



**EXPLORING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ZAMBIA: A STUDY OF
SELECTED SCHOOLS IN KABWE DISTRICT- ZAMBIA**

By

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Zimbabwe Open University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of Degree of Master of Science in Peace, Leadership and Conflict
Resolution**

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DECLARATION

I Syabwanta Villa, do hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work, all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that it has not been previously presented for a degree at any level at this or another university.

Signed: **Date:**

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Syabwanta Villa has been approved as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Science in Peace, Leadership and Conflict Resolution.

Signed:.....**Date:**.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my dearest husband, Exsaviour Sakala and our beloved daughter Tionge Sakala for their patience and perseverance during my studies. I also dedicate this work to my father Dyson Syabwanta whose interest in my education has never ceased to amaze and inspire me and to my mother Alice Siamilemba Syabwanta for her unconditional love and care throughout my educational endeavours.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DEBS	-	District Education Board Secretary
HOD	-	Head of Department
MOGE	-	Ministry of General Education
PEO	-	Provincial Education Office
UNZA	-	University of Zambia
ZOU	-	Zimbabwe open University

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the conflict management strategies used in the management of public schools in Kabwe District, Zambia. The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish the types of conflict that are common in public schools, determine factors that lead to conflicts being experienced in public schools, to discuss how such conflicts affect the running of schools and also propose conflict management strategies to be used in management of public schools. The research approach was qualitative and a descriptive survey design was adopted. The population of the study comprised sixteen participants from four public schools. Participants included head teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, class teachers as well as supporting staffs. Purposive sampling was used as a sampling procedure and Maximum variation was the sampling technique. Data was collected by use of semi- structured interviews and it was analyzed by the use of thematic analysis. The findings of the study showed that conflict was experienced in public schools at one time or the other. The most common types of conflict were inter-group conflicts between teachers and management as well as teacher to pupil and intra-group conflicts among pupils. The study established that the main sources of conflict include late coming, absenteeism, failure to follow teaching ethics, poor teacher and pupil performance, pupils not following school rules as well as the adolescence nature of pupils. The study also revealed that conflict had negative effects on the running of the school such as de-motivation, teaching not being done effectively, work environment is affected, absenteeism, transfers and also poor performance by both teachers and learner. The study concluded that various strategies of managing conflict were used in public schools and the prominent ones were dialogue, guidance and counselling, cooperation and use of disciplinary measures. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) should provide on-job and in-service training courses to teachers to equip them with skills and knowledge for conflict management. Courses in conflict management should also be included in the curriculum for teachers in training institutions as a way of preparing them for conflict management in schools. Managers in schools should also apply different approaches to conflict management.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

The chapter presents a general introduction to the problem which includes: background to the study, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Also addressed are objectives, significance of the study, theoretical frameworks as well as definition of terms.

1.2. Background to the study

In the recent past, a great deal of management attention has been directed towards the development of an effective way of managing conflicts in schools. This is all intended to empower head teachers and teachers to perform and produce results which are necessary for the survival of any school organization. Schools in most communities in the world are seen to be key institutions in the transformation of technological, social and economic dimensions of people's lives (Afful-Broni, 2012). As a result most governments, all over the world usually apportion lot of money in training appropriate manpower, developing suitable policies as well as providing the necessary infrastructure to ensure that schools run properly.

The fact that people view schools to be very important, as they are a cornerstone of human progress and development, the last incidence that one would expect to find in schools is conflict. Ghaffar (2013), however argues that conflict is found in any human environment and it may grow from simple to complex or from non-violent to violent depending on the gravity. Even the school environment, which stands for education and progress, has its own share of a variety of conflicts, some of which end in violence. This is due to the fact that different individuals while having different goals are prone to interact for the achievement of their mutual gains which in one way or the other lead them to conflict. In schools, internal conflicts occur because sometimes administrators, teachers and learners have different perceptions and attitudes towards certain issues.

According to Sagimo (2002), conflict is a situation where there is disagreement between parties. It denotes a stressful, unhappy, distressing, depressing, annoying and frustrating state of affairs. Conflicts occur because individuals have different perceptions, beliefs and goals. Rahim (2002), argues that conflict could be described as all forms of opposition, disagreement, friction between two or more parties and it manifests in various forms such as arguments, protests, demonstration, aggression and other destructive behaviours.

Conflict in schools is also said to occur when one party perceives the action of another party as hindering the opportunity for the attainment of a goal. Nevertheless Ubi (2001), emphasized that disagreements among people are natural as people must disagree to agree and conversely it becomes logical that they should agree to disagree. This implies that such agreement or disagreement to agree, does not constitute conflict. Conflict in a school setting could arise among staff, between staff and management, students and staff, or even between the school and the host community. Since school administrators must live with conflicts, inter-group, inter-personal, ethnocentric and so on, the best technique and attitude an effective and efficient school administrator should have towards it is to reorganize its inevitability in the work place and develop an understanding of the strategies of managing, minimizing and resolving it.

Conflict management as a phenomenon is an integral part of the administration of any given organization. The school as an organization consists of people with different background with regard to their competences, needs, values, skills, aspirations and psychological make-ups. Thus no organization can successfully accomplish its set objectives without having to deal with organizational conflicts. Since we agree to the fact that where there are people, there is bound to be conflict hence it is an inevitable part of school life. Though some of these conflicts are healthy and if viewed positively can be change drivers, some can be detrimental to the achievement of school goals. According to Oputa (2003), the consequences of conflicts on the school organization have been regrettable. Part of the repercussions on schools is disruption of academic programmes, inadequate staffing as a result of unplanned transfer, hostility, suspicion and withdrawal from active participation in school activities. In some cases, school results were withheld or cancelled, as a result of emergency transfer of subject teachers.

In line with the above, public school head teachers need to take conflict management as a very important aspect of school administration because conflicts and attempts at conflict management is very vital in shaping organizational behavior towards achievement of set objectives. Education managers and school heads need to give more attention to the principles or strategies of managing these conflicts. Corwin (1996), argues that there is need to analyze conflicts in public schools in order to increase the capacity to understand the teaching profession and the challenges it faces. Therefore, conflict management in the school system is an issue that every stakeholder within the school system has to deal with at one time or the other. The basics of conflict management include teamwork, communication and

a systematic approach to solving the disagreement. In view of this the study intends to Explore Conflict Management Strategies used in the Management of Public Schools: A Study of Selected Schools in Kabwe District, Zambia.

1.3. Statement of the problem

A school environment has diverse values, beliefs and attitudes making it inevitable for conflicts to occur among and between students, parents, teachers and staff (Achoka, 1990). Management of conflict in schools therefore mean those responses that the administrators and teacher make in order to deal with the conditions that can hinder the realization of the aggregate objective of the school as well as the teacher's instructional and behavioural classroom lesson objective. However one gets the sense that most of the schools are ever affected in matters that border on conflict. One wonders if there are established conflict management strategies that schools use. It is against this background that the study was undertaken to explore conflict management strategies used in the management of public schools.

1.4. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to explore conflict management strategies that are used in the management of public schools in Zambia.

1.5. Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives

1. To establish the type of conflicts common in public schools.
2. To determine factors that lead to conflicts being experienced in public schools
3. To discuss how such conflicts affect the running of schools.
4. To propose conflict management strategies to be used in the management of public schools.

1.6. Research questions

The research questions that guided the study are:

1. What are the types of conflict in public schools?
2. What are the factors that lead to conflicts being experienced in public schools?
3. What are the affects of conflict on the running of schools?
4. What conflict management strategies are used in management of public schools?

1.7. Significance of the study

This study is very valuable to the management of both private and public secondary school since, it seeks to provide vital information about conflict management in schools. It may help the school management to determine suitable ways in dealing with conflict in educational sector. The study would also be important to the management of organizations and government ministries in Zambia especially the ministry of general education in their bid to deal with conflict in schools.

1.8. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that guided the study was behavioral theory also known as the human relations theory. The human relations theory is a radical reaction to the scientific or classical movement which treated human being as machines. The principles of human relations believed that organizations should see and treat the workers as human beings. It was a product of what is known as the Hawthorne studies, by George Elton Mayo, which examined the effects of social relation, motivation and employee satisfaction on productivity (Ismail, 2016).

Mayo and others, argued that the concept of social man motivated by social needs and more responsive to work group pressure than to management control has to replace the old concept of rational man motivated by personal economic needs. This theory marked the beginning of the recognition of human factor in the effectiveness of an organization (Ismail, 2016). Hawthorne studies also revealed that social factors such as employ relationships were an important factor for managers to consider. It was believed that any manager who fails to account for the social needs of his or her employees could expect to deal with conflict and lower performance (Ismail, 2016).

The theory has two major principles which are satisfaction and democracy. It implies that organisation with the most satisfied workers is likely to be more efficient while democracy advocates employee participation in decision making, delegation of responsibilities to workers by the administration and open channels of communication. Human relations provide communication between employees and managers allowing them to interact with one another to help make proper decisions. Workers are also exposed to motivational and emotional tactics to get them increase productivity. Adherence to these principles consequently helps to reduce organisational conflict thereby increasing productivity.

Therefore, this theory is applicable to the study as it recognizes the frequent occurrence of conflict between individuals and groups within the organizations due to differences in their needs and accepts the notion that conflict is inevitable in an organization. It also holds support for the traditional theory that conflict is bad and can be avoided and that the best approach to manage conflict was to resolve it once it arises. Human relations theory argues that conflict is natural in all organizations and that it may have either a positive or a negative effect, depending on how the conflict is handled (Osabiya, 2015). Performance may increase with conflict, but only up to a certain level, and then decline if conflict is allowed to increase further or is left unresolved. Because of the potential benefits from conflict, managers should focus on managing it effectively rather than suppressing or eliminating it.

The human relationship theory is applicable in educational administration as relationship approach helps education to achieve effective results. The business in educational administration is oriented with teaching, nurturing, simulating and providing a healthy and supportive learning climate for children. The effective use of human relation theories and methods therefore plays a significant role in student-teacher, teacher-principal, principal-community, and principal-administration relation (Ismail, 2016).

Not only that, the school with a human relations view embodies an atmosphere in which relational aspects such as developing and maintaining positive relationships are deemed of high importance. Such a school environment is one of high teacher morale. Staff members are enthusiastic about coming to work every day and are genuinely excited to be part of the school team (Ismail, 2016). The head teacher sets a tone of encouragement and embraces the concept of workers as important individuals who are capable of influencing the school in a positive manner through their own unique skills. The overall result of this theory is an environment consisting of collaborative and harmonious relationships amongst staff members ranging from paraprofessionals to administration (Ismail, 2016). The principal who leads a school with a human relations approach places an emphasis on employee satisfaction and motivation thereby reducing unnecessary conflict.

A human relations theory also steers managerial focus towards an emphasis on employee enthusiasm, morale and contentment rather than just productivity alone. An emphasis on this democratic approach developed the term democratic administration. This in turn influenced a more democratic approach to administration in teaching, leadership strategies, decisions and conflict resolution. The emphasis on human relations and democratic style develops what is

termed principles of administration. This entails suppositions of how things should be or how individuals should behave within the realm of an organization..

1.9 Definition of key terms

Conflict

Conflict involves individual or group disagreements, struggles, disputes, quarrels, or even physical fighting and wars.

Public School

Public school refers to schools that are supported and controlled by the government for example posting of teachers and funding in school is done by government.

Conflict management

Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly and efficiently.

Conflict management strategies

Conflict management strategies refer to internal mechanisms used in resolving conflict.

1.10 Summary

The chapter gave an introduction to the study. The chapter also presented the background to the problem, the problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study and the theoretical perspectives applied to the study. The next chapter will provide a review of literature related to the study

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

This chapter contains review of related literature to the study under the following sub headings; concept of conflict, levels of conflict, factors that lead to conflict being experienced in organizations, effects of conflict on organization performance and strategies of managing conflict in organizations.

2.2. Concept of Conflict

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. According to Best (2006), conflict is defined as the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. He views conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize or eliminate the rivals. In this regard conflict is seen to be an inbuilt aspect of the organizational behaviour system. Flippo (1980), pointed out that a total absence of conflict in any organization would be unbelievable, impossible, undesirable, and boring, and a strong indicator that conflict is suppressed.

In organizations, conflict is regarded as the presence of discord that occurs when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and frustrate each other's attempting to achieve objectives. Amason (1996), described conflict as a form of socialization. He stressed that people in organizations have both personal and role preferences about the organizations' actions and policies. Conversely, conflict exists whenever it is impossible for others to carry out their desired action. This also shows that conflict is a fact of life and cannot be avoided. It is a reality in any social system. Bens (1997), also reported that conflict is the tension that is experienced when a group of people feels that their needs or desires are likely to be denied. His argument was in conformity with the contention made by Owens (1995), who suggests that conflict occurs whenever incompatible activities occur. This means that conflict involves an emotional reaction to a situation signals a disagreement of some kind and bonding is broken.

According to Abdu- Raheem (2004), conflict means strife, controversy, discord of action and antagonism. This is in line with DuBrin (2005), who argued that conflict is synonymous to terms such as, controversy, strive, battle, quarrel and incompatibility. He continues to define conflict as a condition which occurs when two or more parties recognize mutually exclusive goals, values or events. His argument is in agreement with the argument made by Canavan and Monahan (2001), who asserted that conflict situation is one in which the parties involved are unable to iron out their differences. This simply shows that conflict is the art of coming into collision, clash or be in opposition with one another.

It is also learnt that conflicts occur at the work place when two or more people disagree over issues of organizational substance and experience some emotional opposition with one another. Rahim (2002), described conflict as an interactive process involving inconsistencies in or between social existences such as individuals, groups and organizations. This is in line with Achinstein, (2002:4), who said conflict is a “social interaction process, whereby individuals or groups come to perceive of themselves at odds”. Uline et al (2003), also agree that conflict can occur when two persons interact and are found to be having different interests. This shows that conflict therefore occurs when the action of a person is interfering, obstructing or in some way making other’s behaviour less effective. For Johns (1988), conflict is natural and in many ways inevitable because of the natural tendency in almost every human person to presume that their way of thinking and doing things is not only the best, but also the only right way.

In spite of the many negative connotations of conflict, some scholars however are of the conviction that conflict is necessary for genuine involvement, empowerment and democracy (Afful-Broni, 2012). Putnam (1977), also believes that conflict can be used to balance power, improve communication, and to develop a foundation to manage differences. What makes conflict potentially dangerous is the fact that many people are unaware of how to identify it or deal with it when it initially occurs. It tends to be more recognizable when its effects have escalated into destructive, sometimes irreversible levels.

2.3. Levels of Conflicts

These are common types of conflict existing in organisations and managers need to know and learn how to manage them effectively. There are six levels of conflict namely: intra-personal conflict, inter-personal conflict, intra-group conflict, inter-group conflict, intra-organizational as well as inter-organisational conflict.

2.3.1. Intra-personal Conflict

According to Rahim (1986), this type of conflict is found within the individual even though its effects can profoundly influence organizational functioning and is perhaps the most difficult form of conflict to analyze and manage. It can indicate the presence of simultaneous, opposing, divergent and conflicting ideas, feelings and activities. Characteristics of such tension are uncertainty, hesitation, stress, anxiety, and depression. For example in schools, school head teachers might be task orientated at the expense of human relations. This can cause stress within the school head if he or she has to decide whether to caution a teacher whose work is not up to standard. Fekru (1993), also agrees that in a school setup, these conflicts may occur when a school member is required to perform certain tasks and to play roles which do not match with his or her expertise, interests, goals and values. His argument is in line with Rahim (1986), who maintains that intra or individual conflict occurs when an individual is forced with two or more incompatible views or ideas and the person cannot easily adopt one. The result for this conflict is commonly in the form of tensions, and frustrations' which ultimately affect the individual's performance.

2.3.2. Inter-personal Conflict

These are conflicts that arise between individuals. According to Ghaffar et al (2013), interpersonal conflict has been defined as a phenomenon that occurs between two opposing but interdependent parties due to the experience of negative emotional feelings for the achievement of their respective goals. In organisations, interpersonal conflicts can be based on some types of role conflict in which a person perceives incompatible messages and pressures from the role senders, boss or supervisors (Corwin, 1996). At school level this kind of conflict can happen between a teacher and student, student and school head or between fellow teachers. A common case is that of an imbalance in allocating extra jobs to heads and staff that makes some of them very key and others unnoticed. This situation also happens for example when a less experienced teacher is made superior to long experienced ones. According to Hodget (1993), no one lives in vacuum, people interact with each other and this is how they develop values, perceptions, attitudes, and to a large degree personality. This means, conflict will be intensified when we make interaction with people whose values, perceptions, attitudes and personalities are different or opposite from ours.

2.3.3. Intra-group Conflict

Groups, be they formal or informal, have their own norms and standards of behaviour that members are expected to adhere too. Therefore, individuals and groups come into conflicts

when members do not abide by the groups rules (Rahim, 1986). Saddler (1998), describes intra-group conflict as largely interpersonal conflict between persons in a group. Conflict is always present in groups because individuals differ in terms of values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. As a result some people are more attracted to some than to others. Berhanu (2014), further argues that intra-group conflict occurs among individuals within a team and involves clashes among some or all processes. In schools this may be applicable when teachers and students are in a group which has norms and values incompatible to ones expectations and values; as a result a conflict emerges within the group. The performance of the group and team work in general may significantly be affected. Although conflicts is generally regarded as a problem, intra-group conflict can, however, play a constructive role by stimulating creativity and renewal among members in that they start to communicate and work together as a unit. Working together, promotes the spirit of good human relations including respect, caring and love among them.

2.3.4. Inter-Group Conflict

This type of conflict occurs between two or more groups within an organization, caused by improper assignment of responsibility, limited resources or maintenance of department. Rahim (1986), stated that in a school environment, such conflicts occur due to different departments, competing for scarce resources like number of teachers, time allocation for extracurricular activities, textbooks, teaching aids and other learning material. The results of this conflict has been costly because the parties involved develop attitudes that are characterized by distrust toward each other, rigidity, a focus on self-interest, a failure to listen and sometimes picketing and leads to role dissatisfactions. Hall (1993), further states that inter-group conflict occurs due to the stereotypes groups attach to others. He mentioned that stereotypic distortion occurs when the parties only see evidence that supports the hypotheses they have developed about the other side, but not evidence that contradicts them. Groups in this circumstance tend to have prejudice towards one another. In order to reduce this type of conflict however, groups must be encouraged to interact with each other in a more frequent way so as to identify positive aspects about others.

2.3.5. Intra-Organizational Conflict

According to Nayereh (2014), this is conflict which occurs when management and staff disagree about working conditions, goals, authority and decisions. Bowen (2005:25), agrees with this argument when he contends that “practices that in effect rob employees of their voice and sense of personal dignity like leaving them out of decision making processes or

omitting them from important communications” tend to add gasoline to smouldering embers. In this regard, employees become very angry and as such, conflict occurs. Intra-organizational conflict can also arise in situation where some organizational departments fight to gain more resources at the expense of others. This leads to departments harbouring grudge against each other (Hodget, 1993). Other factors which affect the interaction structure between departments and create the conditions for interdepartmental conflict include; different attitudes between line and staff units, organizational size, physical or communicational barriers between departments, unequal access to authority, rewards and ambiguity or uncertainty in assigning tasks or reward to different departments. In a school system, this type of conflict can occur between members of a certain subject group, for example conflicts between history and science teachers, concerning a certain approach to work

2.3.6. Inter-Organisational Conflict

This is conflict developed between organisations. Inter-organisation conflict usually occurs when there is high level of competition between two organisations. Mergers, takeovers and acquisitions may also result in inter-organisational conflict (Likert and Likert, 1976). Likert and Likert (1976), further maintains that the opposite attitudes and values of two organisations can lead to high level of inter-organisational conflict. It develops in situations where managers in one organisation feel that another organisation is not behaving ethically and is frightening the well being of stakeholder groups. However a majority of inter organisational conflict result in the productivity of an organisation rather than deterioration in performance. Some level of inter-organisation conflict is essential for organisations to compete in the market. To resolve such conflicts, organisations must avoid adopting unethical practices.

2.4. Factors leading to conflict in organisations

There are a number of research findings that have provided insights into causal factors of workplace conflict. Hart (2000), suggest eight causes of conflict among staff in the workplace to include conflicting needs, conflicting styles, conflicting perception, conflicting goals, conflicting pressures, conflicting roles, different personal values and unpredictable policies. Lye (2008), argues that the common causes of workplace conflict may also include poor communication, mushroom effect, unrealistic work expectations, overwork, stress, personality clashes, favoritism and poor leadership. Not only that, it is also learnt that

organizational structure like the size of the organization has been found to positively correlate with the amount of conflict. Meaning that the larger the organization, the greater the number and the intensity of conflicts. This is so because the more the number of staff, the more diverse their personality types and the more difficult it becomes to effectively communicate with all members (Lye, 2008).

According to Mulu (2008), disparities in wealth, natural resources, technology and power among social classes and ethnic groups cause grievances, animosity and conflict. Thus, it appears that potential for conflict exists because people have different needs, views and values. Hotepo, et al (2010), did a Study on the effect of conflict on organisational performance in Nigeria. The study found lack of resources, different expectation, and competition. There was also lack of cooperation, interdependence and communication problems as factors that caused conflicts in the Nigerian service industry.

In a related study in the banking sector in Nigeria, Obasan (2011), identified unacceptable terms of employment, poor human relations between management and workers , non consultation with employees before making key decisions affecting them, anti-union posture of management and lack of effective mechanism for prevention of conflict as multiple causal factors of workplace conflict. A Philippian study also conducted in the banking industry by Tsevendorj (2008), rated communication failure, perception, values and culture problems as moderately serious sources of conflict. This is an indication that most organizational conflicts have economic and goal incompatibility orientations.

Havenga (2002), further indicated that the causes of conflict at the level of the organization could also include resource availability, affirmative action programs, the scope and content of workload, the introduction of new management techniques, and differences of a cultural and racial nature. This is in line with Msila (2012), who identified several causes of conflict such as goal incompatibility, unavailability of resources, performance expectations and organizational structures. He argues that goal incompatibility occurs when there is a lack of agreement concerning the direction of evaluating task accomplishment. This source of conflict is said to be the most frequent in an organization. In a school setup therefore, individual teachers may also bring with them different time and goal orientations that may create a state of high differentiation thereby causing conflict.

Bankouskaya (2012), ascertains eight structural aspects of an organization that are recognized as the causes of conflict. These are specialization, common resources, goal differences,

interdependence, authority relationships, status differences, jurisdictional ambiguities, and roles and expectations. According to Gray and Strake (1984), there are six sources of conflict in organisations. These are limited resources, interdependent work activities, differentiation of activities, communication problems, differences in perceptions and the environment of the organization.

Otobo (1987), further identified two major causes of conflict which include; internal factors which consist of management style, nature of physical environment of the work place, consciousness of staff, promotion system and dispute resolution procedures and external factors which include economic policies, government as well as unpatriotic behavior of the administrative class. This argument is in line with Nelson and Quick (2001), who differentiate causes of conflict between structural factors such as those that develop from within the organization and originate from the manner in which work is organized, and secondly, personal factors, which emerge as a result of individual differences among employees.

Another cause of conflict is performance of one person in a group that affects the subsequent performance of other member. According Adler (2008), inter-group conflict may arise in situations where conflicting goals, task dependency, dissimilar work orientations, competition for limited resources, and competitive reward systems exist. Interpersonal conflicts resulting from personality variables such as dislikes, distrust, or prejudice usually hinder group performance (Nzuve, 2007). This shows that, when interpersonal conflict occurs, people are more concerned with gaining advantage over others than with task performance.

Hanson (1991), argued that conflict is everywhere, and it is inevitable as it comes from many sources. Conflict arises whenever perceived or real interest collides. The collision can result from a divergence in organizational goals, personal ambitions, group loyalties, departmental budget demands on scarce resources, ethnic expectations and demands. Therefore, in a school, conflict can arise from divergence in expectations of scarce resources like accommodation, classrooms, instructional resources such as chalk, manila, and so on. Nyamajiwa (2000), agrees with this assertion when he recognizes that conflict within an organization can be caused by competition for limited resources. He asserts that at a school for instance books and furniture are mostly in short supply.

Furthermore Agenga and Simatwa (2011), did a study on assessment of conflict management and resolution in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study found that the major causes

of conflict experienced in public secondary schools included disrespect, differences in opinions, poor academic performance, intimate relationship, harshness by support staff, criticism by other teachers, communication breakdown, late payment of school fees by parents, negative attitudes towards teachers, discipline of students, poor work performance by staff as well as financial control. This corroborates with Kiwira (1984), who perceived conflict as a result of the absence of courses in conflict management by administrators. This leads to poor approach for getting resolutions. The point here is to see that administrators in schools are able to meet with the daily routine challenges happening at their service area. Strategies used to calm the conflicting parties in schools currently seem not to help to solve the prevalent situations. Rono (2001), further shares the above views and indicates that some head teachers display poor leadership qualities that created conflicts in schools.

Sompa (2015), also did a study on management strategies used to address interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers in selected secondary schools of Lusaka province in Zambia. The study revealed that conflicts were caused by many factors such as communication breakdown, responsibilities not being shared fairly, incompetent supervision, late coming, absence from work without a reason, head teacher wanting to engage himself or herself into teacher's affairs, teachers not wanting to submit teaching files as per schedule, unsatisfactory class allocation, favouritism, laziness by teachers and poor management strategies. Schofield (1977), agrees with these arguments when he stated that the causes of conflicts in schools between heads of school, teachers and students involve; lack of proper communication with teachers, imposition of strict deadlines for various activities, differences in perception on management of certain issues in the school, dictatorial tendencies on the part of school heads, poor physical working conditions, lack of administrative support on provision of learning aids as well as psycho-social support when they are in need.

Maliyamkono (1991), observed that inability to perform tasks assigned, unauthorized absenteeism, setting unrealistic targets for teachers, setting goals that are not specific, engaging teachers in crash programs where they have to cover wide sections of syllabuses in a fraction time, careless in implementation of school policies, unreasonable demands by school administration and carelessness among teachers are the major source of conflict in schools.

2.5. Effects of conflict on organisation performance

Despite the undesirable effects that conflict can produce, disagreement between people has its good side as well. Wehlege and Wisconsin (2000), point out that conflict is a pivot around which change takes place in workplaces and the society at large and that when we disagree, it sharpens our focus and defines what the important issues are.

Aldag and Stearns (1994), also argue that theorists and practitioners today view conflict as a useful force in an organisation and, if managed correctly, can be a potential force for innovation and change. In disagreeing with the notion that conflict is inherently destructive, Robbins (2001), further asserts that a certain amount of conflict in an organisation is healthy as it prevents the organisation from stagnating and from producing myopic decisions.

Omisore (2014), also did a study on organizational conflicts: causes, effects and remedies. The study revealed that conflict is beneficial as it facilitates an understanding of the problems people have with one another and leads to better coordination among individuals and departments, in addition to strengthening intra-group relationship. The study also asserted that some organizations view conflict as an opportunity for finding creative solutions to problems as conflict can inspire members to brainstorm, while examining problems from various perspectives. Putnam (1977), agrees with the above assertion when he believes that conflict can be used to balance power, to improve communication, and to develop a foundation to manage differences. What makes conflict potentially dangerous is the fact that many people are unaware of how to identify it or deal with it when it initially occurs. It tends to be more recognizable when its effects have escalated into destructive, sometimes irreversible levels.

Göksoy and Argon (2016), in their study on conflicts in schools and their impact on teachers indicated that positive outcomes of conflicts are observed in personal, social and organizational aspects. In terms of personal aspects, school conflicts result in learning correct behaviours, realizing mistakes, distinguishing different ideas, regarding events from multiple perspectives, developing new ideas and methods, finding the truth and relaxation. In terms of social aspects, school conflicts result in communication among the staff, better understanding of one another, respecting others' opinions, reaching a consensus and being persuaded. Positive organizational outcomes include realizing the problems, overcoming or resolving existing problems, increasing competitive performance related to development of different

and new solutions, creating a democratic environment and enriched views, embellishing the environment and reaching a common solution.

Owusu-Mensah (2007), did a study on conflict in the primary school and its effects on teaching and learning. The study revealed that conflict has positive impacts as it helps to know the individual differences in people and how to cooperate accordingly. It was also shown that, if conflict is amicably resolved, both parties feel satisfied and increase their output in their work. This stresses the idea that a certain amount of conflict is desirable in an organisation.

Coser (1967), further believes that conflict can be beneficial to an organization in many ways and these include helping in establishment and maintenance of authority boundaries of jurisdiction among the various office holders in the organization; strengthen staff identification with the organization; creates awareness of organizational problems; stimulates organizational changes and adaptations; leads to emergence of new and more effective leadership; directly or indirectly can help in breaking down old rituals and routines and thus encourages innovations among staff.

On the other hand, the negative effects of conflict in an organisation cannot be overemphasised. According to Owens (2001), conflict has an effect on how people behave in an organisation in that conflict often develops into hostility which causes many people to withdraw both physically and psychologically. Physical withdrawal includes absenteeism, tardiness while psychological withdrawal can take the form of alienation, apathy and indifference. Omisore (2014), also stated that one of the major impacts of organizational conflict on employee job performance clearly manifests in employees' poor commitment towards the job which in turn affect service quality and customer satisfaction. The outcome here is that the performance of the organization is hampered and employee job satisfaction is affected, triggering off turnover intentions. On the same score, Jorgensen and Gail (1990), stated that even though a conflict may be resolved, the means of gaining the solution may cause pain to the people involved and generally weakening relationships.

Barker and Gum (1994), also categorically argue that many times, in the midst of conflict, opposing individuals or groups will put their own interests or goals above those of the organisation, resulting in the lessening of the organisation's effectiveness. According to Greenberg (1996), there are three negative effects produced by conflict. These include;

producing strong negative emotions and thus can be quite stressful; conflict frequently interferes with communication between individuals or groups and that it diverts attention energies away from major tasks and efforts to attain key organizational goals.

Furthermore, Hirschman (2001), stated that conflict if not properly managed could result to strikes and lockout most especially in the civil service which could have resultant effect on the psychology of the staff. It can also affect the nation both politically and economically and can result to bad feelings, low turnover and costly litigation. Nelson-Jones (1995), agrees to the above assertion when he explains that, not only can conflict in the workplace bring stress and unhappiness but it can also lower outputs and in extreme cases, brings strikes.

Jennings and Wattam, (2004) further states that conflict in the school environment can have adverse effects on the academic environment, including affecting the morale of educators, the pace at which they work, and increasing absenteeism. In a related study by Sompa (2015), it was revealed that the effects of interpersonal conflict between head teachers and teachers are poor work relations among staff, de-motivated, frustrations, poor academic performance and poor teacher performance, teacher releases anger on pupils, teacher transfers, brings about tension and hatred making the school environment not conducive for teaching and learning.

According to Oputa (2003), the consequences of conflicts on the school organization have been regrettable. Part of the repercussions on schools is disruption of academic programmes, inadequate staffing as a result of unplanned transfer, hostility, suspicion and withdrawal from active participation in school activities. In some cases, school results were withheld or cancelled, as a result of emergency transfer of subject teachers. Owusu-Mensah (2007), supports the assertion when she revealed that some teachers get transferred from schools in which they have problems, which ends up negatively affecting the school especially rural schools to which many qualified teachers refuse to accept postings.

The study done by Owusu-Mensah (2007), also revealed that conflict undermines other administrative work such as the head not being able to assign duties to teachers they are in conflict with which could also hinder effective teaching and learning. The study also showed that where conflict involves a teacher and a pupil, instructional time is wasted as part of it is usually spent on addressing the conflict. Not only that, when conflict occurs between pupils in the same class during teaching periods, part of instructional time is wasted to settle the conflict.

The study further argues that where conflict emerges between a teacher and his pupils, the pupils do not feel happy in class since the teacher could hate the offending pupil to the extent of refusing to mark exercises pupils present in class, refusing to call on those pupils to answer questions they ask during lessons, and more irritatingly, refusing to call on such pupils who dare to raise their hands either to ask or answer questions, or they simply ignore them in all class activities. Such conflict aftermath makes it difficult for those pupils to assess their performance in class. As a result, the timid pupil may decide to stay out of the teacher's way by not coming to school just to avoid that situation, and may eventually drop out of school if no one goes after them.

In the same study by Owusu-Mensah (2007), it was also observed that if a conflict emerges between a teacher and a pupil or pupils and it is resolved, some teachers refuse to let go of the issue but use it as a weapon to punish the offending pupil by relating poorly with them. This makes the affected pupil unhappy, embarrassed, and uncomfortable in the teacher's presence both inside and outside the classroom. Even after conflicts have been settled, some teachers keep on making references to whatever caused the conflict they had with the pupils even during lessons, which causes much embarrassment making pupils want to run away from the presence of their classmates. Therefore this shows that conflict lead to a teacher's reluctance to provide quality teaching to their pupils and cause them to lose out on what they should gain from the curriculum.

Orlich, Callahan, and Gibson (2001), further agree with the above argument when they indicate that when a conflict occurs between a teacher and a pupil, sometimes other teachers join the fray, and in solidarity with their colleague, they also harass the pupil in school. Such a pupil becomes very uncomfortable in the school environment and cannot go to see their siblings and friends in other classrooms. The implication is that pupils in conflict with particular teachers could end up being unnecessarily punished by other teachers in their school.

2.6. Strategies of managing conflict in organisations

Since conflict is seemingly unavoidable, particularly in a scholarly setting, it is necessary for managers to be able to recognize conflict, to view its constructive as well as destructive potential, to learn how to manage conflict, and to apply conflict management strategies in a practical way. Akanji (2005), suggested that constructively managed conflict encourages a positive performance, while destructively managed conflict heats up the work environment to

bring about dislocation and polarization of the entire group with reduction in productivity and job performance. This indicates that a well-managed conflict aims at the improvement of organizations for the purpose of stimulating performance in the work situation. Through good conflict management strategies, weaknesses in the organizational decision making are exposed which may prompt the establishment to effect changes and search for positive solutions. For the sake of increasing organizational performance therefore, management has a duty to resolve conflict properly.

Hirschman (2001), agrees with this argument when he stated that conflict if not properly managed could result to strikes and lockout most especially in the civil service which could have resultant effect on the psychology of the staff. It can also affect the nation both politically and economically and can result to bad feelings, low turnover and costly litigation. However when properly managed, conflict can result to increased individual participation, innovativeness and increased employee's productivity (Uline, Tschannen-moran and Perez, 2003).

Conflict management is a highly striking process which can be implemented in a number of ways in organizations. Ford (2007), posited a four-way process which includes assessment and inquiry, design, implementation and evaluation aimed at achieving effective and objective conflict decision in the workplace. This integrative approach is often employed to encourage management to satisfy the needs of stakeholders in the resolution of conflict. Ladipo (1997), identified forcing, structural changes, avoidance, compromise and smoothing as strategies used to management conflict in organisations. In a related study by Hodge and Anthony (1991), suppression, smoothing, avoiding, compromise, third-party intervention, cooperation, democratic process, job rotation as well as confrontation were identified as important strategies for managing conflict.

Bonkovskaya (2012), conducted a study on development of conflict management strategies to increase the organizational effectiveness in Nordic companies in Iceland. Findings of the study show that in spite of manager's satisfaction by the level of productivity of their employees, they still have lot of complaints from their employees about stress at work. Therefore, if the manager ignores these kinds of complaints it could lead to potential conflict. According to Rahim (2002), conflict management involves designing effective strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhance the constructive functions in order to optimize learning and effectiveness of an organization. This implies that managing conflict

does not necessarily connote avoidance or termination but the decrease of the odds of non-productive escalation.

Oyebade (1995), identified certain strategies as important in resolving conflict. These strategies include dialogue, automatic, emergency and delaying approaches. The efforts of all stakeholders in the management of organisations are therefore required in ensuring amicable resolution of conflict. Adebayo (2007), postulated that the first strategy of conflict resolution is commitment to the management of productive conflict, such that conflict does not become destructive. He advocated for these strategies by enjoining leaders, management and all in positions of authority to promote the rule of law protect the fundamental human rights, promote human freedom, fair allocation of values and equity of justice. These values are very essential in order to reduce friction and conflict in organizations.

Hong (2005), conducted a study to compare conflict management strategies between Koreans and Americans. The study showed that Koreans prefer an avoidance conflict management and a cooperative orientation, whereas the American prefers a competition strategy and an assertive orientation. In a related study, Lee and Rogan (1991), examined the conflict management styles of local government employee with superiors, peers and subordinates. The study established that the conflict management styles used by government employees varied depending on the relative status. Lee and Rogan (1991), found that in conflict with peers, Korean tend to use the compromising style most frequently and then followed by integration obliging, dominating and avoidance respectively.

Vigil-King (2000), also observed that the use of integrative style of managing conflict is likely to create better result and higher commitment in individuals than teams using non-integrative conflict management. The integrative approach broadens the understanding of the conflict problem and increases resolution. In the same vein, Fajana and Shadare (2012), suggested collective bargaining strategy as the approach for managing union-management conflict in organizations. The approach is internationally commended as the legal instrument by which workers and management settle conflicts arising from employment contracts. This study is also in agreement with Robbin (2001), who suggested conflict management strategies to include collective bargaining, reconciliation, negotiation and arbitration.

According to Meyer (1994), effective communication is seen as the best strategy for conflict management because it would make the group aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem solving. Ibukun (1997), on the other hand identified problem solving,

appeal to superior organizational goals, prevention and avoidance, expression of opportunities and resources, use of authority and command, changing the structure of the organization and compromise as management strategies for resolving conflicts in organizations.

Thomas (1971), examines conflict management strategies by focusing on general strategies used by administrators in an educational setting. In his research he points out that there is no difference between management and leadership; hence, manager is synonymous with leader. Thomas identified eight strategies for management which are: citizens' advisories, confrontation sessions, sensitivity training, process involvement, educational pluralism, volunteerism, cooperative studies and failure fact of life. Roloff (1987), also did a study on the investigation of understanding, perceptions and impacts of conflict resolution mechanisms in secondary school in Kenya. The study revealed that conflict management techniques in secondary school are varied. This means that the use of a certain conflict strategy depends on the nature of conflict. It also implies that much as these conflicts continue to manifest, researchers have continued to carry out surveys and researches with a view to exploring the best strategies for managing conflicts effectively in the workplace.

In western Uganda, a study by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008), revealed that all schools where head teachers used control oriented management strategies, teachers and students tended to be dissatisfied with the school climate. Consequently, students who reported a high level of dissatisfaction with school climate were more likely to be involved in violent conflict or strikes against the school administration.

Another research that was done in Uganda specifically examined the role of school management style in averting or exacerbating violent conflicts in schools. The study considered collaborative and control orientation management strategies in secondary schools (Tumwesigye and Basheka, 2008). This was in line with Cunningham (1998), who stated that collaboration is the best way to resolve institutional conflicts as it promotes commitment by incorporating the concerns of all institutional stakeholders. This style of management aims at solving conflicts by focusing on the roots of the problem. The features associated with collaborative management include sharing of information, investigating underlying problems and seeking for a situation where all parties feel satisfied.

Toss (1990), in his study on managing organization behaviour in secondary schools in Tanzania further found that conflict can be minimized if school heads understand the major

phases of conflict management styles and a post conflict phases. This means inclusion of conclusion of post conflict stages that deals with improvement of organization practices in order to minimize future conflict. He also found that strategies for reducing future conflict are clarification of goals, reducing ambiguities and improving policies, procedures and rules.

Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013), also did a study on conflict resolution strategies in non-government secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria. The study revealed that principals, teachers, proprietors, and students, strategies for resolving conflicts include: agreeing on the procedure taken for the resolution of conflicts, encouraging parties to work together, taking staff and students' comments and suggestions or open door policy, use of suggestion box in the school, promoting negotiation among powerful sub-group leaders, involvement of school disciplinary committee and public complaint commission in the dissolution of conflict, and application of dialogue between the conflicting parties.

Agenga and Simatwa (2011), in their study on assessment of conflict management and resolution in public secondary school in Kenya found that effective strategies for resolving conflicts were arbitration, reconciliation, and climate of trust, negotiation, collaboration and effective communication. In a related study by Sompa (2015), on the management strategies used to address interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers in selected secondary schools of Lusaka District, it was revealed that the most effective management strategies as highlighted by the teachers were: communication, dialogue and mediation. Avoidance, confrontation and collaboration are other strategies used but not considered effective.

In addition to that, Onsarigo (2007), did a study to determine factors influencing conflicts in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. The study found out that it is better to expose and resolve conflict before they damage people's relationships or even before they degenerate into violence which undermines schools stability and performance. The study also established that social conflicts in educational institutions demand moral authority and leadership integrity to manage and resolve them. If not resolved, they can have a destabilizing effect on institutional performance in all learning process.

Mwamanda (1999), further conducted a study on conflict management to teachers in public schools in Mbeya region in Tanzania. The study showed that there is need for comprehensive and systematic conflict management techniques in which conflict is effectively resolved including types of conflicts and there causes and effects in secondary schools. Okotoni

(2003), conducted a study on the conflict management in secondary schools in Osun state, in Nigeria. Findings showed that school administration has been adversely affected by lack of knowledge on conflicts management as most administrators handled conflict by trial and error approach because there were no specific procedures and methods of managing conflicts.

Ajai (2017), in his study on the assessment of Conflict Management Strategies in Public Secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria revealed that the confrontational and compromise strategies are most productive in public secondary school conflict resolution. The study also revealed that the avoidance strategy is not too suitable for secondary school system. The avoidance styles used include withdrawal, ignoring the conflict, postponed dealing with the conflict and pretending that the conflict does not even exist.

2.7. Research gap

The review of related literature has shown various studies on strategies of managing conflict. Nevertheless, it is important to state that even though a number of studies on conflict management strategies have been undertaken, not much has been done in regards to strategies of managing conflicts in public schools. A few studies such as those of Agenga and Simatwa (2011) discussed conflict management and resolution in public secondary school in Kenya. Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013) also did a study on conflict resolution strategies in non-government secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria. Okotoni (2003) discussed about conflict management of secondary schools in Osun state in Nigeria. The findings of the researchers did not fulfil the requisites of the study at hand. It is for this reason that the present study has been deemed necessary.

2.8. Summary

The literature review focused on types of conflict, factors that lead to conflict and effects of conflicts in organizations. This section also looked at the extent to which researchers have come up with strategies of managing conflict in organisations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in the study. It includes an account of the research design, the study sample and sampling procedure, target population, research instruments, delimitation and limitation of the study as well as ethical considerations.

3.2. Research design

This study adapted a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design where the researcher conducted a field survey in selected public secondary schools was used. The survey design was based on the use of interviews as data collection instruments. The population of the study was scattered since the schools are located separate from each other therefore a survey was appropriate. The major purpose of descriptive research design is a description of the state of affairs as it exists at present (Kothari, 2007). The researcher applied this design to explore the current situation on the conflict management strategies used in public schools in Kabwe District.

3.3. Sampling and sampling procedures

Sampling is the process of selecting a unit from a population of interest so that by studying the sample the results can be fairly generalised back to the population from which they were chosen (Robson, 2002). A sample is a subset of a population that is used to represent the entire group.

3.3.1. Purposive sampling (Maximum variation)

The study used purposive sampling for the selection of public schools and subsequently the participants of the study: head teachers, class teachers, guidance and counselling teachers and support staff. Purposive sampling also known as judgemental or selective sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher intentionally selects individuals to learn from who understand the phenomenon. According to Robson (2002), purposive sampling allows the selection of people who are considered to be critical for the production of valuable data. The idea behind purposive sampling is to concentrate on people with particular characteristics who will better be able to assist with the relevant research.

3.3.2. Maximum variation

Maximum variation is a purposive sampling technique used to capture a wide range of perspectives relating to the thing that you are interested in studying (Robson, 2002). The basic principle behind maximum variation sampling is to gain greater insights into a phenomenon by looking at it from all angles. This often helps the researcher to identify common themes that are evident across the sample. Maximum variation is used when the sample population is small and when it is not difficult to find population members with selected characteristics.

3.4. Population of study

The study focused on four public schools which include two secondary schools: Kabwe secondary school and Kalonga secondary school as well as two primary schools: Lukanga primary school and Mpima prisons primary school. The participants comprised of four (4) head teachers, four (4) guidance and counselling teachers, four (4) class teachers as well as four (4) supporting staffs.

3.5. Data collection techniques

According to Creswell (2009), data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on themes, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions and evaluate outcomes. In this study, both primary and secondary sources of data were used.

3.5.1. Primary data collection instruments

Primary data is a set of raw information that is collected by the researcher when conducting a research. In this study the researcher used interviews to collect primary data.

Interview refers to the interchange of views between two persons conversing about a common theme or dialogue between two partners about a topic of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996). Interview as a data collection instrument, has three common types: highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. In structured interviews, the interviewer asks the same questions in the same way, and a tightly structured schedule of questions is used in advance, very much like of a questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews, sometimes referred to as focused interviews, involve a set of open-ended questions. The interviewer has a general idea of where he or she wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it, but does not

enter the interview with a set of pre-determined questions. The interviewer has enough freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interview (Kvale, 1996).

Unstructured or in-depth interview has very little structure at all and it is mainly guided by the responses of the interviewee rather than the agenda of the researcher. The interviewer discusses a limited number of questions and frames the questions on the bases of the interviewee's previous responses. Since the interviewer has little or no control over the interview, the direction of interviews seems to be relatively unpredictable.

The study specifically used semi structured items when interviewing head teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, class teachers and supporting staff. Interviews were used as a means of data collection in this study to capture the participants' views, perceptions and experiences on conflict management strategies in public schools. One main goal of interviews is to provide a way to retrieve rich data, where at times participants are unwilling to share confidential information. De Vos (2002), argued that person-to-person interview allows the interviewees to express themselves as clearly and as freely as possible about their personal experiences.

3.5.2. Secondary data collection

Secondary data refers to information that already exists and was collected by others. Secondary sources such as different journals and related literatures were reviewed and analyzed in order to substantiate the information gathered from primary sources.

3.6. Data analysis

Data analysis is a process that seeks to reduce and make sense of vast amounts of information, often from different sources, so that impressions that shed light on a research question can emerge (Dey, 1993). Making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read. Data analysis in qualitative research ought to pay attention to the spoken word, context, consistency and contradictions of views, frequency and intensity of comments, their specificity as well as emerging themes and trends. In this study thematic type of analysis was used. This method of analysis can be applied to data that has been collected through semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The data processing operations in this study involved among other things editing thus a process of examining the collected raw data to detect errors

and omissions and to correct them wherever possible; classification thus arranging data in themes or classes on the basis of common characteristics in descriptive form.

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews was collected, transcribed and coded into themes and sub-themes that emerged. This was done by carefully listening to the recorded conversations in order to interpret, reduce and code key responses into major and sub-themes that emerged for later discussion. This was done in the light of the research questions at hand. Some responses were also isolated to be used as original quotes for verbatim to highlight important findings of the study. Themes and topics were developed in line with the objectives of the study and these themes were used as chapter sub-headings on the findings. Consequently, interpretation of data was done as a way of trying to make sense of the findings in relation to the study.

3.7. Delimitation of study

The study was devoted to reveal conflict and its management strategies in public schools. The study was confined to public schools in Kabwe District of Central province, Zambia because the researcher resides there, hence making it more easy to carry out the research.

3.8. Limitations of the study

The study was confined to selected public schools in Kabwe District of Central Province, hence the findings may not be representative of all public secondary schools in the country and therefore similar studies may need to be carried out in other public schools.

3.9. Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations refer to correct behaviours and procedures that are necessary and in line with the recommended legal and ethical conduct the researcher must adhere to (Cohen et al, 2007). Ethical considerations are always of primary concern when working with human research subjects. To ensure that the study strictly adheres to ethical considerations, the following guidelines were followed: the researcher notified the respondents that participation to the study was completely voluntary. Secondly, the purpose of the research was explained to the respondents and the respondent's identity was protected. This was accomplished by exercising anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher also avoided any possible harm to the respondents by avoiding embarrassing or uncomfortable questions (Maxwell, 2005). The researcher sought permission from the District Education Board Secretary to conduct research in targeted schools.

3.10. Summary

This chapter explored the methodological procedures used in the study. The chapter discussed descriptive research design and gave the procedure to its application. The chapter has also given detailed steps taken from the research design through data collection, analysis, sampling and sample size, data validation methods and ethical consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the research findings and their analyses. The results are presented using a thematic approach following the research questions. Below were the research questions which guided the study:

1. What are the types of conflict in public schools?
2. What are the factors that lead to conflicts being experienced in public schools?
3. What are the effects of conflict on the running of schools?
4. What conflict management strategies are used in the management of public schools?

4.2. Participants reflections on the types of conflict experienced in public schools

It came out from the findings of the study that people view the concept conflict in varied ways. As a result, establishing the types of conflict that are common in schools seemed to have posed a challenge, as many participants viewed the concept differently. Consequently, this study found it very important to gather head teachers, class teachers, guidance and counselling teachers and support staff views on the types of conflicts that are common in public schools.

4.2.1. Inter-group conflicts

According to the study two inter group conflicts were most common in public schools. These are management and teacher conflict and also teacher and pupil conflicts. The presentation of findings for each follows below.

4.2.1.1 Management and teachers

The study showed that conflict between management and teachers was one of the major types of conflict in public schools. With regards to this,

One of the head teachers stated that,

“There are so many types of conflict which we face as a school; sometime we face conflicts between a teacher and management”.

One of the guidance and counselling teachers also asserted that;

“There are different conflicts, it can be a teacher and a teacher, but the most common one is between teachers and management that is the head teacher and deputy head and teacher and senior teacher having misunderstandings with teachers because of various reasons”. (One on one interview with Guidance teacher, 2018)

For class teachers one of them stated that,

“We deal with different conflicts in this school, but the most common is between management and teachers”. (One on one interview with class teacher, 2018)

4.2.1.2 Teacher to pupil conflict

It also emerged from the study that conflict between teachers and pupils was also a prominent type of conflict in public schools.

One of the head teachers had this to say,

“There are so many types of conflict which we face as schools, sometime we face conflicts between teachers and pupils but not necessary the types of conflict were people go to war”. (One on one interview with head teachers, 2018)

One class teacher also asserted that,

“We deal with different conflicts, it can be pupil issues and others can be teacher to pupil issues. I witnessed conflict between a pupil and a teacher who happened to be a class teacher”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

Another teacher added that,

“Sometime there is conflict between a teacher and a pupil where you are telling a pupil to behave in certain order and they are not getting what you are telling them in the end the teacher and pupil will be at logger head.”

4.2.2 Intra Group Conflict – Conflict between pupils

It came out from the findings of the study that intra-conflict between pupils was also the common type of conflict in public schools. The findings from the respondents' views are presented below: On the question of the pupil to pupil conflict, one of the class teachers had the following to say:

“We deal with different conflicts; the most common one is pupil to pupil conflict. Personally I have never been involved in any conflict but I have witnessed a situation where learners are fighting or where maybe a learner could make a silly comment toward the friend and the other colleague does not hold the temper”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

One of the support staff when asked about the most common type of conflict in schools had the following to say,

“On part of the support staff I have never witnessed any conflict but among pupils it is very common, they usually fight over desks, books, girls and boyfriends”.

“At this school I have not witnessed the head teacher and a teacher being in conflict but for pupils it is common such that as a guard I have found myself mediating”. (One on one interview with Support staff, 2018)

One of the guidance and counselling teacher also added that,

“As guidance and counselling teachers we rarely deal with conflicts involving teachers in this place, normally it is learner to learner”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

Nevertheless, it should be stated that other types of conflicts in public schools such as those among teachers, school and community as well as teachers and support staff were mentioned by the some respondents, but the most prominent ones that came out from this study was inter-group conflict, that is conflict between administrators and teachers and also teachers and pupils as well as intra-group conflict, that is conflict among pupils.

4.3 Prominent sources of conflict in public schools

The second objective of this study was to find out the factors that lead to conflicts being experienced in public schools. Respondents highlighted that the sources of conflict differed based on the types of conflict.

4.3.1 Sources of conflict between management and teachers

4.3.1.1 Absenteeism

Respondents indicated that absenteeism was one of the main sources of conflict between management and teachers. It was established that whenever a teacher decided not to go for

work without any reason or formal communication, management would confront such a teacher in the end a misunderstanding arose.

One of the class teachers had this to say,

“Absenteeism is one of the causes of conflict between administrators and the teachers. If a teacher is a perpetual absent and they try to warn and caution but the teacher does not change, the administrators are forced to go to higher offices like the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) office or the Provincial Education Office (PEO) to report those cases to those authorities so that at least they can come in and work in conjunction with the school administration”. **(One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)**

One of the guidance and counselling teachers also added that,

“Between teachers and management conflict usually arises due to absenteeism and not teaching a class”.

One head teacher revealed that,

“If someone is behaving outside what we have agreed as a system, for example teacher absenteeism from work, it causes conflict. **(One on one interview with head teachers, 2018)**

4.3.1.2 Failure to follow the ethics of teaching

It was also revealed from the study that failure to follow the ethics of teaching was a prominent source of conflict between management and teachers.

One of the head teachers from one of the schools stated that,

“If somebody goes outside the boundaries of how we ought to live as an institution it causes conflict. For example lack of honesty in lesson plan preparation, not following eight hour policy, such a teacher will be in conflict with management”.

“We are government institutions and as teachers we have the code of ethics, education act and circulars written by our superiors especially from the national level the permanent secretary which guides on what we should do and how we are supposed to behave. These guide how we are supposed to live and work therefore if a worker fails to adhere to these given guidelines it becomes a source of conflict”. **(One on one interview with head teachers, 2018)**

Similarly one of the guidance and counselling teachers had this to say,

“Between teachers and management conflict happen when a teacher fails to work or follow the ethics of teaching. If a teacher is supposed to be in class at a given time and that teachers decides not to go to class or comes maybe thirty minutes late, the administration mostly would want to confront such a teacher to find out why he or she went to class late and in the end conflict arises”. **(One on one interview with Guidance teacher, 2018)**

Another teacher also added that,

“The teacher and the head usually it is when the teacher is not doing what the head wants or when a teacher does not follow the rules of teaching. For example teachers sometimes do not teach and also do not go for work”. **(One on one interview with Support staff, 2018)**

4.3.1.3 Coming late for work

Respondents revealed that a teacher coming late for work was also the source of conflict between teachers and management.

One of head teachers had the following to say;

“There are certain teachers who like coming for work late, not going to class in time and coming drunk for work, that teacher maybe called by the administrators and in the process of advising that teacher there is always those conflicts that arise”. **(One on one interview with head teachers, 2018)**

4.3.1.4 Poor performance

It was also revealed in the study that teachers’ poor performance as well as poor academic performance by pupils was also one of the sources of conflict between teachers and management.

One of the guidance and counselling teachers stated that,

“Not all teachers like teaching so the administration has to push them just like that so that they can teach in the end misunderstandings occur”.

One of the supporting staff had this to say

“Administration and teachers differ when teachers do not do what they are expected to do. Administration wants teachers to teach the children now some teachers they want to go and

do their own business without getting permission. Some teachers the way they teach administration also follow; they want to know why children are failing because they see that the teacher is destroying the children when children are paying a lot of money". (One on one interview with Support staff, 2018)

Even though the study established that the factors stated above were the common sources of conflict between management and teachers, respondents also highlighted other factors which were not very prominent such as coming for work drunk, favouritism, miscommunication and self interest.

4.3.2 Sources of conflict between teachers and pupils

4.3.2.1 Not following school rules

Between teachers and pupils, respondents indicated that conflict is usually caused because of pupils not following school rules.

One of the guidance and counselling teacher stated that,

"Mostly the conflicts that we have are those that happen between the teachers and pupils, those are caused when pupils do not follow the school rules. The rules have been tabulated and each pupil is supposed to follow the rules but once the rules are broken, then definitely conflict arises between the teachers and pupils that takes us to a form of punishment that has to be inflicted on a pupil for that pupil to live according to the school code of conduct". (One on one interview with Guidance teacher, 2018)

One class teacher also had this to say,

"Pupil to teacher conflict normally is because a child has come late and you try to punish that child and in the process you even end up beating the child and the child will take the case to the administration and conflicts come in. The child can even hate the teacher and starts to say bad things about the teacher".

One of the supporting staff also stated that,

“For female teachers and pupils conflict arises when they tell pupils to dress properly or to stop powdering their face”. (One on one interview with Support staff, 2018)

4.3.2.2 Adolescent nature of pupils

It was revealed from the study that the adolescent nature of pupils was equally a source of conflict between teachers and pupils. Respondents indicated that pupils were young people who wanted to try out a lot of things hence in the process of controlling them conflict arises.

One of the head teachers asserted that,

“Teacher and pupil differ because most of the pupils are entering the adolescent stage and this is a confused stage. Pupils are in the learning process so they make a lot of mistakes so in the process of the teacher wanting to control a child that causes the conflict not until you reach a level where as a teacher you make a child to appreciate the information”. (One on one interview with head teachers, 2018)

One of the guidance and counselling teachers also asserted that,

“Conflict between teachers and pupils arise when a teacher is trying to correct a child and in the process the child feels intimidated and it leads to conflict”.

One teacher stated that,

“Sometimes there is conflict between a teacher and a pupil where you are telling a pupil to behave in certain order and they are not getting what you are telling them because they are kids in the end the teacher and pupil will be at logger head”.(One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

Apart from the factors stated above, the other source of conflict between teachers and pupils that was highlighted although was not seen to be very common is the use of abusive language by both teachers and pupils.

4.3.3 Sources of conflict among pupils

Between pupils, the study revealed that conflict was mainly as a result of stealing books and pens from each other, fighting for learning resources such as desks as well as relationships in school.

One of the head teachers had this to say,

“For pupils it is just misunderstanding because of stealing of pens and books from each other”.

One of the guidance teachers highlighted that,

“For pupils it is the issue of desks or maybe they have issues where they come from then they bring them here”. (**One on one interview with Guidance teacher, 2018**)

A class teacher also said,

“Conflict among pupils is simply because of small issues such as fighting for pens and desks or learners making silly comments toward the other”.

One of the supporting staff stated that,

“Conflict between pupils is because of relationships in school”. (**One on one interview with Support staff, 2018**)

However factors such, not wanting to make contributions towards the cleaning of the class, making silly comments toward each other or bringing issues from home to school were also highlighted by respondents although they were not prevalent.

4.4. Perceived effects of conflict on school performance

The third objective of the study wanted to find out the effects of conflicts on the running of the school. The effects of conflicts on the running of the school are presented below using themes that emerged prominently from the study.

4.4.1. Teaching and learning is not effectively done

Respondents in the study indicated that, conflict in a school environment impacts negatively on the teaching and learning process. Some respondents had the following to say;

“It disturbs actually because sometimes you might have issues with your friend in the department, let’s say the Head of Department (HOD), meaning I’ll try by all means to avoid him and her and he or she will also try by all means to squeeze me as a result the child will suffer because my teaching will not be effective”. (**One on one interview with class teachers, 2018**)

“It will disturb my planning and also my execution of lessons. I’ll just be in class maybe for few minutes immediate we meet with the person am in conflict with, I will move out maybe even go home were I think I will be safe. All in all it is the pupil who suffer and the system. If teachers are

in conflict, learners are not attended too especially if two teachers teach the same subject. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

One of the head teachers had the following to say on the effect of conflict on teaching and learning.

“For teachers it makes them not to teach the way they are supposed to that is giving pupils knowledge. Some teacher will be going to just register their presence but not to teach effectively if there is a conflict.”

4.4.2. Poor performance in school

The study revealed that conflict leads to poor performance by both teachers and learners.

A head teacher from one of the schools had this to say,

“A teacher has to come for work with a free mind, because people spend a lot of time at a work place than at home. Now if they come for work and they have issues with themselves they will not perform as expected. If two teachers differ and the issue is not resolved as it is supposed to be resolved, the person who is aggrieved will not perform according to the way they are supposed”.

Equally another head teacher stated that,

“Conflicts have negative effects especially on the learner in terms of performance because if there are conflicts for example between management and a teacher the teacher will not teach well. The teacher will be going to class with a heavy heart such that even when it comes to offloading the information the teacher will not be offloading the information happily”. (One on one interview with head teachers, 2018)

One guidance and counselling teacher also stated that,

“For us guidance and counselling teachers, teaching is affected as lessons are disturbed because sometimes you can be called at a wrong time to resolve a conflict. You will be called maybe one hour you are just resolving issues already learners have lost and are behind as a result poor performance in schools”. (One on one interview with Guidance teacher, 2018)

One of the class teachers had this to say,

“When I have conflict with a pupil for example, a pupil will not like my presence and my subject as a result what I should expect is bad results”.

4.4.3. De-motivation

The study showed that because of conflict, teachers and other staff do not have the inspiration to do their duties. This is what some respondents had to say;

“If I have conflict with management and it is not addressed accordingly automatically I’ll be de-motivated where commitment to work is concerned”. **(One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)**

A similar view was held by another teacher who explained that,

“Every time people are in conflict nothing will move well, people will stop doing what they are supposed to do because they think others are not appreciating in the end the school and the chill will suffer”.

One of the head teachers stated that,

“The worker does not execute the duties very well because the worker will be going to class with a heavy heart. The worker will be de-motivated somehow and that is why we as management we should always be there to motivate the worker who is the teacher and also the teacher should always be there to motivate the learner who is a pupil in class”. **(One on one interview with head teachers, 2018)**

4.4.4. Work environment

The study also revealed that as a result of conflict, the work environment is affected. Respondents indicated that conflict brought tension in school and the team spirit of cooperation among members of staff is broken. One of the respondents had the following to say;

“Conflicts have negative influence because when you find that there is a conflict between the administration and the teacher and if the issue is not settled amicably definitely the working culture will be different”. **(One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)**

“When there is conflict, the school environment is not nice and work becomes very difficult”. **(One on one interview with supporting staff, 2018)**

One of the head teachers also stated that,

“Conflict brings about grudges especially in a situation where a person who is aggrieved may not be satisfied with the way you have dealt with the issue.”

4.4.5. Absenteeism

It was also shown from the study that, because of conflict teachers and learners would rather be absent from school instead of facing the person they have a misunderstanding with.

One of the class teachers asserted that,

“When there are conflicts between the learners and teachers, learners may start absenting themselves from classes as a result performance of the school will be very bad”.

“It disturbs actually, the teaching is not effectively done because you might find that I have issues with the head definitely I’ll try by all means to avoid even coming here as a result lessons won’t be taking place”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

4.4.6. Transfers

Respondents were of the view that, as a result of conflict some teachers and pupils ended up being transferred. One of the respondents had this to say;

“Some teachers who were in conflict with management were secretly transferred or surrendered to the District Education Board Secretary offices”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

“In a situation that the child beats a teacher, they are usually given a forced transfer and the child ends up being disturbed by going to another school”. (One on one interview with supporting staff, 2018)

Some respondents in the study also revealed that some conflicts could lead to people losing focus along the way, however not much was brought out on this issue.

4.5. Preferred conflict management strategies in public schools

The fourth objective of the study had sought to propose conflict management strategies that are used in management of conflict in public schools. From the responses, emerging themes from this objective of the study are presented below.

4.5.1. Dialogue

Respondents in the study indicated the dialogue is one of the most preferred methods of managing conflict in schools. Respondents revealed that dialogue gave parties to a conflict an opportunity to openly air out their grievances and find a lasting solution to the problem.

One of the respondents had this to say;

“The strategy I feel works mostly is one to one talk. As administrators they can table out an issue for example a teacher has been absent from work for continuous ten days and that one is a case as one can easily lose a job. So the administration will sit the teacher down by summoning the teacher and talk to the teacher. If the teacher is able to defend himself they just caution the teacher and the case will end just there. They just caution that you were supposed to inform us”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

Another class teacher added that,

“I normally talk to the people involved, so that we discuss we see the source of the problem then we reason together with those people by trying to iron out the differences. If its pupils who have issues you try to get information from both and then you try to reason with them so that you see where the problem is coming from. If the issues are coming from within the school we handle them, if they are things to do with parents we invites their parents here”.

One of the head teachers also stated that;

“Usually we talk to them, it is talking which works; you need to sit with the teachers then talk to them in a nice way, you tell them there boundaries”. (One on one interview with Guidance teacher, 2018)

A guidance teacher also had the following to say,

“Me I feel the strategy that works out very well, is when the culprit is talked to on a one to one basis. I’ll try to talk to a teacher on a one to one basis, if we cannot come to a concrete conclusion that is when I push that issue to the administration. Now it has to be tabled out and the administration has to hear from both sides and a conclusion is made from there. If we feel a conclusion is not made and a teacher is not satisfied we have to involve the higher authority. As a school there is that connection, if you fail to resolve the conflict within the school you have to go higher, you have to involve DEBS office because that one is our overall

authority, you find direction from there”. (*One on one interview with Guidance teacher, 2018*)

4.5.2. Providing guidance and counselling

It was also established from the study that providing guidance and counsel is used as means of managing conflicts in public schools.

One of the head teachers asserted that,

“When we see that for example the teacher has not logged in the log book, we call the teacher and ask why. The teacher is counselled or talked to. That counselling is not done between two persons the head and the culprit; other parties are involved like the head of department, senior teacher and union representatives”. (*One on one interview with head teachers, 2018*)

One of the class teachers stated that,

“If it is pupils, they take them to the deputy’s office they counsel them so that the issue does not repeat itself”.

“The office of the guidance and counselling is also helpful in trying to guide and counsel the parties involved.” (*One on one interview with Guidance teachers, 2018*)

4.5.3. Forms of discipline

The study revealed that disciplinary measures were used as means of addressing conflict. This involved among others giving transfers, suspension, surrendering to DEBS office or termination of employment.

One of the respondents had the following to say,

“Conflict management depends on the nature of a conflict involved as we have levels of conflict management in school. According to levels of management the head of department starts to resolve an issue, if the head of department fails to resolve an issue, it is taken the disciplinary committee which is chaired by the deputy head. If it seems not to have been resolved it comes to the offices of the head teacher. If the office of the head fails, an issue can still be referred back to the disciplinary committee. All this is to try and see if the aggrieved parties can be brought together”. (*One on one interview with head teachers, 2018*)

Similarly guidance and counselling teacher from one school stated that,

“Pupils are normally given punishment after finding the root cause of the conflict, after punishment they are taken to the office of guidance and counselling where they are talked to. If it is something that is beyond the office of guidance and counselling they normally call parents they sit down with parents they resolve the issue and they punish pupils. If they do something that is outside the school rules others have been given forced transfers and others suspended”. (One on one interview with guidance and counselling teachers, 2018)

One of the class teachers also had the following to say,

“for teachers the head normally call the teachers involved firstly he talks to them, next time if he does the same thing they will be given verbal warning, then after that they are written to so that they exculpate themselves. Others who do not change are surrendered to DEBS office to be redirected”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

One of the supporting staff had this to say,

“If you are a general worker on contract, they talk to you first when you do not change that is when they terminate employment, if you are a supporting staff on government payroll they head will also request for your transfer and request someone else who can easily work with others”.

4.5.4. Cooperation

The study further revealed that conflicts in schools are also managed by advising parties involved to work together. Participants indicated that since good academic performance was an important aspect of a school, those in conflict had to be reunited in order for them to effectively work together.

One of the respondents stated that,

“We would go to the deputy head and explain what happened and the deputy head will give us direction. The deputy may not say who is wrong or right but he will just say this was supposed to go like this and you are supposed to work together for the good of the school and the child”. (One on one interview with class teachers, 2018)

One of the guidance teachers stated that,

“Normally the head would call the parties which are involved to hear why they are those conflicts. Then at the end he would advise both parties that you were supposed to handle this issue in this way this is not the way you react to your friend. After that they will be advised that from here go back and continue working properly. Bury everything that happened we are one in this place”.

Apart from the strategies presented above, some participants in the study indicated that there were other conflict management strategies that were used in schools, however they were rarely adopted. These include avoidance, confrontation as well as having in-house workshops where the aggrieved parties can air out their grievances.

4.6. Summary

This Chapter has presented the results of the study on conflict management strategies used in the management of public school. The results were presented in line with the four research questions set out in chapter one. The next chapter will discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Overview

The previous chapter presented the results on conflict management strategies used in the management of public schools. The results were presented in line with the four objectives of the study. This chapter discusses the findings in chapter four by relating them to the literature reviewed in chapter two in the light of the four objectives of this study.

5.2. Participants reflections on the types of conflict experienced in public schools

5.2.1. Inter-group conflicts

The study demonstrated that different types of conflict exist in public schools. According to the study two inter group conflicts were most common in public schools. These are management and teacher conflict as well as teacher and pupil conflicts. The study revealed that teachers and management were in conflict at one point or the other due to various reasons which includes among others, teachers not doing that which is expected of them. The findings of the study on these types of conflicts are in line with Nayereh (2014), who stated that conflict within an organisation occurs when management and staff disagree about working conditions, goals, authority and decisions. Rahim (1986), also agrees with this assertion when he argued that in a school environment, such conflicts occur due to different departments, competing for scarce resources like number of teachers, time allocation for extra-curricular activities, textbooks, teaching aids and other learning material.

Hall (1993), further states that inter-group conflict occurs due to the stereotypes groups attach to others. He mentioned that stereotypic distortion occurs when the parties only see evidence that supports the hypotheses they have developed about the other side, but not evidence that contradicts them. Groups in this circumstance tend to have prejudice towards one another. In order to reduce this type of conflict however, teachers and management must be encouraged to interact with each other in a more frequent way so as to identify positive aspects about each others.

5.2.2. Intra-group Conflict

It also came out from the findings of the study that intra-conflict between pupils was among the prevalent types of conflict in public schools. The study revealed that pupils often fight for resources such as desks and books.

The findings of the study are in line with the assertion made by Berhanu (2014), who argued that conflict may occur among individuals within a team in an organisation and involves clashes among some or all processes. In schools this may be applicable when teachers, or students are in a group which has norms and values incompatible to ones expectations and values as a result a conflict emerges. The findings of the study are further supported by the arguments made by Saddler (1998), who described intra-group conflict as largely interpersonal conflict between persons in a group. Conflict is always present in groups because individuals differ in terms of values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour.

Rahim (1986), further adds that individuals in a groups may come into conflicts when members do not abide by the groups rules. The results of this conflict are usually costly because the parties involved develop attitudes that are characterized by distrust toward each other, rigidity, a focus on self-interest, a failure to listen and sometimes picketing and lead to role dissatisfactions. The performance of the group and team work in general may significantly be affected. In line with this, the study established that as a result of conflict between pupils, some would even refuse to be put together to perform a school task.

Intra-group conflict can, however, play a constructive role by stimulating creativity and renewal among members in that they start to communicate and work together as a unit. Working together, promotes the spirit of good human relations including respect, caring and love among them.

It should however be noted that, other types of conflicts such as those among teachers, school and community as well as teachers and support staff were mentioned by some respondents, but the most prominent ones that came out from this study are the ones discussed above.

5.3. Prominent sources of conflict in public schools

The second objective of this study was to find out the factors that lead to conflicts being experienced in public schools. It was established from the study that the sources of conflict in schools differed based on the types of conflict. The sources of conflicts have since been discussed below.

5.3.1 Sources of conflict between management and teachers

5.3.1.1 Absenteeism

The study revealed that absenteeism from work was one of the main sources of conflict between management and teachers. It was established that whenever a teacher decided not to go for work without any reason or formal communication, management would follow up such teachers and try to understand why they failed to report for work. One of the respondents indicated that, according to the ethics of teaching, absenteeism from work especially for a number of days was a serious and dismissible offence therefore management does not take it lightly. This is clearly reflected in the following statements:

“Absenteeism is one of the causes of conflict between administrators and the teachers. If a teacher is a perpetual absent and they try to warn and caution but the teacher does not change, the administrators are forced to go to higher offices like the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) office or the Provincial Education Office (PEO) to report those cases to those authorities so that at least they can come in and work in conjunction with the school administration”.

“If someone is behaving outside what we have agreed as a system, for example teacher absenteeism from work, it causes conflict”.

The findings of the study are supported by the findings of Sompa (2015), whose study revealed that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers in secondary schools were caused by among others absence from work without a reason and communication breakdown. Maliyamkono (1991) also observed that unauthorized absenteeism as well as reckless behaviour among teachers was actually the major source of conflict in schools. It is therefore important that whenever a teacher decides to stay away from work, formal communication to supervisors must be made.

5.3.1.2 Failure to follow the ethics of teaching

It was also revealed from the study that failure to follow the ethics of teaching was a prominent source of conflict between management and teachers. The study showed that when

a worker fails to conform to expected standard of behaviour in a work place it usually brings conflict. For instance a teacher is supposed to be in class at a given time and that teacher decides not to go to class, the administrators mostly would confront such a teacher to find out why he or she did not go to teach, in the end conflict arises. According to the ethics of teaching, it was established that teachers are required to prepare a lesson plan before going to class, work at least eight hours per day, log in and out every time they report for work and ensure that the pupils clean the learning rooms before knocking off. However most teachers seem not to follow these guidelines accordingly and whenever they are reminded by their supervisors it becomes a source of conflict.

These findings corroborates the arguments of Nelson and Quick (2001), who asserted that conflict in organisation usually emanates from structural factors such as those that develop from within the organization and originate from the manner in which work is organised. This is so, in that not every worker in an organisation may be able to adjust to the expected standard of behaviour. Msila (2012), also identified several causes of conflict such as performance expectations and organizational structures. He argued that in a school, individual teachers may bring with them different time and goal orientations that may create a state of high differentiation thereby causing conflict.

The findings of the study a further supported by the arguments made by Hanson (1991), who argued that conflict is everywhere, and it is inevitable as it comes from many sources. Conflict arises whenever perceived or real interests collide and the collision can result from a divergence in organizational goals as well as ethic expectations and demands. This therefore means that workers sometime fail to meet the expected standard of behaviour in a workplace giving rise to conflict.

5.3.1.3 Coming late for work

The study showed that a teacher coming late for work was equally a source of conflict between teachers and management in public schools. Respondents revealed that some teachers had a tendency of coming for work late and in a quest to correct or advise them a misunderstanding arose. Sompá (2015), confirms this assertion when she stated that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers in secondary schools were caused by many factors and among them is coming late for work. Teachers are expected to always report for duty on time to avoid conflict with management. Failure to do so, management usually takes action as they try to avoid wasting teaching and learning time.

5.3.1.4 Poor performance

The study further revealed that teachers' poor performance as well as poor academic performance by pupils was also one of the common sources of conflict between teachers and management. Some respondents indicated that some teachers exhibited laziness and lacked diligence in the execution of their duties thereby leading to poor school performance. Somba (2015), agrees with the above assertion as her study equally observed that laziness among teachers caused conflict between head teachers and teacher in secondary schools as it contributed to poor performance of the school.

The study also showed that, when pupils perform poorly, management become concerned and responsible teachers are put to task. This is so in that employees in a work place are expected to always perform their duties to the best of their ability and ensure that organisational goals are realised. This is clearly reflected in the following statements:

“Administration and teachers differ when teachers do not do what they are expected to do. Administration wants teachers to teach the children now some teachers they want to go and do their own business without getting permission. Some teachers the way they teach administration also follow; they want to know why children are failing because they see that the teacher is destroying the children when children are paying a lot of money”.

“Not all teachers like teaching so the administration has to push them just like that so that they can teach in the end misunderstandings occur”.

It is evident from the above statements that some teachers in public schools spent time doing other things at the expense of performing their duties at work. The findings of the study corroborates with Agenga and Simatwa (2011), whose study revealed that that the major causes of conflict experienced in public secondary schools included poor academic performance as well as poor work performance by staff. Maliyamkono (1991), also confirms the above argument when he observed that teacher's inability to perform tasks assigned and also carelessness are among major source of conflict in schools.

5.3.2 Sources of conflict between teachers and pupils

5.3.2.1 Not following school rules

Between teachers and pupils, respondents indicated that conflict is usually caused because of pupils not following school rules. The study showed that public schools had stipulated rules

and regulations which each and every pupil was expected to follow thus conflict always emerge when a pupil breaks one of the rules. It was indicated that pupils are expected to ensure they report for school in time and be punctual for all school activities. Meaning that, if a pupil comes late the teachers would want to punish the pupil and in process a misunderstanding arises. Agenga and Simatwa (2011), are in line with the assertion made when they stressed that the major causes of conflict experienced in public secondary school included among others discipline of students and disrespect. Teachers and management are however on the look out to always ensure discipline among pupils in school is maintained.

In contrast with the above arguments, Kiwira (1984), asserted that conflict is as the results of the absence of courses in conflict management, which lead to poor approach for getting resolutions. The point here is to implore administrators in schools to ensure that daily routine challenges happening at their service area are met.

5.3.2.2 Adolescent nature of pupils

It was revealed from the study that the adolescent nature of pupils was equally a source of conflict between teachers and pupils. Respondents indicated that pupils were young people who wanted to try out a lot of things hence in the process of controlling them conflict arises. It was learnt that in a situation where a pupil does something wrong and a teacher is trying to advise, pupils usually feel intimidated and do not appreciate the information even when it is in their best interest. This is reflected in the following statement;

“Sometime there is conflict between a teacher and a pupil where you are telling a pupil to behave in a certain order and they are not getting what you are telling them because they are kids in the end the teacher and pupil will be at logger head”.

The above finding is in line with Hart (2000), who suggested conflicting perceptions, different personal values and conflicting goals as sources of conflict in a work place. A Phillipian study conducted in the banking industry by Tsevendorj (2008), also suggested among others perception, values and culture problems as moderately serious sources of conflict. This implies that what teachers see as valuables and important may not be considered as such by pupils in the end creating some kind of conflict between them.

Apart from the factors discussed above, the other source of conflict between teachers and pupils that was highlighted by respondents although was not seen to be very common is the use of abusive language by both teachers and pupils.

5.3.3 Sources of conflict among pupils

Among pupils, the study revealed that conflict arises mainly as a result of stealing books and pens from each other as well as fighting for desks. The study showed that most of public schools have limited resources in terms of books, pens, desks and other learning materials therefore it makes pupils fight just to have access to them. On the other hand some pupils were in a habit of stealing their friend's books and pens which also caused conflict. The study also established that pupils engaged themselves in intimate relationships which made them fight over girlfriends and boyfriends. Pupils however kept such relationships secretly as they were against the school rules.

The findings of the study are in line with some of the literature reviewed such as Nyamajiwa (2000), who recognized that conflict within an organization can be caused by competition for limited resources. He asserted that at a school for instance, books and furniture are mostly in short supply therefore causing conflict. Hanson (1991), also argued that conflict arises whenever interests collide and the collision can result from among others a demand on scarce resources. Therefore, in a school, conflict can arise from divergence in expectations of scarce resources like accommodation, classrooms, instructional resources such as chalk, manila, and so on. Gray and Strake (1984), affirm the view above when they identified six sources of conflict in organisations among them is competition for limited resources.

It is important to state that, other factors such as not wanting to make contributions towards cleaning of the class, making silly comments toward each other or bringing issues from home to school were also highlighted as sources of conflict between pupils. Nevertheless, respondents indicated that they were not prevalent.

5.4 Perceived effects of conflict on school performance

The third objective of the study wanted to find out the effects of conflicts on the running of the school. The effects of conflict are discussed below using themes that emerged from the study.

5.4.1 Teaching and learning is not effectively done

It emerged from the study that conflict in a school environment impacts negatively on the teaching and learning process. This was so in that the planning and the execution of lessons were often disturbed. The study showed that when a teacher was in conflict with the head

teacher for instance some teachers would not even go to class as a result the teaching and learning process was affected.

Barker and Gum (1994), agree with this assertion as they categorically state that many times, in the midst of conflict, opposing individuals or groups will put their own interests or goals above those of the organisation, resulting in the lessening of the organisation's effectiveness. Omisore (2014), also stated that one of the major impacts of organizational conflict on employee job performance clearly manifests in employees' poor commitment towards the job which in turn affect service quality and customer satisfaction. This means that conflict made teachers to be reluctant in provide quality teaching to their pupils and this makes pupils to lose out as they do not cover enough work in the curriculum.

5.4.2 Poor performance in school

The study further revealed that conflict lead to poor performance by both teachers and learners. It was established that because of conflict teacher were unable to deliver according to expectation. Respondents highlighted that a person who is aggrieved is likely not to perform according to the way they are supposed to. The findings of the study are supported by Sompa (2015), who argued that the effects of interpersonal conflict between teachers and head teachers in secondary schools were among others, poor academic performance as well as poor teacher performance.

It further emerged from the study that conflict affected the performance of the school as teachers were called to resolve conflict at a time when they are expected to teach. This meant that much of the learning time was hence lost at the expense of solving conflicts. Owusu-Mensah (2007), affirms that where conflict involves a teacher and a pupil, instructional time is wasted as part of it is usually spent on addressing the conflict. Not only that, when conflict occurs between pupils in the same class during teaching periods, part of instructional time is wasted to settle the conflict.

On the part of pupils, the study revealed that, conflict made them to end up with bad results because whenever they are in conflict for example with a teacher, they were not free to be in class of that teacher and they equally hated the subject that the same teacher takes. Some teachers would sometimes treat the pupils very badly making them feel very uncomfortable to be in their class. The situation however undermines teachers' position as role models, in whom pupils can emulate their behaviour to build good relationships and solve their differences amicably.

This corroborates with the findings by Owusu-Mensah (2007), who indicated that where conflict emerges between a teacher and pupils, the pupils do not feel happy in class since the teacher could hate the offending pupil to the extent of refusing to mark exercises pupils present in class, refusing to call on those pupils to answer questions they ask during lessons, or they simply ignore them in all class activities. As a result, the performance of the pupil is affected.

Similarly Orlich, Callahan, and Gibson (2001), support the above argument when they indicated that when a conflict occurs between a teacher and a pupil, sometimes other teachers join the battle, and in solidarity with their colleague, they also harass the pupil in school. Such a pupil becomes very uncomfortable in the school environment and cannot go to see their siblings and friends in other classrooms. The implication is that pupils could end up being unnecessarily punished by other teachers as well. This situation however is contrary to the expectation that teachers would act as substitute parents to their pupils and that this parenting role would compel pupils to replicate the feelings they have for their parents to their teachers.

5.4.3 De-motivation

The study showed that because of conflict, teachers and other workers do not have the inspiration to do their duties as expected. Respondents stated that when a worker realises that their efforts are not being appreciated automatically their commitment to work is affected. It was established from the study that as a result of de-motivation, workers production levels as well as the quality of work was affected.

What was revealed by the study is in agreement with the assertion made by Omisore (2014), who stated that one of the major impacts of organizational conflict on employee job performance clearly manifests in employees' poor commitment towards the job which in turn affect service quality and customer satisfaction. The outcome here is that the performance of the organization is hampered and employee job satisfaction is affected, triggering off turnover intentions.

Jennings and Wattam (2004), states that conflicts in the school environment can have adverse effects on the academic environment, including affecting the morale of educators and the pace at which they work. Management was therefore encouraged to always be there to motivate the worker who is the teacher and also the teacher should always be there to motivate the learner in class. A human relations theory that is used in the study further

supports this as it emphasises on employee enthusiasm, morale and contentment rather than just productivity alone. It states that the principal who leads a school with a human relations approach places an emphasis on employee satisfaction and motivation thereby reducing unnecessary conflict.

5.4.4 Work environment

The study also revealed that as a result of conflict, the work environment is affected. Respondents indicated that conflict brought tension in school and broke the team spirit of cooperation among teachers and other staff in the school environment. It was established that tension made people to develop negative feelings and attitude towards one another consequently affecting relations in a work place. The study showed that even when a teacher may not be directly involved in a conflict, misunderstanding between other colleagues still made the work environment tense and work culture was affected. This is clearly reflected in the following statements:

“Conflicts have negative influence because when you find that there is a conflict between the administration and the teacher and if the issue is not settled amicably definitely the working culture will be different.”

“When there is conflict, the school environment is not nice and work becomes very difficult.”

It is evident from the statements that because of conflict in school, teachers and other staff find the work environment very unpleasant and not favourable for teaching and learning processes. Sompa (2015), supports this argument as she asserted that conflict in school brings about tension and hatred making the school environment not conducive for teaching and learning. This is also in line with Oputa (2003), who stated that the consequences of conflicts on the school organization have been regrettable. Part of the repercussions on schools is hostility, suspicion and withdrawal from active participation in school activities.

Similar to the study is the assertion of Greenberg (1996), who identified that conflict produces strong negative emotions and thus can be quite stressful. To avoid stress, management of all levels of conflict need to be the core business of school managers.

5.4.5 Absenteeism

The study showed that because of conflict, teachers and learners would rather be absent from school instead of facing the person they have a misunderstanding with. When there is conflict between a teacher and head teacher, the teacher would avoid coming for work as it made

them feel awkward in school and if they did, it was merely to register their presence but they do not put in much effort to deliver the lessons as they are expected to do. The pupils in the end lose out even when they are not involved directly. It was also established that when there is conflict between a teacher and pupil, some pupils would opt to absent themselves from class just to avoid the teacher. This however had a negative impact on the performance of the pupils as they miss out most of the lessons.

Owusu-Mensah (2007), agrees with the finding as she stated that, where conflict emerges between a teacher and a pupils, the pupils do not feel happy in class since the teacher could hate the offending pupil to the extent of refusing to mark exercises pupils present in class, refusing to call on those pupils to answer questions they ask during lessons, and more irritatingly, refusing to call on such pupils who dare to raise their hands either to ask or answer questions, or they simply ignore them in all class activities. Such conflict aftermath makes it difficult for those pupils to assess their performance in class. As a result, the timid pupil may decide to stay out of the teacher's way by not coming to school just to avoid that situation, and may eventually drop out of school if no one goes after them.

Owens (2001), also adds that, conflict has an effect on how people behave in an organisation in that conflict often develops into hostility which causes many people to withdraw both physically and psychologically. Physical withdrawal includes absenteeism, tardiness while psychological withdrawal can take the form of alienation, apathy and indifference. This shows that to avoid further misunderstanding, teachers and pupils choose to stay away from parties they are in conflict with by not going to school.

5.4.6 Transfers

It also emerged from the study that as a result of conflict, some teachers and pupils ended up being transferred. Respondents indicated that in a situation where there was conflict between a teacher and head teacher, the head teacher would secretly go to higher offices and solicit for the transfer of that teacher. If it is a conflict between a teacher and pupil or between pupils the disciplinary committee will equally recommend to the head teacher that a pupil be transferred depending on the gravity of the matter. Transfers were however seen to affect the teaching process as some classes are left unattended to due to the unexpected transfer of the teacher.

This is in line with the assertion made by Oputa (2003), who stated that the consequences of conflicts on the school organization have been disruption of academic programmes as well as

inadequate staffing as a result of unplanned transfer. In some cases, school results were withheld or cancelled, as a result of emergency transfer of subject teachers. Owusu-Mensah (2007), also agrees with the above assertion when she revealed that some teachers get transferred from schools in which they have problems, which ends up negatively affecting the school especially rural schools to which many qualified teachers refuse to accept postings. It is therefore necessary to ensure that, conflicts in the school environment are addressed in a positive manner and avoid such negative effects.

It is significant at this point to indicate that, most of the respondents in the study had a negative view of conflict as opposed to a positive view. The study revealed that conflict had more negative effects on the performance of school and hence there was need to ensure that it was properly managed.

5.5 Preferred conflict management strategies in public schools

The fourth objective of the study had sought to propose conflict management strategies that are used in management of conflict in public schools. From the responses, emerging themes from this objective of the study are discussed below.

5.5.1 Dialogue

Respondents in the study indicated that dialogue is one of the most preferred methods of managing conflict in public schools. The study revealed that dialogue gave parties to a conflict an opportunity to openly air out their grievances and find a lasting solution to the problem. It helped in building trust and understanding to the parties in a conflict.

The findings were consistent with the argument made by Oyebade (1995), who identified certain strategies as important in resolving conflict and among them is dialogue. It was noted that, to ensure amicable resolution of conflict, the parties to a conflict needed to take a step by committing themselves to finding a solution to the dispute. This required application of clear and effective communication. Meyer (1994), affirms to this by stating that effective communication is seen as the best strategy for conflict management because it would make the group aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem solving.

The study established that when there was conflict between a teacher and management, the teacher is called by management and they will have a one to one talk and try to iron out their differences. Respondents indicated that by using dialogue, conflicts would usually be resolved in a respective and proper manner.

5.5.2 Providing guidance and counselling

It was also established from the study that providing guidance and counselling is used as one of the means of managing conflicts in public schools. Respondents revealed that whenever there was a conflict between members of staff or pupils, parties involved would be talked to in a friendly manner so as to instil in them the need for peaceful co-existence. Guidance and counselling helps disputing parties to understand themselves and reflect on their view points.

The findings are however in contrast with most of the literature reviewed. According to Ladipo (1997), forcing, structural changes, avoidance, compromise and smoothing are strategies mostly used to management conflict. In a related study, Hodge and Anthony (1991), also identified suppression, smoothing, avoiding, compromise, third-party intervention, cooperation, democratic process, job rotation as well as confrontation as important conflict management strategies.

Respondents further indicated that guidance and counselling worked well on conflict that involved pupils other than those between management and teachers. They stated that, since guidance and counselling involves a counsellor or adviser on the issue causing the conflict, talking to those in management and teachers is always challenging. It was observed that unlike the counselling sessions which involved a one to one talk, teacher management conflict required the process to be done in a group which somehow compromised the process as some individuals would not speak up or open up about the issue at hand. Some people may not be unable to disclose what is keeping them from wanting to settle the dispute with the other party. Not only that, in situations where one of the parties is not satisfied with the resolution it created grudges and worsened the situation. Therefore handling pupil conflict using this strategy was much easier and positive results were often achieved.

The study by Roloff (1987), supports the above findings when it showed that conflict management techniques in secondary school are varied. This means that the use of a certain conflict strategy depends on the nature of conflict. It also implies that much as these conflicts continue to manifest, researchers have continued to carry out surveys and researches with a view to exploring the best strategies for managing conflicts effectively in the workplace. Mwamanda (1999), also adds that there is a need for comprehensive and systematic conflict management techniques in which conflict is effectively resolved including types of conflicts and there causes and effects in secondary schools.

5.5.3 Forms of discipline

The study showed that when there is conflict either between management and a teacher or between a teacher and a pupil, disciplinary procedures would be used to deal with the matter. It was established from the study that public schools have disciplinary committees which help in resolving different conflicts in school. The disciplinary measures that are usually implemented include suspension, transfers, surrendering to DEBS offices or termination of employment. This is evident from the following statement;

“Conflict management depends on the nature of a conflict involved as we have levels of conflict management in school. According to levels of management the head of department starts to resolve an issue, if the head of department fails to resolve an issue, it is taken the disciplinary committee which is chaired by the deputy head. If it seems not to have been resolved it comes to the offices of the head teacher. If the office of the head fails, an issue can still be referred back to the disciplinary committee. All this is to try and see if the aggrieved parties can be brought together”.

It emerged from the study that when there is conflict between management and teachers and the dispute seem not to be resolved, the head teacher would surrender the teacher to higher offices or may push for the transfer of the teacher involved. However it was also learnt that sometimes it is a teacher that will go to higher offices and request for a transfer though this was a rare scenario. If a conflict involves one of the support staff who is on contract with the school, employment could even be terminated. For pupils, they are given work to do or they are asked to call their parents to help solve the problem before being expelled or given a transfer.

The findings of the study corroborates with Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013), who identified among others involvement of school disciplinary committee and public complaint commission as important in the dissolution of conflict. These are very necessary in promoting good behaviour in schools as well as taking suitable action towards misconduct especially among pupils.

The findings of the study are however not consistent with the study by Tumwesigye and Basheka (2008), which revealed that all schools where head teachers used control oriented management strategies, teachers and students tended to be dissatisfied with the school climate. The use of transfers or suspension in this case is viewed as a temporal means of addressing conflict as the root causes to a conflict are usually not resolved. Relationships are

usually left unrepaired. Onsarigo (2007), is in line with the views made by the previous researcher when he suggested that it is better off to expose and resolve conflict before they damage people's relationships or even before they degenerate into violence which undermines school stability and performance. The study also found that social conflicts in educational institutions demand moral authority and leadership integrity to manage and resolve them. If not resolved, they can have a destabilizing effect on institutional performance in all learning process.

5.5.4 Cooperation

The study revealed that conflicts in schools are also managed by advising parties involved to work together. This strategy ensures that parties to a conflict are reunited in order for them to effectively work together. This is reflected by the following statement:

“We would go to the deputy head and explain what happened and the deputy head will give us direction. The deputy may not say who is wrong or right but he will just say this was supposed to go like this and you are supposed to work together for the good of the school and the child”.

It is evident from the above statement that cooperation was also one of the conflict management strategies used by public schools. Cooperation was aimed at creating and maintaining good working relationships between members of staff. The human relations theory used in the study actually suggests that a school with a human relations view embodies an atmosphere in which relational aspects such as developing and maintaining positive relationships are deemed of high importance. Such a school environment is one of high teacher morale and members of staff are enthusiastic about coming to work every day and are genuinely excited to be part of the school team.

The study also showed that through cooperation parties to a conflict were simply required to collaborate with each other and ensure that they invest time and resources to finding a solution to a conflict. Cunningham (1998), is in agreement with this argument when he states that collaboration is the best way to resolve institutional conflicts as it promotes commitment by incorporating the concerns of all stakeholders. This style of management aims at solving conflicts by focusing on the roots of the problem. The features associated with collaborative management include sharing of information, investigating underlying problems and seeking for a situation where all parties feel satisfied. This is also reflected in the theoretical framework used in this study which advocates for an environment consisting of collaborative

and harmonious relationships amongst staff members as means of increasing productivity among workers.

Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013), also support the findings when they revealed that principals, teachers, proprietors, and students, strategies for resolving conflicts in schools include among others encouraging parties to work together and application of dialogue between the conflicting parties. Hong (2005), also conducted a study to compare conflict management strategies between Koreans and Americans. The study showed that Koreans prefer cooperative orientation to resolving conflict. To ensure that this conflict management strategy works well in schools, administrators therefore need to focus on actions or processes that enhances teachers working together to achieve the same end, by resolving the perceived difference.

Adebayo (2007), also suggested that the first strategy of conflict resolution is commitment to the management of productive conflict, such that conflict does not become destructive. This involves willingness by people to working together for the common good. He further advocated strategies such enjoining leaders, promoting the rule of law, protection of fundamental human rights and freedom, fair allocation of values and equity of justice. These values are very essential in reducing friction and conflict in organizations.

Nevertheless, although respondents revealed that the strategies discussed above were the most prominent ones, they indicated that there were other conflict management strategies that were used in public schools though they were rarely adopted. These include avoidance, confrontation as well as having in-house workshops where the aggrieved parties can air out their grievances.

5.6 Summary

This Chapter has discussed the major findings of the study. The next and last chapter will draw conclusions to the study and provide recommendations on conflict management strategies in public schools.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Overview

The previous chapter presented the major findings of the study. The present chapter will draw conclusions to the study, provide recommendations on conflict management strategies in public schools and make further suggestions.

6.2. Conclusion

The study sought to explore conflict management strategies used in the management of public schools in selected schools of Kabwe District, Zambia. It was clearly observed from the study that since school culture are built by people who came from different family backgrounds and learning experiences, the inevitability of conflict is unquestionable. The human relations theory used in the study is in agreement with this observation as it recognizes the frequent occurrence of conflict between individuals and groups within the organizations due to differences in their needs and accepts the notion that conflict is inevitable in an organization. It therefore supports the idea that, as soon as conflict arises, they would be need to properly manage it.

Respondents in the study confirmed that they experience one form of conflict from one time to another in the cause of performing their tasks. The common types of conflict were between teachers and management, teachers and pupils as well as pupils and fellow pupils. Some of sources of conflict that were identified include late coming, absenteeism, failure to follow teaching ethics, poor performance by both teachers and pupils as well as pupils not following school rules.

The study also revealed that respondents viewed conflict from a negative perspective as destructive or dysfunctional. The effects of conflict on the running of the school were seen to be; poor performance, de-motivation, work environment is affected, absenteeism and transfers. This is exactly the argument of the human relations theory that conflict is natural in all organizations and that it may have either a positive or a negative effect, depending on how the conflict is handled (Osabya, 2015). The theory thus emphasises the need for school administrators to motivate members of staff and ensure that good social relations in school are maintained. This helps to improve employee satisfaction thereby increase productivity.

The study also established that the most used conflict management strategies in public schools include dialogue, using various forms of discipline measures, guidance and counselling as well as cooperation.

6.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations on conflict management in schools are made for possible implementation.

1. The Ministry of General Education (MOGE) should provide on-job and in-service training courses to teachers to equip them with skills and knowledge for conflict management, to enable them handle various conflicts.
2. Courses in conflict management and human relations should be included in the curriculum for teachers in training institutions as a way of preparing them for conflict management in school administration
3. Administrators in schools should also embrace conflict not only negatively but positively to enable them meet up with challenges.
4. Schools administrators should apply the situational approach to conflict management because methods of conflict management which is appropriate in one case may not necessarily be appropriate when applied to a conflict generated from another source.
5. Clear and effective communication among various stakeholders should be improved in schools and those in management should ensure everyone is brought on board when making decisions.
6. Seminars, workshops and symposia in the field of educational management should be organised from time to time to improve awareness on the effects of conflict in schools.

6.4 Suggestions for further study

Conflict management and school climate, continue to offer rich ground for inquiry. A fairly large body of research exists related to conflict management and school climate as well as to the broader area of leadership, of which conflict management is a part. Few studies, however, have investigated conflict management as it relates to school climate. The results of this study contribute to the research and raise a number of questions as well.

1. Further research on conflict management strategies in private and faith based schools could be conducted in the district for comparison of findings.

2. A study on conflict management strategies used in management of teacher and pupil conflict can be done.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS:

APPENDIX A: Semi-structured interview schedule for head teachers

1. How would you define the concepts conflict and conflict management in your own words?
2. What are the types of conflicts that exist in this school?
3. What are the factors that lead to conflict being experienced in school?
4. Does conflict have any effects on your performance as a school?
5. How do you effectively manage conflicts in school?
6. What conflict management strategies do you use in this school?
7. What challenges do you face in applying the identified strategies for managing conflicts?
8. What are you suggesting on the improvement in conflict management strategies used by head teachers in managing conflicts?
9. Do you have any additional comments about conflict management and if so, explain?

APPENDIX B: Semi-structured interview schedule for class teachers

1. How frequent do you experience conflict in this school?
2. What is nature of conflict do you experience in this school?
3. What do you think are the main causes of conflicts in school?
4. Have you ever been involved in handling conflicts in school?
5. What conflict management methods do you frequently use in this school?
6. What conflict management strategies are mostly used by your head teacher?
7. What challenges do you face when you have been involved in handling conflicts?
8. How does conflict influence teachers effectiveness in teaching and learning?
9. What are your suggestions for improving conflict management strategies for effective school management?
10. How can conflict be avoided in school?

APPENDIX C: Semi-structured interview schedule for guidance and counselling teachers

1. How frequent do you experience conflict in this school?
2. What type of conflict do you experience in this school?
3. What do you think are the factors that lead to conflict being experienced in school?
4. Have you ever been involved in handling conflicts in school?
5. What conflict management strategies do you frequently use in this school?
6. Do you have any challenges with regards to handling conflicts in school?
7. What conflict management strategies are mostly used by your head teacher?
8. How does conflict influence the running of the school?
9. What are your suggestions for improving conflict management strategies for effective school management?

APPENDIX D: Semi-structured interview schedule for supporting staff

1. What do you understand by the term conflict?
2. Have you ever witnessed any conflict in school?
3. What are the causes of conflicts in school?
4. Do you have any idea how conflicts are managed in this school?
5. What strategies has your school been using to eliminate or reduce conflicts in your school?
6. How effective are the conflict management strategies applied in reducing conflicts in school?
7. Suggest measures that can be applied to reduce or eliminate conflict in your school?