

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SENIOR HIGH
SCHOOLS – ASHANTI MAMPONG MUNICIPALITY**

FAUSTINA TWUMWA

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SCHOOLS – ASHANTI MAMPONG MUNICIPALITY**

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation 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: Faustina Twumwa

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: Mr. S. K. Atakpa

ABSTRACT

The study intended to investigate effects of conflict on the administration of Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. The study was guided by four research questions. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 72 teachers and 133 students were randomly selected to deliberate on the issues. The instruments used for data collection were two self-administered questionnaires.

Data collected were analysed manually and electronically whereby the electronic analysis was done by using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). The main analytical tools used were descriptive statistics with emphasis on frequency and percentages.

The findings of the study showed that conflicts emanated from students, teachers and school heads. It was also seen that conflicts have negative and positive effects on the schools. The strategy mostly used to deal with the conflicts was avoidance. Besides this strategy, compromising, competition, collaborating, accommodating, expansion of resources, arbitration and changing of individuals were also used. The most effective strategies to use are avoidance, compromising, accommodating, collaborating and expansion of resources. The conclusion is that at any point in time, an effective conflict resolution strategy would depend on the relative circumstances. It was recommended that school heads should adopt a non authoritative approach to decision making so that teachers would in turn give them needed cooperation. Besides, they must ensure that preventive mechanisms are implemented to reduce the effects of conflicts.

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DEDICATION

To my dear children, Evelyn and Francisca Hackman.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

A school, according to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2010), is an institution for educating and giving instruction to people. On his part, Bernard (1960) indicated “a school as a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons” (p.65). The school system realizes its objectives through a complex system involving policies, programmes, administrators, teachers, students and supporting services. Also, objectives of the school system can be achieved through the availability of the requisite physical infrastructure, equipment and interactions with the host community. Again, the school is established to achieve certain goals like other formal organizations. One other characteristic of the school is that the relationship between members is defined by a specific and formally stated set of rules and regulations such as the rules and conduct for teachers and students.

The school as a formal organization also shows the expected behaviour of its members. In order to achieve its goals, certain prescribed behavioural patterns are expected from the school community. For instance, when teachers genuinely teach and students learn well, they all are said to be behaving well as expected of them. In the same light, it is expected that the school administrator would do what

is acceptable with respect to managing of people and resources. The issue is that the school system is akin to a micro society where there are leaders and the people who are led.

As the norm dictates, in a Senior High School setting, there is the headmaster/headmistress who is the manager/manageress of the school and directs affairs. All other things being equal, there should not have been any disagreement amongst the head, teachers and students because everyone would do what is acceptable as regards the rules and regulations that govern the system but this does not happen all the time. What happens is that conflict erupts every now and then for a variety of reasons.

Conflict in itself is not bad since in the words of Ghaffar (2005), conflict is an essential and unavoidable human phenomenon because where there is human interaction; there is a likelihood of personal likes and dislikes. These agreements and disagreements among individuals and groups lead to conflicts. Conflicts are neither constructive nor disruptive but the ways these are handled make them either positive or negative. Schools, like other human organizations, are prone to one or other type of conflict. Various conflict management strategies are adopted for handling conflict; the most important among these are, mediation, negotiation, avoidance, and collaborating.

Additionally, Fleetwood (1987) maintains that conflict continues to be a factor in academic life. Besides, schools frequently appear to be centres of tension; on occasion, they are perhaps a manifestation of problems in the community. Also, Algert (2002) states that conflict is a process which begins

when one individual in an organization perceives that another individual has had or will have a negative effect on something that the other individual cares about; thus, conflict is about perception. Similarly, conflict has been defined as “the process in which one party perceives that its interest is being opposed or negatively affected by another party” (Meshane & Glinov, 2000). On top of that definition, Thomas (1976) defines it as “the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his” (p. 892). The implications of these definitions are that conflict involves situations in which differences are expressed by interdependent people in the process of achieving their needs and goals, and it arises when a difference between two or more people necessitates change in at least one person in order for their engagement to develop.

The crux of the matter is that in any school community there is the potential for conflict to occur. Instances are that students may misunderstand each other; teachers may disagree on resource allocation and parents may diverge on how the school should be. In short, emotions can run high on a variety of issues. The potential for conflict exists because people have different needs, views and values. The challenge for schools, as for the wider community, is to find ways of managing conflict constructively so that those involved can learn and grow from the experience.

Looking at conflict in a positive light, Karl Max as cited in Johnson and Johnson (2000) opined that in an organization where there is no incidence of conflict, there will be no struggle between job owners and the workers. Max was

of the view that conflict is useful and can bring about positive changes in an organization. Giving credence to the views of Karl Max on the importance of conflict in organizations, Ghaffar (2005) stresses that conflict is inevitable and often good. He states for example that good teams always go through a "form, storm, norm and perform" period. Furthermore, Ghaffar (2005) maintains that getting the most out of diversity means often-contradictory values, perspectives and opinions. He emphasises that conflict is often needed because it helps to raise and address problems; energizes work to be on the most appropriate issues; helps people "be real", for example, it motivates them to participate; and helps them learn how to recognize and benefit from their differences.

The other side of conflict is that it is seen as a tool that splits society apart (Stern, 2003). The crux of the matter is that conflict, wherever it happens has devastating consequences and it does not affect the individuals involved in the situation but the whole society. Stern (2003) states that interestingly, those who take the decisions to start or sustain conflict are often relatively immune to adverse effects that result from the conflict situation. Furthermore, Stern (2003) emphasises that conflict is not just a problem for development but a threat to human life. For instance, during conflict and civil wars, society diverts some of the meaningful resources from productive activities to deal with the associated violence and destruction that accompany the conflict. Thus, the development of the society is reversed.

In school situation, conflict may arise over issues relating to discipline of students, admission of students, the use of classrooms by teachers for extra classes

or competition over limited resources, such as land for farming among others (Oppong-Mensah, 1999). In recent times, some senior high schools have experienced conflict situations that have threatened the academic and social life of the institutions concerned. A case in point is the Okomfo Anokye SHS at Wiampoase and Osei Tutu SHS at Akropong both in the Ashanti Region where forms one, two and three students were asked to stay home while the final year students stayed to write the final examinations. The result of the demonstrations in the two schools led to the destruction of a lot of property belonging to staff and the schools, which were worth several thousand Ghanaian Cedis. In another instance, Cobba-Biney (2003) reports that 13 students from the Breman Asikuma SHS in the Central Region were suspended indefinitely for being ring leaders of a students' demonstration that also destroyed property belonging to individual members of the school and the institution.

From another angle, there could also be other instances where teachers would call for the removal of the school head when the relationship between the teaching staff and the head is not conducive to promote teaching and learning in the school. Some of the time, some headmasters/headmistresses are seen to be autocratic and would not take suggestions from teachers and this leads to conflict. When such situations occur, members of staff may undermine the efforts of the head to deliberate on important issues. Two examples would suffice in this instance. The first conflict was when members of staff of the Apam SHS called for the removal of the head because she was autocratic since she did not consult teachers on matters that affected the running of the school. This situation

threatened the smooth administration of the school. A similar conflict occurred between the teachers of Ghana National College and the headmaster and this disturbed the academic life of the school.

Yet other potential source of conflict in the school could come from the poor human relations of the head. This is because some heads of schools consider their offices as their bonafide property and so they exhibit personal powers. Thus, teachers in his/her good books are given unlimited attention to gossip and those perceived to be detractors are sidelined. Such attitude of the head could lead to opposing groups, which could lead to the creation of conflicts when administrative mistakes are made.

In so far as people have different appearances, attitudes, values and goals, conflicts are unavoidable. They are inevitable but when they arise, a means must be found to resolve them. More so, the divergent views on conflict recognize its inevitability but when it occurs, strategies must be put in place to get it resolved or at least minimised to avoid explosion. According to Cummings and Davis (1994), when conflict is not resolved, it becomes uncontrollable and takes on a life of its own. Such conflicts may quickly escalate into violence, grossly distort interpersonal perceptions and induce a proliferation of disagreement between the people involved. In fact, conflict is unavoidable, no matter how careful a person is. This can be buttressed by the fact that once people come from different social, political, economic and religious backgrounds, there is bound to be divergence of views that in most cases result in conflict.

The researcher chose the topic conflict management behaviours of heads of Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of the Ashanti Region due to complaints gathered from some teachers accusing the heads of being the root causes of most conflict situation in the schools. It is an undeniable fact that school heads are tasked with the responsibility of planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating and implementing school programmes. No matter how efficient and well intended the head is, success can hardly be achieved without the support and cooperation of well qualified, dedicated, committed and effective staff. It is expected that the headmaster/headmistress must have knowledge in the management of conflicts to ensure progress in his/her institution.

To be able to manage conflicts constructively, the head has to rely on a combination of factors. He/she must understand the intricacies for managing conflict, if it is to result in progress rather than forestall development. The capacity of the school head as the chief executive of the institution places him/her at an advantageous position to be able to handle dicey situations. Another factor is his/her ability to influence or persuade others because they respect and identify him/her as the manager/manageress of the institution. The school head needs to be well versed in the dynamics of human relations management to enable him/her do this effectively. He/she should also have the requisite knowledge and skills relating to his/her position to earn him/her the necessary respect to exercise such a duty.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict could be seen as a source of much discomfort for individuals in institutions because it may generate tension, stifle productivity and bring about general organizational ineffectiveness. Several events including people competing with each other, concealing information, putting up deviant behaviour, in a cohesive group, opposing the other party are some of the characteristics of conflicts. Schools as institutions of learning are not left out and may experience some conflict in one way or the other. The way a conflict is handled determines whether its outcome will be functional or dysfunctional.

In Ghana, there have been instances of conflicts in most schools which sometimes result from misunderstanding between the teaching staff or the staff in general and the school administration which the head is the chief executive officer. Other conflict situations may result from the type of administration being used by the head of the institution. For instance, if adopts the close type of administration he/she may have problems with the staff. This is because the decision making process in the school may not make room for active participation of members of staff. Again, when communication is ineffective in schools, conflicts can occur. Examples are what happened at Apam SHS and Ghana National College where the teaching staff protested that the heads must be sacked for maladministration.

According to Stern (2003), conflict is a development in reverse. It reflects not just a problem for development in reverse but a failure of development. The way and manner conflict may be handled, determines the outcome whether it will

be progressive rather than dysfunctional. The problem of the study is that heads of schools are not managing conflicts well and this has led to students' unrests and tension among members of staff in some schools, which eventually affect academic performance in the schools. The research was aimed at findings answers to this problem in the SHS in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study investigated conflict situations and how such situations were managed by heads of Senior High Schools. The study also focused on the effect of management principles used by the heads of the SHS in the teaching and learning activities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the sources of conflicts in the Senior High Schools of the Ashanti Mampong Municipality?
2. How do the conflict situations impact on the administration of the SHS in the municipality?
3. What conflict management strategies do the heads of Senior High Schools in the municipality adopt in the administration of their institutions?
4. How effective are the conflict management strategies that the school heads adopt?

Significance of the Study

Conflict and disputes are part of life. There is no society, organisation or interpersonal relationship which does not experience conflict at one time or another as is part of daily interaction. Differences between people's personalities, their job specialties, their group affiliation and their ideas are likely to precipitate conflicts of one kind or another. The study would have some educational significance for teachers and heads since it is aimed at identifying and analysing the types, causes and management of conflict in Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality.

The findings would address how best such conflicting situations in SHS in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality could be reduced to the minimum to promote effective teaching and learning in the schools. The results would also be of immense benefit to heads of the schools in the municipality of the study area and other administrators to be conscious of conflicting situations in their schools and offices and the measures that could be taken to minimise their occurrences to bring about effectiveness. The study is also hoped to give an insight to heads, teachers as well as students on the effects of conflict in schools. Again, the Ghana Education Service can disseminate this information through in-service training for heads of institutions, teachers and other personnel who can influence the life of students.

Also, parents and guardians would consider the findings of this study very informative and useful. This knowledge would help them educate their wards on the effects of conflicts. Additionally, Non-governmental organizations interested

in education and development of the youth would consider the results of this study most useful as it would offer an overview of conflicts in schools and their management.

Finally, the researcher hopes that the results of this dissertation would add to the existing literature on effective strategies for managing conflicts in schools. This study would also offer other researchers interested in the topic, the opportunity to replicate the study.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to three of the four Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. The schools were Saint Monica's, Saint Joseph Seminary and Amaniampong SHS. Data collection covered sources of conflict between teachers and headmasters/mistresses and how these conflicts were managed. Management of conflicts between school authorities and students were also factored into the data collection process.

The findings of this study are therefore limited to the area of study. However, other educational districts with similar characteristics might as well benefit from the outcome of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher would have wished data collection covered the views of students. However, this could not be done because the scope was limited to conflict management between heads and teachers. Besides, time limitations would not allow the scope of the study to be broadened to cover students' perceptions. In

spite of the fact that students' views were not elicited, their concerns in conflict situations are largely catered for because when teachers are not satisfied with their heads there cannot be proper teaching and learning.

Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study and research questions. Others are significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study and as well as organisation of the study.

Furthermore, Chapter Two presents literature review. The literature reviewed relates to conflicts and conflict management strategies in schools.

Chapter Three embodies the methodology by which the study was done. This chapter describes the research design, population for the study, sample and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, pilot testing of instruments, data collection and analysis procedures.

Additionally, Chapters Four is devoted to the presentation and discussion of data collected for the study. It details how data was presented and discussed with the relevant literature support.

Finally, Chapter Five presents the summary of the study, summary of findings, conclusions drawn as well as recommendations made from the findings and suggested areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter mainly reviews the literature related to conflicts in schools and how they are managed. In effect, the review of the literature deals mostly with what other researchers have written about conceptual framework of conflicts, sources of conflicts in schools with particular reference to headmasters/mistresses and teachers and the conflict management strategies the heads adopt to deal with the conflict situations.

Again, the literature review involves the systematic identification, location and analysis of documents containing information related to the study. These documents include newspapers, books, abstracts, periodicals, journals and other research reports.

Conceptual Framework of Conflicts

Some definitions of conflict are explored to put issues in right perspective. It must be stated that there are several definitions of conflict as social construct or phenomenon; it defies a single universally accepted definition. Thus, according to Algert (1996), “conflict may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals” (p. 125). Similarly, Putnam and Poole (1987) define conflict as “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims, and views, and who see the other

party as potentially interfering with the realization of these goals” (p. 352). Finally, Shinwari (2010) adds that “conflict is the deliberate attempt to oppose, resist or coerce the will of another or others” (p. 2). It has been seen that conflict in human endeavours is inevitable.

Conflicts have become part and parcel of human organizations the world over. This indeed is a paradox because of the amount of energy and resources expended by organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts. Flippo (1980) attempted an explanation when he remarked that, “a total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, boring, and a strong indication that conflicts are being suppressed”. The inevitability of conflict was also established by Kerzner (1998) when he asserted that conflict is part of change and therefore inevitable. It is therefore not an aberration to expect conflicts in the administration of senior high schools in Ghana.

The nature and types of conflicts that occur in secondary school administration vary from one school to another. The common types of conflicts usually occur between the students on one hand and the school authority on the other. Other forms of conflict include interpersonal conflicts among staff and as well as the students. Higher levels of conflicts include those that involve the teachers and their heads.

Again, it is revealed that in every society there are bound to be differences of opinion on all important matters. The differences can be due to personal and collective reason. When competitive individuals or groups consciously try to annihilate, defeat or subordinate each other in an effort to achieve certain

objectives, conflict comes into existence. Conflict results when people are competing for scarce material and non material products (Omoluabi, 2001; Rahim, 1992).

Additionally, Jeanty (2010) stresses that conflict is an unavoidable aspect of everyday life. She maintains that whether the conflict is with other people, oneself or an organisation, conflict is an inevitable aspect of life experience. When you understand how it starts and how it escalates goes a long way towards knowing how to use it to your advantage.

On their part, Thamhain and Wilemon (2004) affirm that conflict can occur between two or more people who disagree on an issue that threatens their respective goals, values or needs. What is important in conflict situations is the question of how the participants in a disagreement perceive this threat. This determines to a great extent how heated the conflict can become. With so many resources and opportunities available within any social setting, it is not uncommon for conflicts to arise. On the contrary, when handled effectively conflict can lead to personal growth and create the change needed to improve interpersonal relations (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

According to Jeanty (2010), the ultimate root of conflict happens when one perceives that something or someone is a threat to some area of his/her well being as the case may be in a senior high school. Sweeney and Caruthers (1996) add that threats from conflict situations typically trigger emotional or psychological responses. When this happens one's ability to view and approach the situation in an objective manner is hampered. This, in turn, makes it seem like

there is a limited number of solutions to a particular problem. Once perspective is hampered by emotion, communication becomes difficult. In effect, there is the tendency for the individual to focus on each party's vested interests, rather than the perceived threats is a more effective way of handling conflict. This approach creates an environment in which both parties' needs can be expressed. The shifting of focus works to reduce the emotional drive to protect one's interests. The interaction then becomes a solution-based exchange where emotional factors can be expressed and addressed (Ross & Ross, 1989).

Conflict situations undoubtedly have some effects wherever they occur. To this end, Jeanty (2010) emphasises that as with all things emotional, the ingredients for conflict can be present long before an actual altercation takes place. The ability to identify and address conflict at an early stage reduces the likelihood of escalation. To do this, it helps to understand how people are apt to communicate (or not communicate) their concerns. In line with that one theory holds that individuals typically fall into one of the four basic personality temperaments:

1. Choleric – these are bold, direct communicators who can be intimidating, but are open to change;
2. Phlegmatic – these are fact-driven types who dislike conflict, and change;
3. Sanguine – these types welcome conflict for the expression and exchange of ideas. They see change as an adventure; and

4. Melancholic – these types are all about the status quo. They do not like to rock the boat. They do not like change (Jeanty, 2010; Batton, 2000; Hocker & Wilmot, 1985).

Another fact about conflict is that whether it is expressed or not it invokes change wherever it occurs (Fisher, 1997). On his part, McNamara (2010) indicates that whether the change that a conflict situation brings is positive or negative depends on how the situation is handled. Those who fall under a personality type that is uncomfortable with change benefit most from an exchange that allows for the expression of vested interests and needs. Understanding the reasons for a conflict and the need for change is essential to moving the process of conflict resolution along (Algert & Watson, 2002).

As stressful as conflict can become at times, there are genuine benefits to resolving it that would otherwise not present themselves if it did not arise. Benefits can come in the form of personal growth, stronger relationship bonds, increased productivity and an overall boost in morale. The occurrence of conflict opens up areas that would otherwise find little, to no motivation for growth and change. Examples of the benefits to effective resolution can be found in all areas of society. Conflicts occurring on the international level have led to numerous trade relation agreements across the globe as well as peace treaties invoked by countries with opposing interests. In the areas of business, strategies and approaches have increasingly favoured the "win-win" perspective in business negotiations. As far as personal relationships go, the ability to address concerns and interests makes for long-term bonds that strengthen over time (Fisher, 1997).

Classifications of Conflict

Conflict can take many different forms and the ability to identify the type of conflict brewing at any point in time helps with the resolution process (Shinwari, 2010). According to Eliot (2009), there were originally four types of conflict in literature. However, with the advancements in technology that society has experienced, as well as the relatively new genre of science fiction, a new conflict category has emerged.

Conflict can come in the form of 'Man Versus Man'. This situation is where the conflict is between two characters, which is generally considered a conflict between one man and another man. This is the most common and most obvious literary conflict. The other is 'Man Versus Himself'. With regards to this, internal conflict is another common conflict in literature. This is often portrayed by a character fighting against his own conscience or moral beliefs. The third type of conflict from the perspective of Eliot is the one that has to do with 'Man Versus Nature'. This conflict is portrayed when man fights against the forces of nature. This can be represented in several ways, possibly as man fighting against a whale, as in "Moby Dick," or man fighting against disease. Fourthly, there is 'Man Versus Society' conflict. This conflict situation where man and his society are often represented by a person who is an outcast or by character who tries to break the normal rules society has established. The fifth type of conflict has to do with Man Versus Technology or Fantasy conflict. This conflict encompasses several spheres, such as man fighting against technological advances, man fighting against aliens and man fighting against supernatural forces (Eliot, 2009).

Also, Hammond (2010) describes five types of conflict namely:

1. Structural Conflict – this type is caused by external forces such as a disagreement that may occur within an organization regarding work loads, availability of resources, time constraints. Structural conflicts require structural solutions.
2. Data Conflict – this type of conflict has to do with the information processes in place within an organization. Disagreements over data can be caused by the process itself or misunderstandings on how the process should work. Changes in the process or a thorough explanation on how it works, is the solution approach needed.
3. Additionally, Hammond (2010) says that there are conflicts that have to do with Values. He explains that these types of conflicts are based on individual belief systems and are the hardest to resolve. The best approach here is to encourage an understanding and respect of each others values.
4. Another type of conflict is Relationship Conflict. This typically centres on conflicting personality issues which lead to negative behaviours. Sometimes resolution can be reached through understanding each other's reasons for disagreement depending on how ingrained said issues are. Boundary setting in terms of establishing a cordial respect for those involved may be all that's possible in this instance.
5. The fifth type of conflict in the view of Hammond (2010) is Interests Conflict. With these, conflicts happen as result of perceived threats to one's goals, or needs. Emotional and psychological factors may be present

on both sides. A solution-based approach that addresses each party's interests, desired outcomes and positive intentions can reduce the likelihood of perceived threats dictating the resolution process.

In her study, Owusu-Mensah (2007) touched on four types of conflicts as per the literature she consulted. The four types are: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Intragroup and Intergroup conflicts. Each of these types of conflicts is discussed into some detail.

Intrapersonal Conflict

Owusu-Mensah (2007) cites Larson and Mildred (2000) who pointed out that intrapersonal conflict occurs within a person and that one can experience intrapersonal conflict with respect to the amount of resources one has by hearing internal voices that disagree. In agreement with this assertion, Orlich and Callaham (2001) explain that in intrapersonal conflict the individual tries to reconcile conflict within his or her own value structure. Similarly, Hart (2001) observes that conflict may not only take a toll on one's physical body but it often occupies one's thoughts and causes a great deal of emotion.

Again, Larson and Mildred (2000) agree that intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual and can involve some form of goal or cognitive conflict. They argued that intrapersonal conflict occurs when a person's behaviour results in positive and negative outcomes or incompatible outcomes. An example is where a person has the option to choose a job in a government organisation that does not pay well but has future security or take a job from a private company that

pays well but does not provide any future security. Such a choice could lead to intrapersonal conflict.

Interpersonal conflict

Regarding interpersonal conflict, while Meek, Heit and Page (2005) as cited by Owusu-Mensah (2007) state that interpersonal conflict occurs between two or more persons, Larson and Mildred (2000) refer to interpersonal conflict as clashes that involve two or more individuals who perceive each other as being in opposition to preferred outcomes (goals) and or attitudes, values or behaviours. Similarly, Nelson-Jones (1990) as cited by Owusu-Mensah (2007) indicates that interpersonal conflict is a situation in which one or both individuals in a relationship are experiencing difficulty in working or living with each other. Expanding on this point, Nelson-Jones states that interpersonal conflict usually occurs when due to differences or incompatibilities, needs, goals or styles clash. Similar to this assertion is Orlich and Callaham (2001) who observe that in interpersonal conflict the values of different individuals or groups openly clash.

Intragroup Conflict

This type of conflict emerges between people who identify themselves as belonging to the same group. Larson and Mildred (2000) explain that intragroup conflict is a clash among some or all of a group's members which often affects the group's progress and effectiveness. In a classroom situation, an intragroup conflict may occur within members of a class where pupils sit in close proximity and interact with each other. Such conflict can also occur among the staff of

schools that have different views on the kind of measures appropriate for punishing students. In this case, some teachers may support the use of corporal punishment while others may support other milder forms of punishment for misbehaviour.

Intergroup Conflict

This type of conflict emerges between two or more groups of people. While Larson and Mildred (2000) define intergroup conflict as opposition and clashes that arise between two or more groups, Wilmet and Hocker (1998) indicate that such conflicts are highly intense and costly to the group involved. Intergroup conflict can therefore occur between two or more schools. According to Antcliffe (1998), intergroup conflict within organisations occurs at three levels: vertical, horizontal and line staff. Antcliffe explains these as follows:

Vertical conflict refers to clashes between levels in an organization. For example, vertical conflict occurs when superiors try to control subordinates too tightly as subordinates resist the control.

Horizontal conflict refers to clashes between groups of employees at the same hierarchical level in an organisation. In a school situation horizontal conflict will occur if one department desires a larger proportion of scarce resources at the expense of other departments.

Line-staff conflict is a clash over authority relationships. As Jennings and Wattam (2005) indicate, line staff conflict can easily occur from the different organizational roles of line and staff departments. An example is where staffing decisions taken by the personnel department (a staff function) is opposed by the

production department (a line function). This implies that conflict in an organization can occur at different levels and so conflict resolution is paramount to effective management of organisations.

It is worth remembering that conflict that emerges in oneself, in marriages, in the family, the community, in an organisation or country can be grouped under one or more of the types mentioned. It is also important to note that conflict can arise between people who have the same goals but disagree on the means by which the goals can be achieved. Conflict that occurs within a person can have either a covert effect on the imitations of the fellow or an overt effect which he or she involves other people in the conflict. Conflict should therefore not only be studied by itself as psychologists do but conflict resolution should be given keen consideration in social situations and its study should be a concern for all (Owusu-Mensah, 2007).

Sources of Conflict in Schools

Conflict in schools takes different forms, for example teachers seem reluctant to obey the headmasters/headmistresses, they do not seem to follow rules or accept extra work, and they do not easily get along with their heads. Heads too adopt an authoritative approach. For example, they pressurize teachers for an uninterrupted working of the school activities. It, therefore, becomes common that conflict between teachers and the school heads occur frequently at any time in the school (McNamara, 2010). In institutions, conflict occurs between various individuals because of their frequent interaction with each other. Conflict

is an expression of hostility, antagonism and misunderstanding between the staff members (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

In the perspectives of Aminu and Marfo (2010), conflicts in a school are akin to those of a workplace since school are composed of working people with similar feelings and aspirations. They state that workplace conflict may be shaped by the unique aspects of its occurrence at the workplace, including the long hours of work, high workload, and the hierarchical structure of the organisation. In this respect, workplaces share much in common with schools, especially pre-college educational institutions. Among the common sources of workplace conflicts are:

Unclear definition of responsibility: Where this is the case, there will be numerous occasions for conflict to arise over decisions made or actions taken in disputed territory.

Lack of/Limited Resources: Time, money, space, materials, supplies and equipment are all valuable resources. Competition for any of these resources will inevitably lead to interpersonal and interdepartmental conflict.

Conflict of interest: Individuals may fight for their personal goals and lose sight of organizational goals. The breeding ground for conflict may lie in confusion about, or disagreement with, the common purpose and how to achieve it while also achieving individual goals within an organization.

Poor/Lack of open communication: Communication is a cause of conflict and a remedy as well. Poor or lack of open communication drives conflict underground and can create a downward spiral of misunderstanding and hostility.

Interdependency: Interdependence within an institution feeds conflict. Our ability to accomplish our goals and objectives depends on the cooperation and assistance of others, but this increases the opportunity for conflict. When the other person is late, has different priorities, misunderstands directions, or is playing office politics, conflicts are created.

Workplace romance: Public displays of affection can make co-workers uncomfortable and accusations of favouritism may occur, especially if it is a superior-subordinate relationship; e.g. Headmaster – Housemistress relationship. If the relationship gets awry, one party may seek to exact revenge on the other (Rau-Foster, 2000).

Perception: Perception, i.e. a particular way of regarding, understanding or interpreting something, is fundamentally unique to each person. Often, people will have divergent perceptions of an issue based on their suspicion, level of trust, assumptions, expectations, experience and history. Workplace conflicts “operate parasitically within an environment characterized by low trust and suspicion...” (Beardwell and Holden, 1997: p. 569), characters very common among teachers.

Besides the above, the following sources of conflict are more peculiar to the pre-college educational institutions in Ghana:

1. Jealousy: Normally, people are recruited into institutions with differences in levels of education therefore, they occupy different positions. However, perceptions, assumptions and expectations combine to turn this normal situation into jealousy, which then results in conflict between and among teachers.

2. Discrimination: When heads, supervisors, etc. discriminate against subordinates, grounds are prepared for conflicts to arise. Such conflicts are severe when the discrimination is along tribal or religious lines.
3. Unfair disbursement of revenue generated from extra classes.
4. Load sharing: When people realize that their workloads are heavy while colleagues of equal qualification have less, there is the tendency of creation of pressure and stressful situations. And when this is not managed, conflicts are bound to occur (Aminu & Marfo, 2010).

Effective Conflict Management in Schools

Treslan (1993) emphasises that the ability to successfully minimise and resolve conflict is an important skill for school administrators to develop. A major reason for this is that administrators are faced with the classic confrontation between individual needs and organisational needs, requiring them to spend a major part of their time attempting conflict mediation. In this context, “the ‘appropriate’ management strategy in a given situation requires accurate identification of both the conflict origin and participants, and their relationships, in order to apply the most effective resolution technique” (Greenhalgh, 1986, p.50). Ideally, this technique must reduce the dysfunctional dimension of conflict so as to capitalise on its functionality for the good of all concerned. Since conflict is inevitable in schools, administrators must be prepared to deal with it, not necessarily from the point of view of elimination, but rather to derive the greatest possible benefits from there.

Consequently, conflict anticipation and detection should always constitute the first two phases of good conflict management. That is, pro-action rather than reaction should be the motto (Treslan, 1993). To this end, effective conflict management should reflect the advice offered by Mary Parker Follett some sixty years ago. According to Treslan (1993), Mary Parker Follet argued that one ought not to conceive conflict as a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities, but a normal process whereby socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment of all concerned. Three methods were advanced for dealing with conflict of which only integration was strongly advocated. These included: domination, whereby there is a victory of one side over the other (a win-lose situation); compromise, whereby each side gives up something in the process (a lose – lose situation); and integration, whereby each side refocuses its efforts so that neither side loses anything nor in fact each gains (a win – win situation).

Furthermore, Treslan (1993) states that Follett believed domination should be avoided at all costs. Although application of this strategy requires little effort on the part of the administrator, the long term side effects can be devastating. Compromise carries with it the assumption that both parties will be happy because each will gain something, but each loses something as well and this in turn creates the potential for further conflict. Integration was favoured simply because if both parties can become satisfied there will remain no issue or problem – obviously an ideal situation not easily attained.

Strategies for conflict resolution will also vary according to the different philosophical basis of those involved. Generally, these basis encompass the win-

lose, lose-lose and win – win approaches to conflict resolution. Win – lose is too often overused as a strategy for solving conflicts. Whereas these methods include the use of mental or physical power to bring about compliance, a lose – lose approach will also leave no one entirely happy. Compromise, side payments and submission of the issue to a neutral third party, as in the arbitration procedure, constitute examples of this latter approach. Arbitration resolves issues at some middle-ground between the positions held by the disputants such that while each disputant gains something the outcome is rarely satisfying to either side. The win – win approach is now becoming more popular although it is still misunderstood by many administrators. This method yields solutions satisfactory to all in that each party to the conflict wins something, and the conflict is therefore resolved constructively. It could be suggested that important conflicts tend to be best managed with positive-sum (win-win) strategies, while more trivial issues merit no more than zero-sum (win-lose/lose-lose) strategies, with most situations calling for mixed modes (no win-no lose) (Hanson, 1991; Owens, 1987; Sanford, 1964).

An important point must be borne in mind when attempting to deal effectively with organisational conflict, namely, that any one method will not apply to all situations or all personalities (Stedman, 1991). Given the various approaches to conflict management currently in existence, a major question becomes "Which approach is best?" While it appears that the integrated (collaborative) procedure has the most to offer, each of the other approaches can also be effective in selected circumstances. Perhaps in our pursuit of conflict management strategies we would be well advised to heed the warning given by

Bailey (1971) that "Any administrator who assumes that he can use the same technique or style in resolving conflicts that emanate respectively from subordinate conflicts, super ordinate conflicts and lateral conflicts is either a genius or a fool" (p. 234).

In general, it can be stated that conflict has been effectively managed when it no longer interferes with the ongoing activities of those involved. Conflict management is therefore the process of removing cognitive barriers to agreement (Greenhalgh, 1986). Depending on the situation, conflict management techniques often focus on changing structure, changing process or both. Sometimes structural modifications are not very creative, and the response to conflict is simply more rules and hardening of the role structure. Such efforts can improve the situation outwardly but not without consequences, for as Sanford (1964) states: "the hardening of the role structure which is an organization's best defense against the inroads of individual irrationality gives equal protection against failing and against success" (p. 100).

Hanson (1991) suggests administrator awareness of the various tactics of conflict management. Naturally the tactics selected will depend on the force driving the conflict. One of the most common forces is scarce resources. Effective management of scarce resources and the ability to expand the resource base whenever possible are important to management. Establishing an appeals system which provides the right of formal redress to a superior in the organization is also an excellent means of treating conflict associated with disputes at lower

hierarchical levels. To cope with the bureaucratic constraints of the hierarchy or perceived favouritism, some institutions have adopted an ombudsman approach.

Thomas (1976) provides what might be considered one of the most useful models of conflict management utilizing the contingency approach to conflict diagnosis. This typology examines five styles of conflict management. Two basic dimensions of behaviour that can produce conflict are identified: attempting to satisfy one's own concerns (organizational demands in the case of administrators) and attempting to satisfy others' concerns (individual needs of the members). From this analysis, five major perspectives are identified which may be used in conceptualizing conflict and behaviours commonly associated with those perspectives. These perspectives are identified as avoidance, compromise/sharing, competition/domination, accommodation and collaborative/integration.

Avoidance is often a form of flight suggesting indifference, evasion, withdrawal, or isolation. Being unassertive and uncooperative can also represent a delay tactic. Compromise/sharing involves splitting the difference or giving up something to get something. Competition/domination frequently means a desire to win at the other's expense. It is a win – lose power struggle where the opinions and interests of others are of little concern. Accommodation can be an appeasement or submission to others at your own expense. On occasion it can represent generosity, while at other times it might mean conserving energy and resources by giving up a few battles in order to win the war. Finally, collaboration/integration represents a desire to fully satisfy the interests of both parties. It is a mutually beneficial stance based on trust and problem solving.

Thomas (1976) proposes that each of the five management styles identified may be effective depending on the situation.

The avoiding style of conflict management is a non-confrontational approach to problems. It involves passive behaviours such as withdrawing or side stepping issues of contention in order to avoid issues which might be harmful to relationships involved. This approach is best used when disagreements develop from minor unimportant issues. This is a useful technique when time is needed in order to gather additional information for informed decision making. It is often employed when the negative impact of the confrontation outweighs the benefit of a quick positive resolution. Unfortunately, problems that are not quickly addressed tend to grow over time. Relationships can be damaged by unresolved issues. Overuse of this style can lead us into giving up too many of our personal goals and enable others to take advantage of us (Burrell, 2011).

The competing style is used when a person has to take quick action, make unpopular decisions, handle vital issues, or when one needs protection in a situation where non-competitive behaviour can be exploited. To develop this style you must develop your ability to argue and debate, use your rank or position, assert your opinions and feelings, and learn to state your position and stand your ground. Overuse of this style can lead to lack of feedback, reduced learning, and low empowerment. This can result in being surrounded by “Yes-Men”. People who overuse the competing style often use inflammatory statements due to a lack of interpersonal skills training. When overuse is taken to an extreme the person will create errors in the implementation of the task by withholding needed

information, talking behind another person's back (or "back-stabbing"), using eye motions and gestures designed to express disapproval, and creating distractions by fiddling or interrupting. Overuse of this style can be exhibited through constant tension or anger and occasional outbursts of violent temper.

As regards the use of compromising style it is finding a middle ground or forgoing some of an individual concerns and committing to other's concerns. This style is moderately assertive and moderately cooperative; the goal is to find middle ground. The compromising style is used with issues of moderate importance, when both parties are equally powerful and equally committed to opposing views. This style produces temporary solutions and is appropriate when time is a concern, and as a back up for the competing and collaborating styles when they are unsuccessful in resolving the situation. Compromising skills include the ability to communicate and keep the dialogue open, the ability to find an answer that is fair to both parties, the ability to give up part of what you want, and the ability to assign value to all aspects of the issue. Overuse of the compromising style leads to loss of long – term goals, a lack of trust, creation of a cynical environment, and being viewed as having no firm values. Overuse of compromise can result in making concessions to keep people happy without resolving the original conflict. Under use leads to unnecessary confrontations, frequent power struggles, and ineffective negotiating (Brake & Walker, 1995).

According to Greenhalgh (1986), the collaborating style is used when the concern is to satisfy both sides. It is highly assertive and highly cooperative; the goal is to find a "win/win" solution. Appropriate uses for the collaboration style

include integrating solutions, learning, merging perspectives, gaining commitment and improving relationships. Using this style can support open discussion of issues, task proficiency, equal distribution of work amongst the team members, better brainstorming and development of creative problem solving. This style is appropriate to use frequently in a team environment. Collaborating skills include the ability to use active or effective listening, confront situations in a non-threatening way, analyze input, and identify underlying concerns. Overuse of the collaborating style can lead to spending too much time on trivial matters, diffusion of responsibility, being taken advantage of, and being overloaded with work. Under use can result in using quick fix solutions, lack of commitment by other team members, disempowerment, and loss of innovation.

Similarly, the accommodating style is foregoing your concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others. This style is low assertiveness and high cooperativeness; the goal is to yield. The accommodating style is appropriate to use in situations when you want to show that you are reasonable, develop performance, create good will, keep peace, retreat, or for issues of low importance. Accommodating skills include the ability to sacrifice, the ability to be selfless, the ability to obey orders, and the ability to yield. Overuse of the accommodating style results in ideas getting little attention, restricted influence, loss of contribution, and anarchy. People who overuse the accommodating style exhibit a lack of desire to change and usually demonstrate anxiety over future uncertainties. One of their main desires may be to keep everything the same. When accommodating is overused certain behaviours emerge. Some of these

emergent behaviours include giving up personal space, making "me" or other victim statements, being overly helpful and then holding a grudge, and speaking in an extremely quiet almost unintelligible voice. Under use of the accommodating style can result in lack of rapport, low morale, and an inability to yield. When the accommodating style is underused a person may display apathy as a way of not addressing the anger or hurt, and make statements full of innuendo and double meanings (Thomas, 1976).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology that was used for this study. It covered areas such as research design, population, sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, pre-testing of the instruments for data collection, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used to guide the study. According to Van Delen (1997), the descriptive survey design is appropriate for a research that aims at seeking people's views about issues, events, policies and practices. He states further that a survey allows the collection of data that may be used to assess current practices and conditions and make plans to improve them. The study therefore seeks to find out sources of conflict in senior high school, and how these conflicts are dealt with headmasters/headmistresses in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality.

On the part of Gay (1992), a descriptive survey is used when a researcher attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. In this case, sources of conflicts in schools and how they are managed to ensure the needed conducive environment for effective teaching and learning.

Population

The population for this study was composed of teachers and prefects in the four Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Teacher respondents comprised the headmasters and headmistresses, assistant headmasters and headmistresses, senior housemasters and housemistresses, housemasters and housemistresses, heads of department and form masters and mistresses. Apart from these categories of teachers who necessary have to be part of the study, teachers who do not have any additional responsibility apart from teaching were included in the data collection. On the part of students, only prefects were selected for the study. It must be stated that respondents for this study may be parties in a conflict or part of the solution to the conflict and therefore their inclusion went a long way to make data collection a comprehensive one.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

There were two samples for this study, the teachers' and students' samples. The teachers' sample size was 72 and students' sample was 133. The breakdown of the two samples is displayed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Breakdown of Teacher Respondents

| Position | Number |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Headmasters/Headmistresses | 4 |
| Assistant heads | 7 |
| Senior housemaster/housemistresses | 7 |
| Housemasters/Housemistresses | 36 |
| Heads of Department | 18 |
| Total | 72 |

Table 2: Breakdown of Students Respondents

| Position | Number |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| School/Head prefects | 7 |
| Assistant school/head prefects | 8 |
| Dining hall prefects | 9 |
| Protocol prefects | 2 |
| Compound prefects | 13 |
| Entertainment prefects | 9 |
| Chapel prefects | 15 |
| Library prefects | 7 |
| Sports prefects | 11 |
| House prefects | 20 |
| Assistant house prefects | 20 |
| Post prefects | 5 |
| Dispensary prefects | 7 |
| Total | 133 |

Two sampling techniques are used for selection of respondents and they are stratified and purposive sampling techniques. First of all, respondents were

put into two strata of teacher respondents and students respondents. Once all the respondents within the identified stratum are known; they were selected purposefully to take part in the study. Even within the teacher stratum, there was sub-categorisation of headmasters/headmistresses, assistant headmasters/mistresses, senior housemasters/housemistresses and the others. In the same way the students' stratum were sub-divided into head/school prefects, sports, library, chapel and others. Because of the leadership role each of these categories of respondents play in the school administration they necessarily had to be selected to contribute to the data collection process.

Data Collection Instruments

Two self-administered questionnaires were used for data collection. Teacher respondents' questionnaire had four sections apiece. Section A of each of the questionnaire was about the biographical information of respondents. The teachers' questionnaire had five items which were about the gender, age, educational level, work experience and marital status of respondent. With the student's questionnaire, there were three items in section A and they concerned the age, gender and form of respondents. Apart from these, the remaining sections had the same number and mode of questions.

To be precise, Sections B, C and D had the same number of items. Items in Section B were used to elicit responses on the sources of conflicts in the Senior High Schools of the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. There were three main items and they were in the form of checklist whereby respondents could choose more than one alternative by ticking a 'Yes' to indicate it exists or 'No' to show it

is non-existent. Items in Section C sought to collate views on how conflict situation impacted on the administration of the SHS in the municipality. The items were in the form of statements and respondents were required to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. There were four items in the Section C. Lastly, items in Section D solicited views that gave answers to research questions to three and four. There were three main questions and two were opened with the remaining one being in the form of checklist.

Pre-testing of Instruments

The validity and consistency of the questionnaire items were established before the final data collection. Firstly, supervisor scrutinized the instruments and made a few corrections, after which the instruments were pre-tested as recommended by Cunningham (1986) that the pre-testing process facilitate validation of research instruments.

Later the questionnaires were pre-tested at the Nsutam Catholic Senior High School in the Sekyere Central District. A sample of 18 staff respondents and 33 student respondents were used for the testing of the instruments. The process for selection of respondents for testing the instruments was the same as in the main study. Specifically, respondents were selected through the stratified and the purposive sampling procedure.

By way of introduction, a letter of introduction was obtained from the Head of Department at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA). Copies of the letter were made and sent to the heads of the schools selected for the study and permission was given to conduct the study.

Data collected from the pre-testing process was edited, coded manually and input electronically using the electronic software, Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). When all the data had been inputted, frequency tables, charts and percentages were extracted for the analysis. In the end, a reliability test was run and the result was 0.8500. On the basis of this, the final data administration was undertaken. On the whole two weeks was used to complete the pre-testing of the questionnaires.

Data Collection Procedures

As was done in the pre-testing of questionnaires stage, copies of the introductory letter from IEPA were produced and used to seek permission to collect the data for the study. A period of one month was used to complete the data collection because the school heads, teachers and students cooperated with the research. In the case of students it was very easy because in each of the school, all identified student respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires on the spot and this ensured that the return rate from students was 100 percent. On the part of teacher respondents a week was allowed to elapse before the questionnaires were retrieved and teachers were equal to the task. Virtually, no travelling difficulties were encountered except trekking to Kofiase for four times because teachers would not respond the questionnaires on the spot but they had to be given some space to do so. In all these, within a month data collection was complete and there was a hundred percent return rate for data collection.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data collected with the questionnaires were first grouped and edited for consistency in presentation. After this process was over, data was coded using numerical values for the data view input of the SPSS. When all the data had been keyed into the data view of the SPSS, the coded responses were keyed into the variable view to complete the input process. All items meant to answer a particular research question was analysed as such. Out of the analysed data, frequency tables, charts and simple percentages were generated for the presentation of results in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was concerned with sources of conflict in Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality and how effectively they were managed. In order to get a balanced view of the issues involved, the opinions of heads of the SHS in the Municipality as well as those of assistant heads, senior housemasters/mistresses, housemasters and heads of department were sought. Additionally, the views of students were sought on the issue. In view of this, the views of teachers and students are presented side by side.

Four research questions were formulated to guide data collection for the study; thus, the presentation of results is done to answer the research questions in the order they first appeared in text. Before then, responses on the background information of respondents were presented and their relevance highlighted.

Some background information of teacher respondents and students were collated. In respect of teachers five issues, which are gender, age, educational level, work experience and marital status were considered relevant to the topic under investigation. On the part of students, their gender, age and form were considered to be important to the study. Regarding the gender and age of teachers and students, they are presented in one table because they have some commonalities. The other variables are presented separately.

The first background information presented is the gender of respondents, which are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

| Sex | Teachers | | Students | |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Male | 48 | 66.6 | 90 | 67.7 |
| Female | 24 | 33.4 | 43 | 32.3 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 | 45 | 100.0 |

In Table 3, it is seen that there were 48 male teacher and 90 male student respondents. This shows that male respondents far outweigh those of females and this is not surprising because one as climbs the educational ladder, the number of females dwindle. The significance of gender to the conflict management processes has been drummed home by several researchers. For instance, Birkhoff (2011) intimated that gender affects and indeed permeates conflict management at the societal, organizational and individual levels. On their part, Baril, Korabki and Waston (1993) pointed out that as more women move into decision-making positions in organisations, the issue of gender differences impact on how effective conflict management becomes in organisations.

The issue of age of respondents became an important variable to deal with and hence, responses elicited are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Age Distribution of the Respondents

| Teachers and students age | Students | | Tutors | |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 15-19 | - | - | 96 | 72.2 |
| 20-29 | 18 | 25 | 37 | 27.8 |
| 30-39 | 19 | 26.4 | - | - |
| 40-49 | 30 | 41.7 | - | - |
| 50-59 | 5 | 6.9 | - | - |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 | 133 | 100.0 |

From Table 4, it is clear that the ages of most of the students were between 15 – 19 years. It is acceptable and falls within the normal age of students in SHS. There were a few students (27.8%) whose age went beyond 20. It is also clear that a few teacher respondents had their ages falling between 20 – 29 age range. The significance of the age factor in this study is well pronounced in relation to what earlier researches have postulated. This was evident in what Antonioni (1998) had to say that age in general has little relationship with conflict management style. On the other hand, however, Antonioni found in a study that age was significantly associated with only the integrating and avoiding conflict management styles.

Apart from the age and gender of students, their levels in the SHS were considered germane to the contribution they could make to the study. Consequently, responses were elicited in that direction. From the answers collated, it was realized that 57 (47.5%) were in Form 2 and the remaining 63 (52.5%) were in Form 3. No Form 1 students were chosen because it was felt that

such students had not stayed in the school long enough to contribute meaningfully to sources and management of conflict there. On the other hand, those in second and third years might have experienced a conflict situation and how it was managed.

The next biographical information that was considered important to the findings of this work was the highest educational qualification of teacher respondents. Table 5 presents the responses.

Table 5: Highest Educational Level of Teachers

| Educational Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| First Degree | 63 | 87.5 |
| Second Degree | 9 | 12.5 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 |

Table 5 shows that 87.5% of teachers hold a first degree in various disciplines of study and 12.5% has a second degree, which is an added advantage. The minimum qualification for teaching in an SHS is a first degree, preferably a Bachelor's degree in Education. Therefore, from the responses given, the teachers are adequately qualified to teach at the level. It is also presumed that they possess the needed skills and technical competence to handle whatever conflict may emerge amongst them in the course of their work.

Another equally important biographical variable about teachers was number of years they have been working as teachers of SHS. Responses they provided are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Number of Years Taught

| Number of years Taught | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1-10 | 30 | 41.7 |
| 11-20 | 33 | 45.8 |
| 21 years or more | 9 | 12.5 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 |

The information contained in Table 6 indicates that 41.7 % and 45.8% of teachers have been teaching respectively for between 1 – 10 years and 11 – 20 years. Also, 12.5% of the teachers have taught for more than 20 years. Considering the number of years they have been teaching, it would mean that most of the sources of conflict are known to them and proffering solution to them would not be a difficult task. In effect, the extent of experience teachers have in dealing with conflict situations in their respective schools would be an added advantage for their study.

Finally, the marital status of teachers was explored and the responses to that variable are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Marital Status of Teacher Respondents

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Single | 39 | 54.2 |
| Married | 33 | 45.8 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 |

The results from the marital status of teachers indicate that there were more singles than married respondents. As a matter of fact, the marital status of teachers does not seem to have a direct correlation with conflict resolution but gender has. Besides, the personal characteristics of parties in conflict are imperative to the adoption of a conflict management strategy as postulated by Nuata and Kluwer (2004).

Presentation of the Main Results

Four research questions were used to guide data collection for the study. In the course of presenting the results the views of teachers and students will be presented side by side, whilst each research question will constitute a sub-section under which a set of responses will answer that research question.

Research Question One: What are the sources of conflicts in the Senior High Schools of the Ashanti Mampong Municipality?

Research question one was intended to elicit responses on the sources of conflict in the Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. To be able to deal with the question exhaustively, four sets of items were used and each of them is presented in a separate table. Table 8 presents the first set of responses that also deal with the real sources of conflict in the schools.

In Table 8, it is reckoned that 54.2% of teachers and all (100%) student respondents indicated that teachers' reluctance to obey the headmasters/mistresses is one of the sources of conflict at the SHS. As a matter of fact, for more than 50% of teachers agree with students on this issue give credence to that cause of

conflict. McNamara (2010) gave credence to this source of conflict in the school set up. He said among that conflict in schools takes different forms, for example teachers seem reluctant to obey the school by not following rules and they do not easily get along with their principals.

Similarly, 83.3% of teacher respondents and 64.7% of students accepted the fact that students' reluctance to obey school rules and regulations is another source of conflict in the SHS. Most often students refuse to obey some of the rules and regulations of the school, saying that they are too restrictive and that they were not consulted before those rules were put in place and hence they refuse to obey them. It must be emphasised that when students refuse to obey school rules or regulations it results in conflict situation which is defined by Shinwari (2010) as a deliberate attempt to oppose, resist or coerce an external imposition of will.

Table 8: Sources of conflict in the SHS in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality

| Sources of conflict | Teachers Responses | | | Students' Responses | | |
|---|--------------------|----------|-----------|---------------------|------------|------------|
| | Yes | No | Total | Yes | No | Total |
| | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) |
| Teachers' reluctance to obey the headmasters/mistresses | 39 (54.2) | 33(45.8) | 72(100.0) | 133 (100.0) | - | 133(100.0) |
| Students' reluctance to obey school rules and regulations | 60 (83.3) | 12(16.7) | 72(100.0) | 86 (64.7) | 47(35.3) | 133(100.0) |
| Headmaster/mistress's authoritative leadership style | 63 (87.5) | 9(12.5) | 72(100.0) | 133 (100.0) | - | 133(100.0) |
| Misunderstanding among staff | 39 (54.2) | 33(45.8) | 72(100.0) | 87 (65.4) | 46 (34.6) | 133(100.0) |
| Unclear definition of responsibility | 42 (58.3) | 30(41.7) | 72(100.0) | 13 (9.8) | 120 (90.2) | 133(100.0) |
| Limited resources to work with | 54 (75.0) | 18(25.0) | 72(100.0) | 126(94.7) | 7 (5.3) | 133(100.0) |
| Conflict of interest | 42 (58.3) | 30(41.7) | 72(100.0) | 127(95.5) | 6(4.5) | 133(100.0) |
| Poor/lack of open communication | 72 (100.0) | - | 72(100.0) | 133 (100.0) | - | 133(100.0) |
| Discrimination | 51 (70.8) | 21(29.2) | 72(100.0) | 133 (100.0) | - | 133(100.0) |
| Unfair disbursement of revenue from extra classes | 51 (70.8) | 21(29.2) | 72(100.0) | 103 (77.4) | 30(22.6) | 133(100.0) |

In another instance, all students and 87.5% of teachers agreed that headmasters/mistresses' authoritative leadership style is a source of conflict in the schools. The norm these days is that school heads should endeavour to consult their subordinates on issues that concern them so that implementation of decisions become smooth. Based on this realization, teachers as well students sometimes refuse to yield to the autocratic leadership style of their head thereby bringing about conflict in the school's administration. In the same line of thought, all teachers and students indicated that poor or lack of open communication goes to affirm the authoritative nature of the head, because they think if there were open communication channels they could have grabbed the opportunity to make input into the running of the schools.

Table 8 further reveals that 54.2 % of teachers and 65.4% of students indicated that misunderstanding among staff of a school can bring about conflict. It is natural that in every organisation people will disagree on one or two issues and when the disagreement heightens, it results in conflict. Some other time too, unclear definition of responsibility for staff is a potential source of conflict. This is a clear instance where disagreement results. To this issue of unclear definition of responsibility among staff, 58.3% of teachers and 9.8% of the student respondents indicated it was source of conflict in the school. The majority (90.2%) of students did not see that as any serious source of conflict in their respective schools.

Again, Table 8 shows that 75% of teacher respondents and 94.7% of students acceded to the fact that limited resources to work with in the schools are

a source of conflict. This source of conflict is attested to by Omoluabi (2001); Rahim (1992) who intimated that conflict can result in schools when teachers have to compete for scarce material and non material resources before they could effectively discharge their respective tasks.

More over, Table 8 indicates that 58.3% of teachers and 95.5% of student respondents emphasised that conflict of interest is another source of conflict in the schools. They stressed that in taking certain decisions in the schools, the interest of teachers and that of the head may conflict and they would bring about conflict.

In the same way, the table shows all students and 70.8% of teachers held the view that the exhibition of discriminatory tendencies in the implementation of certain decisions is a clear source of conflict in the school because parties who think, they have been unfairly treated will not cooperate with management and that is not good enough.

Finally, Table 8 shows that 77.4% of student respondents and roughly 71% of teachers stated that unfair disbursement of revenue generated from extra classes in the school is one source of conflict in the schools. Extra classes are done outside the normal instructional periods and they are organised such that every teacher could benefit from the proceeds. This should not have given any headache but unfortunately, the sharing of the proceeds from the extra classes becomes a source of conflict because some people would feel that they have been unfairly treated.

On the whole conflict in organisations and for that matter schools are inevitable. This is so because Thamhain and Wilemon (2004) as well as Jeanty

(2010) affirm that conflicts are unavoidable aspect of everyday life. In effect, conflict is real but how it is handled is what matters. In their contribution, Aminu and Marfo (2010) stressed conflicts in a school are akin to those of a workplace since schools are composed of working people with similar feelings and aspirations, there is bound to be conflict.

Apart from the sources of conflict, there are types of conflicts in the schools set up. In view of this, responses were elicited on the issue and these responses are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Types of conflict in the Senior High Schools

| Types of conflict in the school | Teacher Responses | | | Student Responses | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| | Yes N (%) | No N (%) | Total N (%) | Yes N (%) | No N (%) | Total N (%) |
| Teacher-teacher | 21(29.2) | 51(70.8) | 72(100) | 24(18.0) | 109(82.0) | 133(100) |
| Teacher-students | 21(29.2) | 51(70.8) | 72(100) | 122(91.7) | 11(8.3) | 133(100) |
| Teacher-parent | 15(20.8) | 57(79.2) | 72(100) | 29(21.8) | 104(78.2) | 133(100) |
| Teacher-head | 57(79.2) | 15(20.8) | 72(100) | 109(82.0) | 24(18.0) | 133(100) |
| Student-student | 60(83.3) | 12(16.7) | 72(100) | 79(59.4) | 54(40.6) | 133(100) |
| School-comunity | 27(37.5) | 45(62.5) | 72(100) | 17(12.8) | 116(87.2) | 133(100) |

The responses in Table 9 show that teacher-head conflict and student-student conflict are most pre-eminent types of conflict in the schools. It is seen that on these two counts the majority of teachers and students held similar views. Regarding the other types of conflicts, 91.7% of students believed that teacher-students conflict is also predominant in the schools. On the other hand, the

majority of teachers and students, averaging 70% did not think teacher-teacher, teacher-parent and school-community conflicts are common in their schools.

Even though, the literature did specifically touch on the types of conflict discussed in Table 9, most of the types reviewed are covered. For instance, Hammond (2010) discussed five types of conflict and the first type he touched on was 'structural conflict'. He said that this type of conflict is caused by external forces such as a disagreement that may occur within an organization regarding work loads, availability of resources and time constraints. This is very true because most of the factors associated with this type of conflict occurred in the schools studied. On his part, Owusu-Mensah (2007) touched on four types of conflicts and they are intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup conflicts. Explaining further, Larson and Mildred (2000) pointed out that intrapersonal conflict occurs within a person and that one can experience intrapersonal conflict with respect to the amount of resources which is at the disposal of the individual to carry out a task. It must be emphasised that each of the types of conflict reviewed in the literature has bearing on those that occur in schools.

Table 10 present another set of responses that have to do with how frequent each type of conflict occur in the schools. The response variables used to measure the frequency of occurrence of the conflicts were 'rampant' and 'not rampant'.

Table 10: Responses on the Impact of Conflict on School

| Types of conflict in the school | Teacher Responses | | | Student Responses | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Rampant N (%) | Not rampant N (%) | Total N (%) | Rampant N (%) | Not rampant N (%) | Total N (%) |
| Teacher-teacher | 12(16.7) | 60(83.3) | 72(100) | 17(12.8) | 116(87.2) | 133(100) |
| Teacher-students | 6(8.3) | 66(91.7) | 72(100) | 66(49.6) | 67(50.4) | 133(100) |
| Teacher-parent | - | 72(100.0) | 72(100) | 23(17.3) | 110(82.7) | 133(100) |
| Teacher-head | 27(37.5) | 45(62.5) | 72(100) | 103(77.4) | 30(22.6) | 133(100) |
| Student-student | 51(70.8) | 21(29.2) | 72(100) | 85(63.3) | 48(36.7) | 133(100) |
| School-community | 6(8.3) | 66(91.7) | 72(100) | 25(18.8) | 108(81.2) | 133(100) |

To 70.8% of teachers, the most frequent type of conflict to occur in the schools is student-student type of conflict. On the same issue, 63.3% of students agreed with the position of the teachers. Again, in the view of students, teacher-student and teacher-head types of conflict are among the most rampant ones to occur in the SHS in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Table 10 further shows that there are some types of conflict that do not occur very often. According to teachers and students, teacher-teacher, teacher-parent and school community do not occur rampantly. Table 11 sums up the views of respondents on how frequent conflicts occurred in the schools.

Table 11: Responses on How Frequent Conflicts Occurred in the Schools

| Responses | Teacher responses | | Student responses | |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | N | (%) | N | (%) |
| Once a week | 6 | 8.3 | 25 | 18.8 |
| Occasionally | 66 | 91.7 | 108 | 81.2 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 | 133 | 100.0 |

From the responses displayed in Table 11, conflicts occurred in the schools occasionally. This means that on the whole conflict did not crop up very rampantly. It was in few instances that conflict occurred once a week. As has been indicated earlier, conflicts in human endeavour are inevitable. The most important thing is how these conflict situations are dealt with dispatch.

Research Question Two: How do the conflict situations impact on the administration of the SHS in the municipality?

Bearing in mind the fact that conflicts in human endeavours are inevitable, the effects of the conflicts were also explored. It was on this basis that research question two was formulated to delve into the impact conflicts in schools have on the administration of these institutions. In soliciting the views of respondents on the issues involved, statements were put forward from which they indicated their agreement or disagreement relative to what happens in the schools. Table 12 presents the views of respondents in that direction. For ease of presentation, the response variables are collapsed into two. Thus, 'Strong Agree' and 'Agree' become 'Agree' and 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' become 'Disagree'.

Table 12: Responses on the Impact of Conflicts on Schools

| Statements on the impact of conflict situations in schools | Teacher responses | | | Student responses | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| | Agree | Disagree | Total | Agree | Disagree | Total |
| | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) |
| Conflict is a pivot around which change takes place in workplaces. | 57(79.2) | 15(20.8) | 72(100) | 114(85.7) | 9(14.3) | 133(100) |
| Conflicts help groups become more cohesive and operate more effectively as teams. | 6(8.3) | 66(91.7) | 72(100) | 42(31.6) | 91(64.4) | 133(100) |
| Conflicts engender healthy competition and rivalry which lead to better decisions in the end. | 15(20.8) | 57(79.2) | 72(100) | 32(24.1) | 101(75.9) | 133(100) |
| Conflicts in the school cause great stress and unhappiness and result in lower staff outputs. | 63(87.5) | 9(12.5) | 72(100) | 115(86.5) | 18(13.5) | 133(100) |
| Conflicts in schools cause strike actions among staff and student demonstrations. | 54(75.0) | 18(25.0) | 72(100) | 113(85.0) | 20(15.0) | 133(100) |
| Conflicts lead to outright hostile or aggressive behaviour such as mob action, property damage and minor theft of property. | 42(58.3) | 30(41.7) | 72(100) | 108(81.2) | 25(18.8) | 133(100) |

First and foremost, Table 12 shows that roughly 79 % of teachers and 85.7% student respondents agreed that conflict is a pivot around which change takes place in workplaces, schools inclusive. This point largely corresponds with the views of Fisher (1997) and McNamara (2010). Fisher stated that the fact about conflict is that whether it is expressed or not it invokes change wherever it occurs and McNamara was concerned with the change that is likely to evolve in a conflict situation.

Secondly, regarding the positive aspect of conflict, the table shows that few (8.3%) teachers and 31.6% of students agree that conflicts help groups become more cohesive and operate more effectively as teams. On the other hand, the majority (91.7%) of teachers and students (64.4%) disagreed with the proposition that conflicts in schools can help teachers, the head and students to work as a team to achieve the objectives set.

The views of the minority in this particular instant is supported by Tschannen-Moran (2001) who stressed that when conflicts are handled effectively they can lead to personal growth and create the change needed to improve interpersonal relations in organisations.

Again, Table 12 shows that conflict in schools on a limited scale can engender healthy competition and rivalry which could lead to better decisions in the end. This is so because a few (20.8%) teachers and (24.1%) students agreed with the proposition, whilst the majority disagreed. Whatever the case is, conflicts when not properly resolved could have dire consequences. However, when it is dealt with appropriately, would bring about a desired change (Ross & Ross, 1989).

On the negative aspects of conflict in schools, the table shows that conflicts in the school cause great stress and unhappiness and result in lower staff outputs. This view was shared by 87.5% of teachers and 86.5% of student respondents. Their viewpoints are given credence by Stern (2003) by emphasising that conflict is not just a problem for development but a threat to human life. In more specific sense, 75% and 85% respectively of teachers and students agreed that conflicts in schools cause strike actions among staff and student demonstrations. Similarly, Table 12 shows that roughly 58% of teacher respondents and 81% of students acceded to the view that conflicts lead to outright hostile or aggressive behaviour such as mob action, property damage and minor theft of property in the schools. All these views been expressed about conflict are true in the school situation. Many a time, there have been friction among teachers and school heads because of disagreement on policy implementation and among students, teachers and heads on how to implement certain decisions which students, mostly think is not in their interest. In such case, students have resorted to demonstrations leading to destruction of property. The solution is to institute measures that could resolve conflicts as and when they crop up. To this end, Algert and Watson (2002) emphasised that trying to understand the reasons behind a conflict situation and the need for change is essential to moving the process of conflict resolution along.

Research Question Three: What conflict management strategies do the heads of Senior High Schools in the municipality adopt in the administration of their institutions?

It has been emphasised severally that to some extent a conflict situation would determine whether its effect would be negative or positive. It was on the basis of this that this research question three was evolved to explore the strategies that are used to deal with conflict situations. Responses on the conflict management strategies are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Responses on the Strategies for Managing Conflicts in Schools

| Conflict management strategies | Teacher responses (N=72) | | Student responses (N=133) | |
|--|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) | N (%) |
| Avoiding/withdrawing | 54(75.0) | 18(25.0) | 121(91.0) | 12(9.0) |
| Compromising/sharing | 45(62.5) | 27(37.5) | 32(24.1) | 101(75.9) |
| Competition/Domination/ Forcing | 24(33.3) | 48(66.7) | 83(62.4) | 50(37.6) |
| Accommodating/Smoothing | 57(79.2) | 15(20.8) | 67(50.4) | 66(49.6) |
| Collaborating | 42(58.3) | 30(41.7) | 57(42.9) | 76(57.1) |
| Detraction | 21(29.2) | 51(70.8) | 96(72.2) | 37(27.8) |
| Arbitration | 22(30.6) | 50(69.4) | 67(50.4) | 66(49.6) |
| Changing of individuals involved in the conflict | 17(23.6) | 55(76.4) | 71(53.4) | 62(46.6) |
| Expansion of resources | 16(22.2) | 56(77.8) | 101(75.9) | 32(24.1) |

Table 13 shows nine strategies that can be adopted and used in the schools to manage the conflict situations that crop up sometimes. In the estimation of teachers, four of the strategies are used very often. These strategies include avoiding, compromising, accommodating and collaborating. On the avoidance strategy, it is seen that 75% of teacher respondents claimed that strategy was used to resolve conflicts that cropped in the schools. According to Adkins (2006), the avoiding/withdrawing conflict management strategy is a non-confrontational approach to dealing with problems. It involves passive behaviours such as withdrawing or side stepping issues of contention in order to avoid issues which might be harmful to relationships involved. It is also seen that 62.5% of teachers said the compromising method was used very often. With this strategy, a middle path is found so that some concerns can be forgone by the parties involved in the conflict (Burrell, 2011). The two other strategies which teachers revealed were predominantly used to resolve conflict are accommodating (79.2%) and collaborating (58.5%). The accommodating strategy is a situation a party in the conflict foregoes his/her concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others; and collaborating is a situation when the concern is to satisfy both sides in a conflict (Greenhalgh, 1986).

Furthermore, the Table 13 indicates that few teachers, averaging 28% stressed that competition, detraction, arbitration, changing of individuals involved

in the conflict, and expansion of resources were rarely used. This does not mean these strategies were never used but their frequency was minimal.

However, in the views of students, only one strategy was used rarely. This means that the other eight strategies were used very often depending on the type of conflict concerned. In the first instance, 91% of students indicated that the avoidance strategy was used frequently; this is followed by expansion of resources. The views of students as well as those of teachers show that schools adopt a varied approach to resolving conflicts that come about in administering the schools. The choice of a mixture of strategies is in consonance with the admonition of Bailey (1971). He had advised that administrators should not assume that they can use the same technique or style in resolving conflicts that emanate respectively from subordinate, superordinate and lateral, since that will amount to being a genius or a fool.

The circumstances under which any of the strategies were used were equally explored. These responses are consolidated and presented in prose. As regards the use of avoiding/withdrawing, respondents intimated that it is used mostly when there is conflict between student-student and head-staff situations. It was explained that students being conscious of the school rules regarding quarrelling and fighting would do everything to avoid the other students so that he/she can concentrate on his/her academic work. In the same vane staff conscious of the consequences of being at logger head with one's superior would

ignore the conflict and pretend nothing is wrong. These views are in tandem with what Thomas (1976) said about the avoidance style of conflict management. He held the view that avoidance is used when the issue is trivial, the costs outweigh the benefits of resolution, and the problem is a symptom rather than a cause and allowing the situation cool down.

Regarding the compromising style, it is used when there is conflict between teacher-teacher and student-student because each party has to take part of the blame to allow the system to run smoothly. Closely related to compromising is accommodating. Respondents said a situation when there is a conflict between the head of a school and a teacher, the best strategy is for the teacher to accommodate the head and that can bring peace. On the other hand too, this strategy is applied such that the head of school tends to accommodate all criticism from teachers so as to allow peace to prevail. This style conflict management sits well with Thomas' (1976) recommendations on the use of accommodating in conflict resolution. Collaboration is applied in situations that are similar to those of compromising and accommodating.

The expansion of resources strategy is used in situations where there is lack/limited resources resulting in the conflict. Also, the changing of individuals in the conflict is used by transferring students from one dormitory to another or teachers from one school to another to prevent the deepening of the conflict.

Apart from the strategies discussed above, the use of the others may depend on the seriousness of the situation. Whatever the case may be, all the strategies are used as when the need arises.

Research Question Four: How effective are the conflict management strategies that the school heads adopt?

Responses elicited with research question four were meant to evaluate which of the conflict management strategies were effective in the view of respondents. Views expressed in this section are consolidated and presented in Table 14 followed by the appropriate literature support.

Table 14: Responses on the Most Effective Conflict Management Strategies Used in the Schools

| The strategies | Frequency (N) | Percent (%) |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Avoiding | 156 | 76.1 |
| Compromising | 131 | 63.9 |
| Accommodating/collaboration | 103 | 50.2 |
| Expansion of resources | 92 | 44.9 |
| Others | 62 | 30.2 |

N=205

From the Table 14, respondents intimate that avoiding is the most effective strategy that can be used in to manage conflicts in schools. The table

shows that roughly 76% of respondents (teachers and students) indicated that the most effective conflict management strategy used by the schools was avoidance. Even though, respondents have stressed that avoidance had been used frequently and effectively to deal with conflicts, it has some drawbacks that have to be taken into consideration by school administrators. Burrell (2011) emphasised that the continuous use of the avoidance strategy can lead to relationships being damaged by unresolved issues. Besides, the overuse of this style can lead parties in the conflict into giving up too many of their personal goals, thus enabling others to take advantage of them.

Secondly, in the opinion of respondents the next effective strategy used to deal with conflicts in schools is the compromising style. According to Table 14, almost 64% of respondents alluded to this fact. Compromising is used in a situation where both parties in the conflict are equally powerful and equally committed to opposing views. This style produces temporary solutions and is appropriate when time is a concern, and as a back up for the competing and collaborating styles when they are unsuccessful in resolving the situation. Compromising skills include the ability to communicate and keep the dialogue open, the ability to find an answer that is fair to both parties, the ability to give up part of what you want, and the ability to assign value to all aspects of the issue. Overuse of the compromising style leads to loss of long-term goals, a lack of

trust, creation of a cynical environment, and being viewed as having no firm values (Brake & Walker, 1995).

It can also be seen from the table that collaboration/accommodation, and expansion of resources are effective according to respondents. But in the order of merit, avoidance and compromising are most effective than the others. In reference to earlier responses, this finding is a confirmation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter of the study is the presentation of the summary of the study. Also catered for in this chapter are the summary of findings, conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations made from the findings and areas suggested for further study.

Summary of the Study

This study was focused on conflict management strategies used by school heads in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Based on this the background to the study discussed the inevitability of conflict in schools, the effects these conflict situations have on the administration of the schools and what can be done to deal with the conflicts. The statement of the problem reechoed existence of conflict in human endeavours and the negative effects they would have on the operations of the organisations. Finally, the need to evolve ways of managing the conflicts necessitated this research. Consequently, the purpose of the study sought to identify the sources of conflict in schools, their effects and how to manage them.

Apart from the background to the study, statement of the problem and purpose of the study, other sections that made Chapter One complete were the research questions formulated to guide data collection. Also discussed in the Chapter One were: the significance of the study, delimitation of the study and limitation of the study.

Furthermore, an extensive literature relating to sources of conflict in schools, their impact on school administration and management techniques were reviewed.

The methodology of the study was dealt with in Chapter Three. It comprised the research design, population of the study, sampling procedures used for the selection of respondents and instruments used for data collection. Other areas covered in the methodology were pre-testing of instruments, data collections and analysis procedures.

Moreover, Chapter Four presented the results and discussions. The presentation of results was done mainly using tables and simple percentages. Where it was possible relevant literature was cited to buttress the finding or discussion.

Finally, Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Summary of Findings

The main findings of the study were presented to reflect the research questions. Firstly, research question one explored the sources of conflict in schools and results were:

1. Teachers were reluctant to obey their school heads.
2. Students' reluctance to obey school rules and regulations.
3. Heads' exhibition of authoritative leadership style.
4. Limited resources to work with.
5. Poor/lack of open communication.
6. Unfair disbursement of revenue from internally generated funds.
7. Discrimination.

Apart from the sources, the types of conflict were tackled and they included teacher-teacher, teacher-head, teacher-student, student-student, school-community and teacher-parent. In all, it was seen that in the view of teachers, student-student conflict is most rampant and students were of the view that teacher-head conflict is also very rampant.

The second research question delved into the impact the conflict situations had on the schools. The results indicated positive and negative aspects of conflict. The positive aspects were:

- i. Conflict helps to make certain changes in the schools which ordinarily, would not have been possible without the conflict,

- ii. Conflicts help teachers become more cohesive and operate more effectively as a team, and
- iii. Conflicts in the school engender healthy competition and rivalry and lead to better decisions,

The negative impact of conflicts included the fact that:

- a. Conflicts in the school cause great stress and unhappiness and result in lower staff outputs,
- b. Conflicts in schools cause strike actions among staff and student demonstrations, and
- c. Conflicts lead to outright hostile or aggressive behaviour such as mob action, property damage and minor theft of property.

The third research question explored the conflict management strategies that were used to deal with the conflict situations in the schools studied. The results showed that: Avoiding, compromising, competing, collaborating, accommodating, expansion of resources, arbitration, detraction and changing the individuals involved in the conflicts were used variously. However, the avoiding was not most used strategy.

Finally, it was revealed that the most effective conflict management strategy were avoidance, compromising, accommodating/collaborating and expansion of resources in that order. The challenges of using these strategies came to the fore.

Conclusions

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that conflicts in schools are inevitable. It was also seen that conflicts do not only have negative effects but also there are positive aspects of conflicts in human endeavours. However, care must be taken so that the negative effects do not mar the administration of schools. In view of that every effort must be made to ensure that conflicts are resolved amicably using the appropriate strategies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. In view of the fact that the teachers were sometimes reluctant to obey the school head which they attributed to the authoritative leadership style the heads exhibited, heads are urged to adopt a democratic approach to decision making so that teachers would in turn give them needed cooperation.
2. It is also recommended that students should be well- oriented well to know the rules and regulations so that they would not break them deliberately as it was observed that some students' failure to obey school rules and regulations resulted in conflicts.

3. As regards the limited resources, education authorities must endeavour to expand the facilities and provide adequate resources to forestall conflicts emanating from that angle.
4. School heads must practice open communication and avoid discriminatory practices.
5. Income from extra classes must be shared equitably and according to the input each made into the teaching process.
6. School authorities must ensure that preventive mechanisms are implemented so that the negative effects of conflict can be minimised.
7. Schools must adopt an appropriate conflict resolution mechanism that is acceptable to all parties in the conflict situation.

Suggested Areas for Further Research

First and foremost, prospective researchers must replicate this study in other parts of the Ashanti Region and beyond. Secondly, a study must be conducted into the teacher-head conflicts and how they impact on the academic performance of students, and thirdly, a study should be undertaken into student-student conflict and its effect on the performance of students.

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APPENDICES

Section B: Sources of Conflicts in the Senior High Schools

6) Which of these bring about conflict in your school?

| S/N | Sources of Conflict | Responses | |
|-------|---|-----------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| i. | Teachers' reluctance to obey the headmasters/ headmistresses. | | |
| ii. | Student's reluctance to obey school rules and regulations. | | |
| iii. | Headmaster's/headmistress's authoritative leadership style. | | |
| iv. | Misunderstanding among staff. | | |
| v. | Unclear definition of responsibility. | | |
| vi. | Limited resources to work with. | | |
| vii. | Conflict of interest. | | |
| viii. | Poor/ lack of open communication. | | |
| ix. | Discrimination. | | |
| x. | Unfair disbursement of revenue from internally generated funds | | |
| xi. | Others, specify: | | |

7) Which of the following types of conflict occurs in your school?

| S/N | Type of Conflict in the School | Responses | |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| i. | Teacher- teacher | | |
| ii. | Teacher- student(s) | | |
| iii. | Teacher- parent | | |
| iv. | Teacher- head | | |
| v. | Student- student | | |
| vi. | School- community | | |

8) Which of the above types of conflict chosen is rampant?

| S/N | Type of Conflict in the School | Response | |
|------|--------------------------------|----------|------------|
| | | Rampant | Not Rmpant |
| i. | Teacher- teacher | | |
| ii. | Teacher- student(s) | | |
| iii. | Teacher- parent | | |
| iv. | Teacher- head | | |
| v. | Student- student | | |
| vi. | School- community | | |

9) How often does the conflict occur?

i) Daily []

ii) Once a week []

iii) Occasionally []

Section C: Impact Conflict Situations have on Administration of the Schools.

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of these statements as applicable in your school.

| S/ N | Statements on the impact of conflicts in schools | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---------|--|-------------------|-------|----------|----------------------|
| 10) | Conflicts are a pivot around which change takes place in workplaces. | | | | |
| 11) | Conflicts help groups become more cohesive and operate more effectively as teams. | | | | |
| 12) | Conflicts engender healthy competition and rivalry which lead to better decisions in the end | | | | |
| 13) | Conflicts in the school cause great stress and unhappiness which result in lower output. | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| 14) | Conflicts in schools cause strike actions among staff and student demonstrations. | | | | |
| 15) | Conflicts lead to outright hostile or aggressive behaviour such as mob action, property damage and minor theft of property. | | | | |

Section D: Conflict management strategies

16) Which of these conflict management strategies are used in this school?

| S/N | Conflict Management Strategies | Responses | |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| i. | Avoiding/withdrawing | | |
| ii. | Compromising/sharing | | |
| iii. | Competition/ domination/forcing | | |
| iv. | Accommodation/smoothing | | |
| v. | Collaborating | | |
| vi. | Detraction | | |
| vii. | Arbitration | | |

| | | | |
|-------|--|--|--|
| viii. | Changing of individuals involved in the conflict | | |
| ix. | Expansion of resources | | |
| x. | Others, specify: | | |

17) Under what circumstance(s) is/are any of the conflict management strategies you chose in item 16 above is implemented?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

18) In your opinion which of the conflict management strategies is most effective for your school? Please list them in the order of importance:

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Students

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to solicit your views on the sources of conflict in the Senior High Schools and how effectively they are dealt with by school heads. You are kindly requested to objective supply answers as you perceive the issues in your school. Pleas the responses provided would help the research make appropriate recommendations to educational policy makers with the view to fashioning out workable solutions to conflict situations in SHS in Ghana. Thanks for your cooperation.

Instructions: Please tick or supply brief responses as appropriate.

Section A: Bio Data of Respondents

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| 1) Gender: | Male [<input type="checkbox"/>] | Female [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| 2) Age: | 15-19 [<input type="checkbox"/>] | 20 or more [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| 3) Form: | Form One [<input type="checkbox"/>] | Form Two [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| | Form Three [<input type="checkbox"/>] | |

Section B: Sources of Conflicts in the Senior High Schools

4) Which of these bring about conflict in your school?

| S/N | Sources of Conflict | Responses | |
|-------|---|-----------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| i. | Teachers' reluctance to obey the headmaster/headmistress | | |
| ii. | Students' reluctance to obey school rules and regulations. | | |
| iii. | Headmaster's/headmistress's authoritative leadership. | | |
| iv. | Misunderstanding among staff. | | |
| v. | Unclear definition of responsibility | | |
| vi. | Limited resources to work with. | | |
| vii. | Conflict of interest | | |
| viii. | Poor/lack of open communication. | | |
| ix. | Discrimination. | | |
| x. | Unfair disbursement of revenue from internally generated funds. | | |
| xi. | Others, specify | | |

5. Which of the following types of conflict occurs in your school?

| S/N | Type of conflict in school | Responses | |
|------|----------------------------|-----------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| i. | Teacher- teacher | | |
| ii. | Teacher- student(s) | | |
| iii. | Teacher- parent | | |
| iv. | Teacher- head | | |
| v. | Student- student | | |
| vi. | School- community | | |

6. Which of the above types of conflict chosen is rampant?

| S/N | Type of Conflict in the School | Response | |
|------|--------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| | | Rampant | Not Rampant |
| i. | Teacher- teacher | | |
| ii. | Teacher- student(s) | | |
| iii. | Teacher- parent | | |
| iv. | Teacher- head | | |
| v. | Student- student | | |
| vi. | School- community | | |

7) How often does the conflict occur?

i. Daily []

ii. Once a week []

iii. Occasionally []

Section C: Impact Conflict Situations have on Administration of the Schools

Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of these statements as applicable in your school.

| S/N | Statements on the impact of conflicts in schools | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 8) | Conflicts are a pivot around which change takes place in workplaces. | | | | |
| 9) | Conflicts help groups become more cohesive and operate more effectively as teams. | | | | |
| 10) | Conflicts engender healthy competition and rivalry which lead to better decisions in the end | | | | |
| 11) | Conflicts in the school cause great stress and unhappiness which result in lower output. | | | | |
| 12) | Conflicts in schools cause strike actions among staff and student demonstrations. | | | | |
| 13) | Conflicts lead to outright hostile or aggressive behaviour such as mob | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | action, property damage and minor theft of property. | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Section D: Conflict management strategies

14) Which of these conflict management strategies are used in this school?

| S/N | Conflict Management Strategies | Responses | |
|-------|--|-----------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| i. | Avoiding/withdrawing | | |
| ii. | Compromising/sharing | | |
| iii. | Competition/ domination/forcing | | |
| iv. | Accommodation/smoothing | | |
| v. | Collaborating | | |
| vi. | Detraction | | |
| vii. | Arbitration | | |
| viii. | Changing of individuals involved in the conflict | | |
| ix. | Expansion of resources | | |
| x. | Others, specify: | | |

15. Under what circumstance(s) is/are any of the conflict management strategies you chose in item 14 above is implemented?

a)

b)

c)

d)

16. In your opinion which of the conflict management strategies is most effective for your school? Please list them in the order of importance:

1st

2nd

3rd

4th