools

Item	Very Often N(%)	Often N(%)	Sometime N(%)	Rarely N(%)	Never N(%)
The headmaster tries to bring the parties involved to compromise.	2(2.4)	22(22.0)	64(63.4)	2(2.4)	10(9.8)
Headmaster engages staff members in resolving conflicts stressing mutual respect.	0(0.0)	34(34.2)	58(58.5)	5(4.9)	3(2.4)
Headmaster tries to persuade or coerce one party into submission.	2(2.4)	12(12.3)	34(34.1)	37(36.6)	15(14.6)
The headmaster leaves conflict to die out with time.	2(2.4)	8(7.4)	39(39.0)	24(24.4)	27(26.8)
The headmaster tries to settle the conflict without consulting the other party.	7(7.3)	24(24.4)	22(22.0)	201(9.5)	27(26.8)
The headmaster resolves conflicts in favour of one party.	0(0.0)	5(4.9)	39(39.0)	22(22.0)	34(34.1)
The headmaster helps the parties to reach a compromise that is seldom acceptable to either party.	5(4.9)	27(26.8)	15(14.6)	41(41.5)	12(12.2)
The headmaster focuses on solving the problem but not defeating each other (both parties are satisfied with the outcome.)	5(4.9)	41(41.5)	34(34.1)	10(9.8)	10(9.8)
Arbitration: The headmaster ensures that the disputants explain and support their claims before third party from outside the staff.	5(4.90)	12(12.2)	51(51.2)	7(7.3)	25(24.4)

Table 11 shows that 64(64.4%) non-teaching staff respondents perceived that the headmasters sometimes used the cooperative approach in resolving conflict that arose in that schools. From the Table it can also be realized that the respondents 46(46.4%) believes that the win-win approach in resolving conflict in the schools is quite useful. However, majority 56(56.1%) of the non-teaching staff responded that the headmaster rarely use the win-lose approach in resolving conflict. It can also be observed that some of the respondents said that the head masters can also leave conflicts to die out with time 39(39.0%) which suggests that some of the headmasters adopt laissez faire approach. Again, some of the headmasters do not consult the other party in settling disputes which is clearly not democratic.

Research Question 4: How effective are conflicts management practices of headmasters in the schools?

This section analyses how effective respondents considered the conflict resolution practices adopted by the headmasters, percentage responses are recorded to establish the effectiveness of conflict resolution practices of the headmaster. For the purpose of clarity; the two categories "Yes but Rarely" and "No" have been combined and labeled "Rarely" for questionnaire items 43 to 45. Data of teachers' response on effectiveness of conflict resolution in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 12.

Table 12: Percentage Response of Teaching Staff on Effectiveness of Conflicts Resolution

Item	Yes, Often N(%)	Yes, Sometimes N(%)	Yes, Rarely N(%)	No N(%)
Do staff members adjust to good behavior after conflict settlement by headmasters?	39(36.1)	0(0.0)	7(5.7)	0(0.0)
Does conflict erupt between the headmaster and staff after previous cases that have been resolved?	12(10.7)	29(27.0)	28(25.4)	40(36.9)
Do staff members tend to perform their duties so as to avoid conflict with the headmaster?	63(57.4)	37(34.4)	4(3.3)	5(4.9)
Who is likely to resolve staff conflict better in your school?	75(68.9)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	34(31.1

It can be deduced from Table 12 that, 63(58.2%) of the teachers were of the view that staff members sometimes adjust to good behaviour after conflict settlement by the headmaster. Again, 63(57.4%) of the teachers responded that staff members very often tend to perform their duties so as to avoid conflict with the headmaster. On a more positive note, as shown in the table, majority of the teacher respondents 68(62.3%) stated that conflict rarely erupt between the headmaster and staff after previous cases have been resolved. The questionnaire item 4 in the Table 12 sought the views of respondents about who is likely to resolve staff conflicts better in their schools. It was realized in Table 12 that the headmasters 75(68.9%) are more likely to resolve conflict better than anyone else in the school, although 34(31.1%) disagree that the headmasters can better resolved conflict in the school. This means that many more of the teachers 75 (68.9%) had confidence in the headmaster being the best person to resolve conflicts in the school. This might have been because of the office he occupies and not because of competence in resolving conflicts. Also, a few 34(31.1%) that identified other persons other than the headmaster might have done so because had seen more competence in such people than the headmaster. Data on headmasters' response on effectiveness of conflict resolution in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 13 .

Table 13: Percentage Response of Headmasters on Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution

Item	Yes, Often N %	Yes, Sometimes N%	Yes, Rarely N %	No N(%)
Do staff members adjust to good behavior after conflict settlement by headmasters?	3(60)	1(20)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Does conflict erupt between the headmaster and staff after previous cases that have been resolved?	1(20)	1(20)	2(40)	1(20)
Do staff members tend to perform their duties so as to avoid conflict with the headmaster?	1(20)	3(60)	0(0.0)	1(20)
Who is likely to resolve staff conflict better in your school?	4(80)	0(0.0)	1(20)	0(0.0)

Three of the headmasters 3(60%) indicated that staff members adjust to good behavior after conflicts settlement in their schools. This affirms agrees with that of the teachers responds. The headmasters 3(60%) responded that it was rare for conflict to erupt between them and their subordinates after previous cases of conflicts have been settled, again 4(80%) of the heads in the schools agreed that sometimes their subordinates tend to perform their duties so as to avoid conflict with them, but 1(20%) refuted. From the Table 13, 4(80%) indicated that they are better likely to resolve staff conflict better in the schools any anyone else even though 1(20%) of them responded that some members of staff can resolve conflict better all things being equal. From all indications, it seems the heads can better resolve conflict in the schools. This is collaborated by Sheriff (1958) who conducted an experiment to show that inter group conflict can be minimized by the introduction of superordinate goals. In the experiment, Sheriff created two independent groups with their norms and hierarchies. Conflict was produced between the groups by having them engaged in activities that allowed only one winner. The result was the development of unfavourable attitudes and stereotypes towards members of the opposite group. Researchers noted that after instituting superordinate goals there was a decrease in hostilities.

Data of non-teaching staff response on effectiveness of conflict resolution in the senior high schools are indicated in Table 14.

Table 14: Percentage Response of Non-Teaching Staff on Conflict Resolution

Item	Yes Often N(%)	Yes Sometimes N(%)	Yes Rarely N(%)	No N(%)
Do staff members adjust to good behavior after conflict settlement by headmasters?	51(51.2)	42(41.5)	7(7.3)	0(0.0)
Does conflict erupt between the headmaster and staff after previous cases that have been resolved?	2(2.4)	49(48.8)	27(26.8)	22(22.0)
Do staff members tend to perform their duties so as to avoid conflict with the headmaster?	29(29.3)	61(61.0)	7(7.3)	3(2.4)
Who is likely to resolve staff conflict better in your school?	73(73.2)	0(0.0)	27(26.8)	0(0.0)

On the part of non-teaching staff, 51(51.2%) of the respondents agreed with both teachers and headmasters that staff members adjust to good behavior after conflict settlement by the headmaster. Similarly, 29(29.3%) and 61(61.0%) responded that staff members tend to perform their duties so as to avoid conflict with the headmasters. Moreover, most of them 73(73.2%) perceived that the headmaster is better likely to resolve conflict that arose in the schools just as the teachers and the headmasters. Here again, 27(26.8%) of the non-teaching staff dissented. It could be summed up from the follow-up interview that the headmasters generally, maintained good climate for effective conflict management in most of the schools. They maintained a cordial relationship with their subordinates by establishing rapport and working as a team, in most cases they trusted their subordinates to their duties, welcome suggestions at staff meeting and made staff appointment with fair consideration of experience, rank and attitude. The follow-up interview also gave greater depth of understanding to the responses given to the questionnaire. It became clear that four staff members had problems with their headmasters. The dissenting views expressed by respondents, however, were not overriding. They only accounted for the infinitesimal rate of conflict occurrence in the schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, key findings that emerged from the study conclusion. It also provided recommendations for practice and areas for further research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the conflict management practices in senior high schools in Akuapem South Municipality. Specifically:

1. To research into the common types of conflict in the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality.

2. To identify the main causes of conflict between the headmasters and staff of the senior high schools.

3. To find out the conflict management practices adopted by the headmasters of the senior high schools in the Municipality and

4. To determine the effectiveness of conflict management practices of the senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality.

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The main data collection instruments were questionnaire and structured interview guide. In all 214 respondents participated in the study. They comprise of 5 headmasters, 109 teachers and 100 non-teaching staff. The respondents were chosen from the five

public senior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. The Likert- type scale structured questions were used for the data collection.

The results of the pilot test generated crombach's alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.74 for headmasters, 0.76 for teachers and 0.70 for non teaching staff. This was consistent with the recommendations of Kline (1999). The results of the study were presented in accordance with the research questions that guided the study.

Key Findings

The major findings of the research questions are as follows:

1. It was evident from the study that the most common type of conflict in the senior high schools, as collaborated by the respondents was conflict between headmasters and the teaching staff. This was followed by conflict with oneself and making choices between school demands. Here, 3 (60%) of the headmasters and 61 (56.6%) of the teachers agreed. Majority of the school heads 3 (60%) pointed that conflict due to scarcity of resources to satisfy school or work conditions was also common in the school. Coincidentally all the three respondents agreed that the least type of conflict was the one between the non-teaching staff and the students.

2. The study revealed that the causes of conflict in the senior high schools were multi-faceted. Communication gap, reward system provided by the heads, subordinate shirking their responsibilities and overloading subordinates with tasks were the dominant causes of conflict in the senior high schools in the Municipality.

3. The headmasters according to the findings, mainly employed variety of prudent ways in resolving conflict in their schools. They used 3 (60%) of the co-operative approach, 3 (60%) of the confirming approach and 2 (40%) of the win-win approaches in effectively reducing conflicts prevalence in the schools.

4. The study also showed that, conflict rarely erupts between the headmasters and the staff after settlement of conflict. Headmasters of the schools were found to better resolved conflict and staff members adjusted to good behavior.

5. The follow-up interview granted revealed that the headmasters of the schools maintained good climates for conflict management and enjoyed the co-operation of their staff, though some of them disagreed.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of that emerged from the study it can be concluded that conflict existed in the senior high schools among the staff particularly, between the headmasters and the teachers; although there are other types of conflicts. It can also be concluded that communication gap, reward system provided by the headmasters, subordinates shirking their responsibilities were the major causes of conflict in the senior high schools in the Municipality.

Additionally, headmasters should use the co-operative, confirming and win-win approaches effectively in resolving conflicts in the senior high schools in the Municipality. Furthermore staff of the senior high schools in the Municipality, adjusted to good behavior after conflict settlement by the headmaster. Moreover,

subordinates performed their duties to avoid conflict with their headmasters. Although headmasters have a duty to accomplish management tasks such as planning, organizing, leading and controlling, one of their important tasks is to know how to manage and deal with conflict in the schools.

Finally Senior High Schools in Akuapem South Municipality, just like any other organization cannot be without conflicts. This is to suggest that conflicts is not necessarily destructive but can also be a useful tool in stimulating creativity and problems solving device.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions the following recommendations have been suggested.

1. Headmasters and teachers must collaborate and co-operate greatly to create congenial and moderating work environment for improved, effective and efficient work performance in the senior high schools in the Municipality. Such environment would minimize or eliminate undue tension, rivalry, biases as well as mistrust and suspicious tendencies among staff members.

2. It is recommended that the Ghana Education Service in collaboration with Directors of Education and other stakeholders must organize seminars or workshops for headmasters and their staff in frequent bases.

3. Conflict plays a vital role in an organization like a school. Headmasters need to accept the fact that it is alive and well and have to stay. Directors

of Education should persistently remind headmasters that conflict must be dealt with rather than be avoided.

4. Headmasters should be aware that they play a significant role in the management of their schools; they should always be on the alert if something goes wrong in the school and thus act as mediators in conflict situations; all interested parties should be involved.

5. It is recommended that the effective conflict resolution techniques identified by the headmasters must be strengthened and continued to be used in times of conflict in the schools.

6. Finally, it is recommended that the chain of communication must be followed to ensure effective and efficient communication in the school. That is subordinates must report to their immediate leaders until it gets to the highest hierarchy.

Recommendation for Further Research

The study focused on conflict management practices of headmasters. The current study is not exhaustive due to constraining factors such as limited coverage area, sample size, time and finance.

1. It is recommended that similar researches on the subject be conducted in other municipalities in the regions of the country, so that the findings of the study can be generalized for Ghana.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Questionnaire Designed for School Authorities (Headmaster) and Staff on Conflict Management Practices in Senior High Schools in the Akuapem South Municipality.

I am a graduate student of U.C.C. researching into conflict management practices by school authorities. This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of MED (Administration). All responses will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Where ever an issue is not applicable kindly say so. Your candid cooperation will therefore be duly appreciated.

SECTION A: BIODATA

Name of School…………………………………………………………………………...

Respond by ticking the appropriate box.

1. Staff Status   [　] Headmaster   [　] Teaching Staff   [　] Non-Teaching Staff

2. Sex   [　] Male   [　] Female

3. Age   [　] 20-24   [　] 25-29   [　] 30-34   [　] 35-39   [　] 40-44   [　] 45-49   [　] 50-54

   [　] 55-59   [　] 60+

4. Marital Status   [　] Single   [　] Married   [　] Divorced   [　] Separated

5. Qualification :   [　] M.S.L.C.   [　] B.E.C.E.   [　] GCE 'O' LEVEL   [　] GCE 'A'

LEVEL   [　] SSCE   [　] BA, BSc, B.Ed, B.sec, B.com   [　] M.A, MSc, M.Ed, M.Phil

   [　] Any other: Please specify…………………………………………………..

6. Rank   [　] Senior Superintendent   [　] Principal Superintendent

          [　] Assistant Director II   [　] Assistant Director I

          [　] Deputy Director   [　] Director II

          [　] Director I   [　] Clerk Grade I/II

84

[ ] Senior Clerk   [ ] Assistant Administrative Officer

[ ] Administrative Officer   [ ] Senior Administrative Officer

[ ] Principal Administrative Officer

[ ] Accounts Clerk/Senior Accounts Clerk   [ ] Assistant Accountant

[ ] Accountant   [ ] Senior/Principal Accountant

[ ] Assistant/Pantry/Senior Pantry Hand   [ ] Assistant/Cook/Chief Cook

[ ] Assistant/Matron/Matron Grade I   [ ] Librarian/Senior Librarian/Principal

Librarian

[ ] Storekeeper/Senior Storekeeper/Principal Storekeeper

[ ] Security/Head Security   [ ] Driver Grade I/II

[ ] Any other: Please specify……………………………………………………………

7. How long have you worked in your present school? (In years)

[ ] 1-3 [ ] 4-6 [ ] 7-9 [ ] 10-12 [ ] 13-15 [ ] 16-18 [ ] 19-21 [ ] 22+

8. Post/Position in school

[ ] Headmaster   [ ] Assistant Headmaster

[ ] Senior House Master/House Mistress   [ ] Head of Department

[ ] Guidance and Counseling Coordinator   [ ] Chaplain

[ ] Form master/Mistress   [ ] Welfare Chairman

[ ] Any other: Please specify…………………………………………………………...

SECTION B: COMMON TYPES OF CONFLICT IN THE SCHOOL.

Please tick the appropriate column to show the common types of conflict that occur in the school.

	Very Frequent	Frequent	Sometimes	Rare	Never
9. Conflict within oneself in making choices between school demands					
10. Conflict due to scarcity of resources to satisfy school or work place conditions. E.g. What you wear to school etc.					
11. Conflict between the headmaster and the teaching staff					
12. Conflict between the headmaster and the non-teaching staff					
13. Conflict between the headmaster and the students					
14. Conflict among teachers on the staff					
15. Conflict among non-teaching staff members					
16. Conflict between teaching and non-teaching staff					
17. Conflict between the teaching staff and the students					
18. Conflict between non-teaching staff and students					
Other types of conflict in the school					

SECTION C: CAUSES OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AUTHORITIES (HEADMASTER) AND STAFF

Indicate by ticking the appropriate column the rate at which the factors stated below cause conflict in your school.

	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	OCCASIONALLY	SELDOM	NEVER
19. Conflict caused by communication barriers; insufficient exchange of information					
20. Conflict caused by use of intemperate language by the headmaster					
21. Conflict caused by conflicting goals of special interest groups on the staff.					
22. Conflict caused by dominance; the headmaster attempting to control the behaviour of subordinates					
23. Conflict caused by reward system provided by the headmaster for individuals or groups.					
24. Conflict caused by the headmaster promoting his personal interest at the expense of the school.					
25. Conflict caused by overloading subordinates with tasks.					
26. Conflict caused by strict supervision of subordinates work.					
27. Conflict caused by headmaster's human relationship.					

28. Conflict caused by subordinates using school facilities to promote personal interest.					
29. Conflict caused by subordinates shirking their responsibilities.					
30. Conflict caused by subordinates flouting the code of ethics.					
31. Conflict caused by subordinates perceiving that the head does not appreciate their efforts.					
32. Conflict caused by teachers resenting to the head admission policy.					
33. Conflict caused by subordinates seeing the headmaster as submitting to the control of the bursar.					
OTHER CAUSES: Please list other causes of conflict and rate them.					

SECTION D: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES OF THE HEADMASTER

Indicate by ticking the appropriate column the extent to which the headmaster employs the conflict resolution techniques listed below in finding solutions to conflicts that arise in the school.

	VERY OFTEN	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
34. Co-operative approach: Headmaster tries to bring the parties involved to a compromise.					
35. Confirming approach: Headmaster engages staff members in resolving conflict stressing mutual respect.					
36. Competitive approach: Headmaster tries to persuade or coerce one party into submission.					
37. Non-response: Headmaster leaves conflict to die out with time.					
38. Domination: The Headmaster tries to settle the conflict without consulting the other party.					
39. Win-lose: The headmaster resolves conflict in favour of one party.					
40. Lose-Lose: The headmaster helps the parties to reach a compromise that is seldom acceptable to either party.					
41. Win-Win: The headmaster focuses on solving the problem but not defeating each other. (Both parties are satisfied with the					

outcome).					
42. Arbitration: The headmaster ensures that the disputants explain and support their claims before a third party from or outside the staff.					
OTHER TECHNIQUES: Please list other conflict resolution techniques and rate them.					

SECTION E: EFFECTIVENESS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES OF THE HEADMASTER

Tick the appropriate column below to indicate the effectiveness of the headmaster's conflict resolutions techniques.

	YES, OFTEN	YES, SOMETIMES	YES, BUT RARELY	NO
43. Do staff members adjust to good behaviour after conflict settlement by headmaster?				
44. Does conflict erupt between the headmaster and staff after previous cases that have been resolved?				
45. Do staff members tend to perform their duties so as to avoid conflict with the headmaster?				
	Headmaster	Some staff members	OTHER: Write to specify	
46. Who is likely to resolve staff conflict better in your school?				
	Increasing	Decreasing	Neither	
47. What is the trend of conflict occurrence over the year?				
	Headmaster	Some staff members	OTHER: Write to specify	
48. Who is responsible for the trend (item 47 above)?				

Interview Schedule

Conflict Management Practices in Senior High Schools in the

Akuapem South Municipal

This interview is a follow-up to the Questionnaire on Conflict Management Practices in Senior High Schools in the Akuapem South Municipal.

School:……………………………………………………………………………………….

Date:……………………………………………………………………………………….

1. Describe the relationship between the headmaster and the teaching staff.

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………..

   Please give reasons and examples

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Describe the relationship between the Headmaster and the non-teaching

   staff…………………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   Please give reasons and examples

   ………………………………………………………………………………………….

   ………………………………………………………………………………………….

3. Does the Headmaster trust his subordinates? If Yes/No

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   Give reasons……………………………………………………………………………….

   …………………………………………………………………………………………....

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   4. Does the Headmaster welcome suggestions from the staff? If Yes/No

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   Give comment…………….…………………………………………………………

5. How does the Headmaster make internal appointments in the school to fill vacant positions such as housemaster, heads of departments, etc?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Does the Headmaster encourage those appointed to such positions to perform effectively? If Yes/No

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Give comment………..………………………………………………………………

7. Please, comment on how bungalows are allocated to staff.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

8. How does the Headmaster deal with staff members who have personal problems e.g. seeking permission to attend to personal/family needs, sickness of spouse/children, bereavement, etc?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

9. What disciplinary procedures does the headmaster adopt in dealing with staff members who are involved in such offences as absenteeism, lateness, laziness etc.

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Within the last twelve months, has there been any conflict:

(i) Between you and the staff?...

(ii) If Yes, what caused the conflict?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) How was it managed?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

(iv). What is your impression about the management techniques employed by the headmaster?

APPENDIX C