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INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

**An analysis of the causes of parent – Teacher conflicts at Blem
secondary school in Livingstone**

By

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Zimbabwe Open University in Fulfilment of the Partial Requirements for the
Award of the Degree of Masters of Education in Science, Peace Leadership and
Conflict Management

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DECLARATION

I, Malala Blessed, do declare that this dissertation represents my own work. It is not a replica of papers which have been done before, but a product of my field research. All the information that has been quoted in the literature review has been given full acknowledgement. All right reserved, no part of this publication may be reproduced except for brief quotations in printed review

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people: my beloved father and mother, Dr. Apostle Lazarus Malala and Pastor Kerita Tembo Malala for their encouragement, love and financial support; my siblings, Margaret Tembo, Joyce Malala, Taonga Malala, Jonathan Phiri, Lumba Malala for putting a smile on my face when school became tough. My friend, Mutinta Mweemba who encouraged me to go back to school, and my beloved Mr. Royd Mwewa who was my pillar of strength and prayer during my study in school. Finally my utmost thanks goes to God the Almighty who kept me through the toughest moments in school and saw me through to this end.

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Malala, Blessed has been approved as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Education in Science, Peace, Leadership and Conflict Management of the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PTA - Parent Teacher Association

DEBS - District Education Board Secretary

ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the causes, of parent-teacher conflict at Blem Secondary School in Livingstone District of the southern province of Zambia. The objectives of the study were: to establish the main causes of conflicts between parents and teachers; find-out how conflicts between teachers and parents are resolved; explore the nature of conflicts between parents and teachers. The study employed a descriptive survey design using a qualitative approaches of data collection and analysis. The sample comprised 1 head teacher, 1 deputy head, 5 heads of departments and 2 PTA members. The head teacher and the deputy-head teacher were sampled using purposive sampling procedure while the PTA members and the heads of departments were sampled using simple random sampling procedure. The study findings revealed among others that causes of conflicts in schools were poor performance, favouritism, educational level, scarce resources, and poor work culture. As regards to simple conflict management strategies method used by head-teacher included compromising, dialogue and avoidance whereas the heads of departments and PTA members used competing and confrontation. Method In the light of the findings, the study recommended that head teachers should encourage team work between teachers and parents as a way of minimizing conflict. The Ministry of Education should include a course on conflict management in the secondary school teacher preparation programmes. This will help to impart new knowledge to the head-teachers and teachers on different approaches to conflict management in secondary schools.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Copyright.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Certificate of Approval	v
Acknowledgement	vi
List of abbreviation.....	vii
Abstract	viii
Table of Contents	ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 Main Objectives.....	3
1.4 Research Objectives	3
1.5 Research Questions	3
1.6 Significance of the study	4
1.7 Limitation of the study.....	4
1.8 Delimitations of the study	4

1.9 Operational definitions.....	5
1.10 Summary of chapter one	5

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 overview	6
2.1 Parent-Teacher conflict.....	7
2.2 Causes of Conflict	8
2.3 Nature of the Causes of Conflict.....	11
2.4 Conflict Resolution strategies.....	16
2.5 Conceptual framework.....	21
2.6 Conclusion.....	22
2.7 Summary of the chapter.....	23

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview.....	24
3.1 Research design	24
3.2 Study population	25
3.3 Study sample	25
3.4 Sampling Techniques	25
3.5 Data collection instruments	26
3.6 Date collection procedures	26

3.7 Data analysis procedures	26
3.8 Validity and reliability	27
3.8 Summary of the chapter.....	27
 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS O F THE STUDY	
4.0 Overview	28
4.1 Findings on the Causes of conflict.....	28
4.2 Conflict management methods on teachers.....	30
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS	
5.0 Overview	31
5.1 Causes of conflict between parents and teachers	31
5.3 Summary of the chapter.....	38
 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
6.0 Overview.....	40
6.1 Conclusion	40
6.2 Recommendations.....	41
6.3 Summary of the chapter.....	42
6.4 Suggestions for further research.....	42
REFERENCES	44

Appendix	49
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This chapter introduces the background to the study that bears information obtained from the initial review of literature. It also shows the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and limitations of the study

Background to the study

The term conflict is defined differently to mean disagreement. Several definition emphasise the incompatibility of goals. Laue (1992:14) explains that conflict occurs in the event of “escalated competition between two or more parties, each of which aims to gain advantage of some kind of power, resources, interest, values... at least one of the parties believes is over a set of mutually incompatible goals.” Similarly, “when two or more parties perceive their interests are incompatible, they express hostile attitudes, or pursue their interests through actions that damage the other parties. These parties’ maybe individuals, small or large groups.”(Laue 1992:4). Albert (2002: 69) observes that human perceptions are very important in the understanding of a conflict situation.

Therefore, like in any other place such as organisations, institutions, companies, banks to mention but a few, school institutions are yet other places where different kinds of conflict exist. Wattam (2003) argues that conflict cannot be evaded even in education, as schools and colleges are organizations

This study therefore, aimed at analysing the causes of conflict that exist between parents and teachers at Blem Secondary schools in Livingstone District of Zambia. The genesis of the study was from the realization that little was known about the causes of conflict that exists between teachers and parents in Livingstone urban and rural secondary schools. The study further explored the nature of the main causes of parent-teacher conflict to find out how it is resolved.

Despite the many benefits of parent - teacher relationship as observe above, achieving these collaborative relationships remains a big challenge due to the many conflicts that occur between parents and teachers. Schools want parents to support their practices and teaching efforts, and parents want schools to be responsive to the unique needs of their child. However, far too often, neither parents nor educators are collaboratively finding ways to maximize the educational experience and academic outcomes of students (Auerbach, *et al.* 2012)

More specifically, different perspectives of a child or the child's needs have been identified as a factor that initiates and escalates conflicts between parents and teachers (Lake & Billingsley, 2000). According to panel & Stevens (2010), different viewpoint of child's needs – impact negatively on parental involvement in school programmes, both parents and teachers may want what is best for a learner, but their expectations and perceptions of a particular child. This leaves educators and parents struggling to develop and foster family–school partnerships in a conflict-laden climate with limited knowledge about how best to handle these conflicts (Lake & Billingsley, 2000).

Statement of the Problems

However, there is little or no empirical study conducted to establish the causes of conflicts at Blem secondary school. Therefore, this research was undertaken to establish the causes of parent-teacher conflict and management methods used in order to improve parent-teacher relationship

Main Objectives

The main research objective was to establish the causes of parent-teacher conflict at Blem Secondary of Livingstone District in Southern Province of Zambia.

1.4 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives: To establish the main causes of conflicts that exists between parents and teachers at Blem secondary school.

1. To explore the nature of the main causes of conflicts between parents and teachers at Blem secondary school.
2. To find out how conflicts between teachers and parents are resolved at Blem secondary school.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the main causes of conflicts between parents and teachers at Blem secondary school?
2. What is the nature of the main causes of conflicts between parents and teachers at Blem secondary school?
3. How are conflicts between parents and teachers resolved at Blem secondary school

1.6 Significance of the Study.

The findings this study may assist stake holders in education to understand the causes of parent-teacher conflict at Blem secondary school. Further the findings may inform teachers on how teacher- parent conflicts could better be handled. This can be achieved through sharing the study findings during Continuing Professional Development. Furthermore, it is hoped that study findings and recommendations may act as a source reference material to future researchers.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study was done in one district, Livingstone at one School, Blem secondary School. Further, only the head teacher, deputy head teacher, heads of departments and PTA members of the school constituted the study sample. This study would have been more representative if more schools and PTA members were included in the sample. This means that the findings may not have representation of all the parents and teachers in the district and in the country. Hence the findings may not be subjected to generalisation.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

According to Simon (2011) delimitations are those areas with characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries. Delimitations section explicates the criteria of participants to enrol in the study, geographic region covered, the profession and organizations involved. This research study was delimited to Blem Secondary School in Livingstone district of southern province of Zambia.

This means that the findings of the study could not be generalized to a wider population to other districts of Southern province which have rural secondary schools.

1.10 OPERATIONAL DEFINATIONS

Conflict: conflict is a condition that arises whenever the Perceived interests of an individual or group clash with those of another Individual or group in such a way that strong emotions are aroused and Compromise is not considered to be an option

School: Refers to a social institution set up to transmit knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and norms that are relevant or current to the learner and which will help him or her participate effectively in the activities of the community to bring about better standards of living for the people

Parent: refers to a person who is a mother or father of a pupil at Blem Secondary School

Conflict management: refers to ways of resolving conflict between two conflict parties.

Parent-Teacher Association: an organization composed of parents and teachers that is intended to facilitate parental participation in a school.

1.11 Summary

This chapter has provided and discussed the background of the study. The problem which necessitated this study has also been stated. Further, the chapter has discussed the main and specific objectives of the study, specific research questions, and significance of the study, limitations, delimitations and finally, the operational definitions of key terms as used in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews literature from different countries related to the causes of conflicts that exists between parents and teachers. It further analyses the causes of parent-teacher conflicts, its nature and shows out how conflicts could be resolved.

Garton (1996) adds that a school is not an independent or isolated entity; but rather, it operates in a social context, an important element of which is the local community from which the school draws its students and depends on for much of its financial and social support.

Cannie *et al.* (2002) refers to conflict as a disagreement or struggle between two or more people. Expanding on this definition, Cole (1998) also states that conflict is a condition that arises whenever the perceived interests of an individual or a group clash with those of another individual or a group in such a way that strong emotions are aroused and compromise is not considered to be an option. Further, Hart (2002) writes that conflict is a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more people or groups of people which is sometimes characterized by physical violence or assault.

Furthermore, Sukuba (2017) defines 'conflict' as a situation in which opposing view-points have come into physical confrontation. From these definitions, conflict can be seen as a contest of opposing forces or power, a struggle to resist or overcome. It is also seen that conflict exists whenever common perception or activities occur. Conflict can also be a situation in which there are incompatible goals, thought or emotions within or between

individuals or groups that lead to opposition. Important aspects of these definitions include “expressed struggle”, which means the two sides must communicate about the problem for there to be a conflict. Another important idea is that conflict often involves perceptions. The two sides may only perceive that their goals, resources and interference are incompatible with each other. However, conflicts can be resolved. Methods used in conflict resolution include: Accommodation, compromise, and avoidance.

2.1 Parent–Teacher Conflict

2.1.1 Conflict in the school situation

The school is an organization of individuals who cannot escape conflict because it is a community. Siann and Ugwuegbu (2000) explain that parents and teachers are the two centers of almost every child’s universe. No one knows their child better than the parents and no one knows how to teach better than the teacher. It is a centered child who finds that his or her universes are in harmony with each other.

Smith and Lastlett (1994) believe that when there is a school-based conflict, it is almost always desirable to avoid a win or lose outcomes because the players will continue to work together in the best interests of the child. Smith and Lastlett (1990) further noted that, In other words, relationships between parents and the school are ongoing since it continues long after the conflict is over. The last thing that is needed in conflict in the school situation is for one party to feel like a winner and the other a loser because these stakeholders need to coordinate to ensure better education of the children.

According to Christenson (2004), the willingness and ability to appropriately handle conflict are keys to the establishment of school-community partnerships. Relationships between

parents and educators are often cordial when no source of dissension exists; however, when a conflict arises, it becomes much more difficult for educators and parents to work together in an effective and meaningful way (Cornille *et al.*, 1999). When conflicts arise, shared goals and values serve as the foundation for effectively resolving disagreements.

Rather than viewing conflict as the destruction of partnership efforts, conflict should be viewed as an opportunity to discuss desired goals of the school and parents, and to work collaboratively to reach these goals (Lake& Billingsley, 2000). Understanding the experiences of parents, teachers, and students in the presence of parent–teacher conflict related to a student may provide insights about how to effectively resolve these conflicts. Research in this area could provide educators with the tools, knowledge, and skills necessary to resolve conflict and effectively partner with diverse families.

2.2 Causes of Conflict

In any situation involving more than one person, conflict can arise. The causes of conflict range from philosophical differences and divergent goals to power imbalances. Unmanaged or poorly managed conflicts generate a breakdown in trust and lost productivity. Addressing parent-teacher conflict is challenging in the best of circumstances. But when parents and teachers disagree about educational decisions related to a child, these relationships are further complicated (Lake& Billingsley, 2000).

According to the research done by Mensah (2017), Ejisu-Juaben District-Ashanti Region in Ghana, she pointed out that concerning the causes of conflict between teachers and parents on teaching and learning, the pupils pointed out that some teachers after they have had a

confrontation with the parents, they vent their anger on the children of these people which affects the children's absorbing capacity for the day. The interviewees said some teachers are fond of mentioning the wrongs of their parents to the class just to spoil their day and embarrass them. According to them, teachers use instructional periods to hammer on wrongs of their parents and sometimes insult their parents as well. This has been a contributor to parent-teacher conflict as pupils would report such teachers to their parents who come back with anger to confront such teachers.

Additionally SLirvcy studies canned out in some Secondary schools of Cape Town reported by Scanius (1995); indicate that, some teachers go into the teaching profession as a last resort when other alternatives are absent. These teachers will never settle in their Jobs as professionals. They work to earn a salary with the hope that they will soon leave the profession.

Foster (1989), affirm this view and indicates that unmotivated teachers will not produce good results. Complaint, laxity, grumbling and lighting the head-teacher characterizes their work. As a results student performance can be greatly affected, and this can raise concerns among parents who work so hard to raise money for their children's quality education. Such parents question teachers of their relevance to their children; consequently this has led to conflict between parents and teacher.

The Republic of Kenya (2001) confirms the above that some teachers are forced into the teaching profession without commitment. These teachers cause problems, lack discipline, and are chronic absentees in schools; some engage in immoral acts with pupils or incite them against the school administration. Philips (2000) affirms the above views and indicates that there are teachers who take up the noble teaching profession and yet they have no

interest in it. These teachers display incompetence, laziness and lack interest in pupils' work, they lack self-discipline and are biased and inconsistent in their application of punishment meted out to pupils who break school rules. One of the perceived causes of parent-teacher conflicts in schools is a lack of commitment by some teachers to work in their schools.

Moreover, in school situations, sometimes parents differ greatly with the teachers over academic performance of their children. According to the Republic of Kenya (2001), parents place a lot of pressure on the teachers claiming that they contribute to poor academic performance of the students; Therefore, parents at times agitate for the removal of the head teacher and transfer of teachers to other schools, and the students sometimes support the parents in the move and become indisciplined to the extent of physically demanding for the removal of the teachers. This is supported by Okotoni and Okcuoni (2003) that poorly performing schools many at times are characterized by a lot of conflicts by the stakeholders.

Another factor that can lead to conflict between parents and teachers is the failure of parents to pay school fees. This trend is common in many day schools in Africa and Zambia is inclusive. This leads to lack of the much needed finances necessary for the smooth running of a school. Some school managers perceived conflicts in educational administration with absence of needed financial resources. Larson and Mildred (2000) say that when an organization's resources are insufficient to meet requirements of other sub-units or individuals to execute their work, the potential for conflict is great.

According to Some (2010), shortage of finances makes it hard for the head teacher to forge ahead in educational programs. Some indicates that head teachers have been forced to make ends meet in their schools where there is lack of finance and material resources. The situation is made worse by low student enrolment in some secondary schools. Once in a

while, parents blame the head teacher for not providing the required learning facilities, mean while it is the lack of financial resources which are as a result of less or non-payment of school fees by parents that leads to inadequate teaching materials.

For this reason a teacher is left in a dilemma on how to provide quality education in the absence of adequate teaching materials. The case becomes more complex when the central government insists there must be free education for all. When students fail to perform well due to lack of learning facilities it is the teachers who are blamed by some parents who fail to pay fees. Nafukho (2001) in his view indicates that schools that perform well in national examinations have 70-80% of the required learning facilities.

According to the Daily Mail dated December 12, 2014, the article raised argument to the effect that parents and other community members needed to get actively involved in ensuring that all children are encouraged to go to school at all times. The article pointed out that many parents lacked skills, knowledge and resources to interact with teachers and school authorities, while on the part of schools there is a lack of commitment to reaching out to parents to have a better understanding of what children are learning at school. For instance, the head mistress of the Suburb Primary school stipulated that allowing parents to seat in class and watch the teacher deliver the lesson promotes the relationship between teachers and parents.

2.3 Nature of the Causes of Conflicts

Conflicts can have a remote cause. It is not easy to identify specific causes for conflicts because what can generate a conflict for someone may not be a problem for another. However, some authors have identified some common causes of conflict in an organization.

Fisher and Ury (1981) have outlined the following as some of the common causes of conflicts in a workplace.

2.3.1 Conflict of interest

According to Microsoft Encarta Tool (2007), conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in position of trust, such as a lawyer, a politician, or an executive or a director of a corporation has competing professional or personal interests. Such competing interest can make it difficult to fulfill his or her duties impartially. Cullingford (1988) also defines conflict of interest as any situation in which an individual or a corporation (either private or government) is in a position to exploit a professional or official capacity in some way for their personal benefit

In a school situation for example, a head-teacher may by his position dupe (demand money and other material things) from a parent whose child has broken the school rules such as beer drinking and is supposed to be expelled from school. Conflict may occur if the demands become unbearable or the parent resists complying with the conditions of the head-teacher. Correspondingly, in this instance, conflict of interest can create an appearance of impropriety that can undermine confidence in the ability of that person to act properly in his or her position and also retard the attainment of the organizational goal.

Contrary to this perspective, Meeks *et al.* (2005) point out that conflict is caused by factors such as availability of resources, fulfillment of psychological needs upholding personal values and maintaining self-preservation. These factors are explained as follows:

2.3.2 Availability of Resources

According to Dowling and Osborn (2001) resources are available assets which may include time, money and material possessions. Meeks *et al.* (2005) also hammer on the issue that conflict may arise when there are insufficient available resources in a family, friendship, marriage, groups or organizations. Barker and Gum (1994) hold the view that in a scarce resource environment where people compete for the available limited resources, conflicts occur despite the awareness of how scarce the resources may be. Also, partial distribution of the limited resources increases the probability of conflict to occur.

In school scenarios conflict is likely to breakout when parents fail to pay school fees that are much needed for the running of the school. In Zambia this is a common trend, yet pupils are expected to be in school to learn. A common example is the situation at Blem secondary where three quarters of the parents do not pay school fees. When the child is sent back home to call their parents, they rarely come and when they do, they come nagging that their child should be, in class and not sent to call the parents. Meanwhile the school is lacking in teaching aids because the school has no resources to buy these materials

Another problem arises when it comes to increment of school fees. When prices of materials go high most parents become unwilling to raise the school fees for a couple of years, even though these fees may not adequately met the demands of a student in school, yet quality education is expected to be provided to their children.

As indicated in Zambia Daily mail News-paper dated January 29, 2018 a parent stipulated in her letter to the editor that "I write in dismay at some government that are overcharging pupils.... It is ridiculous for any headmaster to hike school fees when most parents are struggling to pay fees for their children. We parents are being charged K2, 000 for grade

10s.... We feel that school authorities are not being considerate. Ndeke Basic School is a government school; hence school fees should be reasonable”

According to Gray *et al.* (1995), if resources are not enough to be shared equally, hard decisions are made and that these decisions may provide fertile grounds for conflict because some people may not have their share as wished. In agreement with this contention, Jennings and Wattam (2005) also believe that under normal circumstances, conflict occurs when there is scarcity of commodity such as raw materials, machines or rooms, or intangible things such as prestige, influence or status, or time. Bryant (1992) also agrees that conflict is likely to be minimal where there is plentiful supply of such commodity and where there is a scarcity (real or imagined), the potential for conflict increases.

2.3.3 Psychological needs: Psychological needs are things that are needed to feel important and secure and may include friendship, sense of belonging, accomplishments, and status. Workplace conflict can originate from several sources. Aldag *et al* (1987) assert that there are many causes or reasons for conflict in any work setting.

They after that while conflict may take place between members, individuals, and groups, one can easily trace the source of workplace conflicts to one or several of the following events: poor communication, different values, differing interests, scarce resources, and personality clashes which are also what Schlesinger, *et al* (1999) have also identified as some of the fundamental causes of workplace conflict.

2.3.4 Poor Communication

Schlesinger *et al.* (1999) believe that different communication methods can lead to misunderstanding between employees or between an employee and a manager. In their view, lack of communication drives conflict “underground”.

On that stand, Whetten *et al* (2005) contend that an important message may not be received if effective communication channels are not used. For instance, a manager’s instructions may be misinterpreted, or decision makers may arrive at a different conclusion because they use different databases.

In this regard, Nelson-Jones (1995) says that conflict based on poor communication, misinformation or misunderstanding tends to be factual hence, clarifying previous messages or obtaining additional information generally resolves the dispute. In this regards, Aldag and Stearns (1987) indicate that the more misperceptions members have concerning what activities exist in another department or division, the greater the potential for conflict.

In a school set-up poor communication does contribute to the causes of conflict between teachers and pupils. At times, a child may relay a message to their parent incorrectly or misplaces a letter or not from the teacher

2.3.5 Different Values

As Ivacevich and Matteson (2002) posit, any workplace is made up of individuals who see the world differently. Consequently, conflict occurs when there is a lack of acceptance and understanding of these differences. To this end, Larson and Mildred (2000) argue that people in organizations with particular references to their predispositions, for instance, their attitude like insubordination towards authority can create conflict in the workplace.

2.3.6 Personality Clashes

All work environments are made up of differing personalities. As Robbins (2000) declares, unless colleagues understand and accept each other's approach to work and problem-solving, conflict will occur. Whetten and Cameron (2005) contend that because individuals bring different backgrounds to their workplace, there will always be conflict that is based on personal differences. Besides, Ivacevich and Matteson (2002) explain that people's values and needs have been shaped by different socialization processes that depend on differing cultural and family traditions, levels of education, breadths of experience and others.

Nelson-Jones (1995) buttresses this issue of personality clashes with the idea that conflict stemming from incompatible personal values and needs are mostly difficult to resolve since they often become highly emotional and take moral overtones. Under these conditions, disagreement on what is factually correct easily turns to a bitter argument over who is morally right.

2.4 Conflict response style or Conflict Resolution

Meeks, Heit and Page (2005) define conflict response style as a kind of behavior a person exhibits when a conflict emerges while Wheeler (1995) asserts that conflict situation offers everyone an opportunity to choose the conflict management or response style appropriate for the conflict. Bittel (1995) says that the key to effective conflict preservation and management is the choice of appropriate conflict management style.

To Bittel although people have favorite styles they use in conflict situations, they are capable of choosing a different style when it is due. In the opinion of Owens (1990), because it is not always likely for one to control the source of conflict, it is paramount that one sticks to how to respond to conflict in a more acceptable and responsible manner.

Similarly, Wayne, Hoy and Miskel (2001) agree that in order to manage conflict between others effectively, it is important to be aware of the early warning signs of conflict and the causes of disagreements. Bryant (1992) therefore recommends that arriving at a positive resolution of conflict should always be the ultimate goal.

Wheeler (1995) has identified five types of conflict management styles which are described as co-operative or collaborative problem solving, competing, avoiding, accommodating and compromising. These are explained as follows:

2.4.1 Collaborating

According to Wheeler, this style enables people to work together so that everyone can win. In using this style people try to find a solution that will help everyone meet their interest and help everyone maintain a good relationship. This is in line with Larson and Mildred's (2000) explanation that the collaborative style involves a behavior that is strongly cooperative and assertive which reflects a win-win approach to resolving conflict.

Furthermore, Nelson-Jones (1995) says that the collaborative approach enables both parties to work as a team to prevent unnecessary conflict and also to arrive at mutually satisfactory solution in real conflict; thus, neither of them attempts to impose his or her interest on the other. Additionally, Malcolm (1980) says that the approach assumes that each of the parties is prepared to work on their inner difficulties to ensure peaceful conflict resolution.

Whetten and Cameron (2005) contend that this approach, which is sometimes referred to as the "problem solving" mode, attempts to address fully the concerns of both parties so that both of them can feel that they have won the case. The authors believe that people

who use the collaborative style are highly assertive with regards to reaching their goals but have a great deal of concern for the other person.

2.4.2 Competing style

According to DeVault *et al.* (2002), choosing a competitive style to resolve a conflict means a person is putting his or her interest before everyone else's interest. As Hayes (1996) indicates, people who adopt a competitive style try so hard to get what they want that they end up ruining friendships or relationships.

In the view of Nelson-Jones (1995), there is always a winner and a loser with the competing style which allows one party to adopt the "I win-you lose" approach to resolving the conflict and so does all in his or her power to win the conflict. For instance, one party's tactics may include manipulation, not telling the whole truth, not admitting mistakes and sending negative verbal, voice and body messages.

This is what Connie *et al.* (2002) explain as "going all out to win the conflict". Olson *et al.* (2001) have observed that those who employ the competitive style of conflict resolution tend to be aggressive and uncooperative, perusing personal concerns at the expense of the other and in effect, such people try to gain power by direct confrontations and try to win without adjusting their goals and desires in light of the other person's goals and desires.

2.4.3 Compromising style

The BBC dictionary (1990) defines compromise as an agreement in which people concur to accept less than they originally wanted. People who rely on the compromising style to resolve conflict find it necessary to satisfy some of their interests but not all of them; and such people are likely to say "let us split". Whetten *et al.* (2005) posit that compromise is an

attempt to have a partial satisfaction for both parties in the sense that both receive the proverbial “half loaf...” and this compels both parties to make sacrifices to obtain a common gain.

2.4.4 Avoiding style

Wayne *et al.* (2001) refer to the avoiding approach as a method of dealing with conflict from a safe emotional distant. As with viewing a distant mountain range, the specific details get lost the farther away one is.

In the same way emotional distancing as part of the avoiding approach may mean that there is difficulty in emphasizing or putting on another’s shoe. This brings in Wheeler’s (1995) notion that people who choose the avoiding style do not normally get involved in a conflict because such people tolerate whatever their opponent does in order to escape conflict.

Bettmann *et al.* (1994) emphasize that the avoiding style involves a behavior that is unassertive and uncooperative; as a result an individual chooses this style to stay out of conflict, ignore disagreements, or remain neutral. The avoiding approach might reflect a decision to let the conflict work itself out, or it might reflect an aversion or tension and frustration.

In the view of Eccles *et al.* (1995), people engaging in an avoiding strategy protect themselves from the difficulty of conflict by putting up a mental wall. They stress that even though such people want to win, they are reluctant to jump into conflict the way someone with a competing response would. Connie *et al.* (2002) opine that the avoiding strategy may be useful when it is important to give some time and space to a conflict because some people are mood driven, and a day or even a few hours can make a tremendous difference

in their willingness to engage in conflict productively. This brings in the notion that timing can be extremely important in determining when a problem is brought up or a conflict is discussed, and goes with the saying that “time heals some wounds”.

In agreement with this assertion, Olson *et al.* (2001) contribute that conflict may go away over time, particularly if there is continuous contact between both sides on other issues and that contact is mostly positive and productive. In such situations, both parties may decide that what they were upset about in the past is just not important anymore.

2.4.5 Accommodating style

To Connie and CFCS (2002), the accommodating style means surrendering one’s own needs and wishes to please the other person. According to Namusi (2005), some teachers and head teachers who opt for an accommodating style deny themselves to put their interest last and let others have their way.

According to Olson and DeFrain (2001), people who opt for an accommodating style deny themselves to put their interest last and let others have their way. Many times, they say, such people believe that keeping a good relationship is more worthwhile than anything else.

In accordance with this notion, Whetten *et al.* (2005) maintain that the accommodating style satisfies the other party’s concerns while neglecting one’s own. They conclude that the difficulty in habitual use of the accommodating style is that it emphasizes preserving a friendly relationship at the expense of critically appraising issues and protecting personal rights.

In explaining the accommodating approach, Larson *et al.* (2000) indicate that this style involves a behavior that is cooperative but not assertive and which may mean an unselfish

and a long term strategy to encourage others to cooperate or submit to the wishes of others. They describe that accommodators are usually favorably evaluated by others but are also perceived as weak and submissive.

From these sources it can be seen that until we reach utopian society, there will always be conflict as there will always be disagreement about what is fair and best for all of us. It is impossible therefore to walk through the journey of life without experiencing conflict of any kind. If we accept the inevitability of conflict, it becomes extremely necessary to gain the skills needed to be successful dispute solvers. It will also be easiest to make this kind of shift in attitude if we have good skills to resolve or respond to conflict.

Based on the discussion of the five conflict response styles, it could be deduced that avoiding or ignoring conflict does nothing to improve the situation because when conflict is driven underground, it only grows and will stay underground until it is so intense that an explosion may be the next step.

It is also seen that collaboration and compromise are the most productive forms of addressing conflict because there is not a winner or loser but rather a working together for the best possible solution. On the other hand, those who adopt a competitive style try so hard to get what they want that they ruin friendships or relationships. It is also evident that individuals who opt for the accommodating approach deny themselves to contain conflict for the benefit of others.

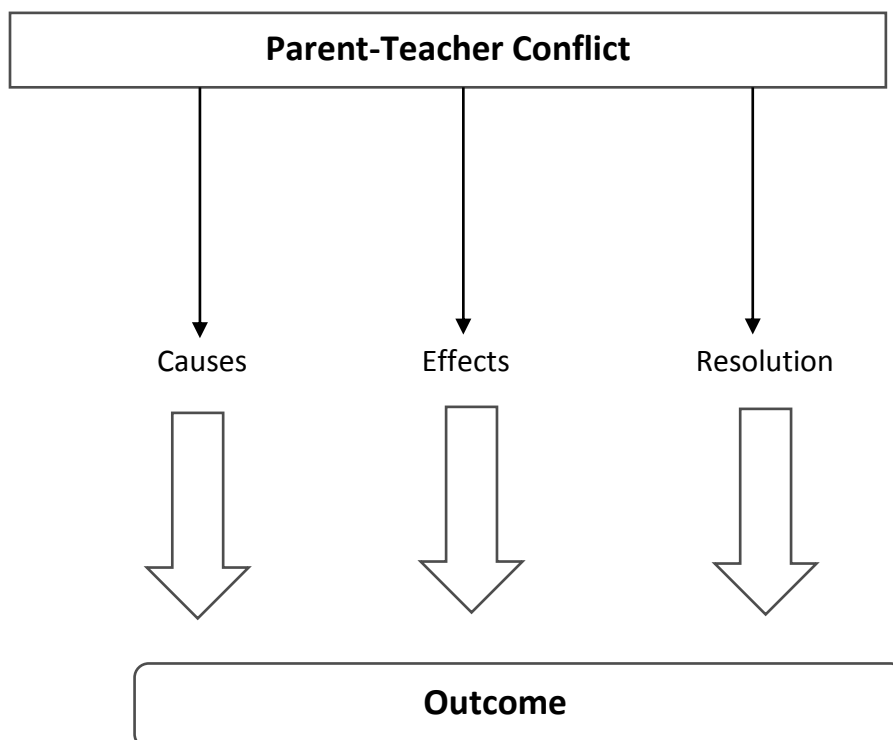
When conflict occurs, people most commonly employ one or a combination of these conflict response styles and generally respond to conflict using what skills they have learned and moreover, are most comfortable with. Like parenting where most people receive no formal instruction but engage in it on the basis of what has been modeled for them in the past, so

do people learn how to resolve conflict through experiencing one or more of these problem-solving styles in use? This implies that people have options for managing or resolving conflicts. The decision to maintain good relationships after conflict is perhaps, the best option. This is also probably the best option for resolving conflicts in the school system in order to sustain interpersonal relationships to ensure effective teaching and learning.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is a model of presentation where a researcher represents the relationships between variables in the study (Orodho, 2009). A conceptual framework contributes to the research because it identifies research variables, and clarifies relationships among variables. It is so valuable in the sense that it sets the stage for presentation of research questions that drive the study. In this case, a conceptual framework assisted a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation at Blem Secondary School.

Figure 1: Study conceptual Framework



2.5 Conclusion

Conflict is often inevitable in many situations. There are many causes of conflict that have been highlighted as economic conflict, lack of professionalism, punishment to mention a few. To provide solution for the above, different management styles (conflict resolution) are used such as accommodation, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, diffusion, smoothing and negotiation. It is important to note that the strategy involved in coming up with a resolution is relative to the kind of the situation.

Addressing conflicts should be viewed as an important element in achieving organizational effectiveness and enhancing productivity. Although some examples on the causes of conflict and conflict management styles from elsewhere have been cited in this work, no detailed study has been conducted in Livingstone District to showcase the causes of parent-teacher conflict and conflict management styles that are used for resolving conflict in secondary schools. It is hoped that the findings of this study has helped to bridge the knowledge gap.

2.6 Summary

This researcher did not find any related literature from the Zambia context. As such, the researcher argues that the findings of this study may be useful for those students who may wish to investigate conflict in secondary schools and how they are resolved in Zambia.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The chapter describes the general procedure adopted to solicit information from Blem secondary school. In other words, the chapter deals with the methodology that was employed and describes the research design which was used to evaluate the causes, and effects of parent teacher and its effects on pupil performance at Blem secondary school in Livingstone district. In the views of Rajascka (2013) research methodology is essentially an outline of the procedures through which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena's

3.1 Research design

The study employed a case study design. This approach was adopted because it offered the best means of obtaining valid data for the study at a particular site.

3.1.1 Qualitative research method

The research employed the qualitative strategy. Best (1991) has described qualitative studies as those in which the descriptions of observation is not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms but not suggesting that numerical measures are never used; rather, other means of descriptions are emphasized. Sidhu (2003) and Altrichter *et al.* (1995) explain that qualitative research emphasizes holistic description of whatever is being observed rather than comparing the effects of a particular treatment while Ary *et al.* (2002) assert that qualitative inquiry seeks to understand human and social behaviour from the “insider’s perspectives”.

The study employed the qualitative research design based on the nature of the topic. It facilitated investigation of causes and effects of conflict that exists between parents and teachers on pupil performance as it occurred in the school setting as natural occurrences where no manipulation of conditions or experiences was possible. Even though qualitative research emphasizes the description and interpretation of data in words rather than numbers, numerical data were collected in the process and analysed as such to understand the natural occurrence of conflict in the sample schools. Since the study adopted the case study approach for in depth study of conflict situations at the different levels of the school system, the qualitative research method was the most appropriate for the in-depth investigation of a phenomenon that cannot be contrived. As the study suggests tentative causal explanations that can extend one’s understanding for educational phenomenon or

proposed grounded theories and because of the human and social behaviour nature of conflict, the most suitable method for the study was the qualitative inquiry.

3.2 Study population

Population in research refers to the aggregate or totality of objects or individuals regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study (Sidhu, 2003). Study population refers to a group to which information is desired and to which one wishes to make inferences. The study sample comprised the head-teacher, deputy head-teacher, PTA members, and heads of department at Blem secondary school.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques are procedures that are used by a researcher to gather people, places or things to study. Sampling also refers to a process of selecting a number of individuals or objectives from the population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Orodho *et al.*, 2002). Purposive sampling was used to select the head teacher, deputy head teacher and heads of departments while simple random sample was employed on the PTA members. Purposive sampling technique refers to the selection of a group of people believed to be reliable for the study because of the rich information they possess, this will help the researcher to select information rich for in- depth analysis related to the central issue of effect of conflict management styles on teacher performance Blem Secondary school of Livingstone district.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Ary *et al.* (2002) refer to instruments as tools used to solicit information in research. In order to collect appropriate data for this study, two instruments were employed; These were Semi-structured interview guides.

3.5 Date collection procedures

Ary *et al.* (2002) stated that data collection procedure refers to the process through which data is collected from the respondents through the use of necessary instruments. Both primary and secondary data was be sought in order to achieve the objectives set for the study. The primary data was collected through questionnaires and interview. While secondary data consisted of the review of literature on conflict and its management.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the critical examination and scrutiny of the coded data in order to make deductions and inferences, this activity involves uncovering underlying structures; extracting important variables, detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The data for this study was analysed used thematic analysis.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are usually referred to a research that is credible and trustworthy. This study adhered to Berg, (1989) suggestion by engaging multiple methods of data collection, thus through... individual interviews which lead to trustworthiness. Further, a voice recorder was used to collect primary.

The final instruments were given to colleagues for corrections and finally to the supervisor for further editing to ensure error free questions.

3.8 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter has discussed the methodology which was used to collect data in order to establish the causes of parent-teacher conflicts and how these conflicts are resolved at Blem Secondary school. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample was 9 participants comprising 1 head teacher, 1 deputy head, 2 PTA members and 5 heads of departments. Data were collected using semi-structured interview guide and semi-structured questionnaires. Qualitative data were analysed by categorizing and arranging it into themes where-as quantitative data were entered in Microsoft Excel and presented using bar graphs, pie charts and frequency tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.0 Overview

The previous chapter provided the methodology used for collection and analysis of data for this study. This chapter presents the findings of the study that were obtained through semi-structured interviews which were conducted to 1 head-teachers, 1 deputy head-teacher, 5 Heads of Departments and 2 Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members. This was based on the already stated objectives.

4.1 Responses on the Causes of conflict

Responses from the participants

One of the Objectives of this study was to analyse the causes of parent-teacher conflict. When asked about the causes of parent-teacher conflict, One PTA member explains that;

One of the common causes of parent- teacher conflict is the poor academic performance of pupils especially in sciences and mathematics. Sometimes a pupil can get 35% in Physics end of term examinations yet his or her position in class is 1 or 2. Then one wonders whether teaching and learning takes place. As a result parents confront teachers accusing them that they are not doing their job.

One teacher stated that;

Most parents only pay school fees on entry point of a pupil into secondary school, which leaves the school without resources to purchase the needed teaching aid, yet they expect their child to obtain quality education in the absence of adequate financial resources.

It seems that relationships between parents and teachers are based on blame games. They point fingers on each other in an attempt to cover their wrongs.

“The common interest of the parent and the teacher is a pupil, however, if the parent is not interested to pay for the education of the pupil it becomes difficult for teachers to teach effectively,

Sometimes as an administrator, I may send for a parent to come to school to discuss the undisciplined behaviour of their child, and when such a parent does not come I decide to punish this child. Then his or her parents suddenly show up absurd and nagging that the punishment given to their child was uncalled for.” Explained the deputy head teacher.

However, another PTA member explained that

Most teachers are usually absent from class, some come for work drunk. And when pupils fail, they blame it on lack of resources.

One of the respondents lamented that "there were high rates of non-payments of school fees among parents.

Resources are valuable assets used in the functioning of the school which include human resources and physical resources. However, one of the respondents lamented that "there were few resources like text books, infrastructure to be equally used by teachers at the required time which contributed to conflict in schools.

Responses indicate that scarcity of resources, clash of interests, absenteeism, lack of professionalism and lack of conflict management skills are some of the causes of parent teacher conflict.

When asked about the conflict management methods used, one parent explained that

Sometimes important decisions such as increment of school fees are imposed on parents. A win-lose strategy is used sometimes if goals have to be achieved. At a certain point, the school ran for 7 years without increments made in school fees and this affected the academic performance of the school and teacher motivation.

The deputy head-teacher calls the teacher and parent involved in the conflict to discuss the conflict. If the conflict cannot be resolved it is taken to the head-teacher, if the head teacher cannot resolve it is then taken to DEBS. Considering that most teachers are not equipped with conflict management methods, it is a challenge to resolve conflict

Another teacher explains that.

Sometimes, when there is conflict a teacher would have to say sorry to a parent for the sake of peace. But sometimes, a stubborn parent may take the issue to the Disciplinary Committee. One open day a parent started shouting carelessly in the school premises over the poor academic performance of his daughter. He was called 3 days after to the disciplinary committee to retrieve his words and apologise for his behaviour

Responses indicate that the conflict management methods that are usually used to resolve parent-teacher conflict are compromise, accommodation, competing and negotiations.

4.2 Conflict management styles on teachers

The second objective of the study was to establish the styles of conflict management at Blem Secondary Schools of Livingstone District.

The chapter presented the findings of the study regarding causes, styles and effects of conflict management on teachers at Blem secondary school of Livingstone District. Qualitative data were categorized and arranged into emerging themes in order to make conclusions on effects of conflict management styles. Findings revealed that there were causes of conflict such as lack of trust, non-payment of school fees, and absenteeism of teachers. Some of the respondents highlighted that scarce of resources caused conflict among teachers.

To address the preceding scenario, respondents suggested that different conflict management styles were used to minimize conflict. Furthermore, the respondents used the following conflict management styles; accommodation, compromising and competing. It was observed that compromising was the best strategy used to minimise conflict at Blem Secondary School.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

The preceding chapter presented the findings regarding main causes of conflict, the nature of conflict, and how this conflict is resolved between parents and teachers at Blem Secondary of Livingstone district. This Chapter presents the discussion of the research findings in Chapter Four by relating them to the literature reviewed in Chapter two in the light of the three objectives of this study.

The discussion addressed the following objectives of the study: identify the main causes of conflicts at Blem secondary school of Livingstone District, it explored the nature of the main causes of conflict between parents and teachers at Blem secondary school of Livingstone District and found out how conflict between parents and teachers is resolved. This is however, meant to provide sufficient answers to the three objectives and realize the purpose of this study. As stated by David and Sutton (2004), the discussion section should bring together the main research findings and the key elements of the literature review

5.1 Causes of conflict between parents and teachers

The research revealed that lack of trust was the cause of conflict between parents and teachers. Furthermore the respondents said that lack of trust was contributing to high levels of conflict between parents and teachers which needs urgent attention. The above finding conform to Joel (2013) who observed that most teachers failed to share responsibility due to not trusting the working relationships. It was also established that some respondents were not in agreement with lack of trust as a cause of conflict in an organization.

Participants were asked questions related to their training and preparation in building effective partnerships with families. They were asked to describe training opportunities in their teacher preparation programs as well as professional development provided by their school districts. All participants responded that they received no formal training in their teacher preparation programs regarding the establishment of parent–teacher relationship or effectively resolving conflict with parents.

Participants described specific parent qualities or behaviours that further challenged to the development of parent-teacher relationship. Participants described these parents as either

“demanding” or “disengaged.” Gibbs (2005) describes these parenting extremes as the over-involved and the under-involved (as cited in Epstein, 2011).

Disengaged parents were described as removed from all aspects of the educational process, whereas demanding parents used commands, force, or threats to obtain desired results for their children. Participants specifically believed that the manner in which parents approach schools is often problematic. They described parent behaviours as attacking, rude, and occurring at inappropriate times, which can cause teachers to feel nervous, pressured, and tense.

It is unclear as to whether or not parents intentionally employ “scare tactics” to obtain desired out-comes for their children, but it is clear that the behaviours that are intended to support their children further damage the parent–teacher relationship. The manner in which parents approach schools may suggest that they lack the knowledge and skills to more appropriately advocate for their children. Though parents were often perceived by participants as demanding and attacking, their efforts to communicate with teachers were to assist, support, and protect their children.

According to Henderson *et al.* (2007), “problem parents” are “trying to be advocates, but they don’t know how to act constructively”. The willingness of teachers to accept parent “demands” as well-intentioned advocacy may play a role in their ability to respond to parent concerns non-defensively and in a manner that supports partnership development. In addition, teacher responsiveness to demanding parents and unresponsiveness to less demanding parents raises concerns and may perpetuate the cycle of poor parent–teacher relationships.

5.1.1 Teacher – Parent Conflict

Punishment is one of the causes of conflict that emerged between teachers and parents in the sample school. There were two instances where some parents claimed their wards were mercilessly beaten by their teachers. In one instance, a parent quarrelled with a teacher for making her daughter kneel down too long for reporting to school late. In another instance parents were also involved in conflict with teachers for giving pupils a very big portion of land to weed as punishment. Because those parents were already angry before getting to the school, they responded to the teachers' explanation of the issues with confrontation, an inappropriate conflict response style.

5.1.2 Poor accountability

Conflict between parents and teachers suggests that neither parents nor teachers are equipped with conflict management skills to effectively deal with issues of conflict. Because teachers live in the same community as the parents of the pupils, it is easy for them to wrong each other and where this is not communicated and resolved, any negligible issue might produce conflict.

This could also be the result of both teachers and parents not being fully aware of each other's role as far as children's education is concerned and therefore pick up unnecessary conflicts with each other. In the case where teachers insult their pupils' parents for offences

caused by the pupils in school and which the pupils report to the parents could also contribute to increased occurrences of teacher-parent conflict in the schools. Cases of teachers being too harsh on pupils are another problem area.

It is evident from the foregoing that parents and teachers have conflicts which have remained unsettled over time and this however creates anxiety and stress which further intensifies existing conflicts. This is in line with the theory behavioural or contemporary view, also known as the human relations view. It argues that conflict is natural and inevitable in all organizations and that it may have either a positive or a negative effect, depending on how the then decline if conflict is allowed to increase further or is left unresolved (Wilson, 2007). This approach advocates acceptance of conflict and rationalizes its existence through how conflict is resolved.

The study established that scarce of resources in school was a cause of conflict such as inadequate texts books, out dated texts books, inadequate chalk and dusters, plain papers necessary for printing of examinations, pains, poor chalk-boards, insufficient furniture for pupils are some materials that are a challenge due to inadequate resources. Some respondents articulated that many parents only pay school fees once and that is upon entry of their children in school, after which they never pay until these children complete school.

Due to lack of resources most of the conflict situations observed between teachers and parents were caused by collection of money by teachers such as extra classes' fee, and printing fee for examination questions. Demands for items like books and other learning materials by teachers also caused conflict at Blem secondary school especially during PTA meetings. There were parents who did not understand why teachers should demand money

for the purchase of other learning materials while the government says education is free. This annoys parents and pushes them into conflict with the school.

5.2 Conflict Management between Parents and Teachers

Conflict between teachers and parents is initially dealt with by the School Disciplinary Committee which consists of the head-teacher, the deputy head, and a teacher. If not resolved the case is referred to the PTA executives. If it does not get resolved, it goes to the CS and then to the DDE.

The research findings established that some respondents used accommodation as the best strategy and others also agreed that it was the best way of resolving conflict between parents and teachers. This is in line with Abdul, (2013) who said that Accommodation is another style that is used to manage conflicts between parents and teachers in the school. The accommodating mode is appropriate to show reasonableness, develop performance, create good will, or keep peace. The study also established that, teachers usually use the accommodating mode when the issue or outcome is of low importance to them.

However, some teachers revealed that arbitration which is listening to the two parties involved and finding a compromising resolution would be the best strategy. However, Irene (2011), maintains that the accommodating style satisfies the other party's concerns while neglecting one's own. However, some respondents were not in agreement with the accommodation style of minimizing conflict.

The research revealed that some respondents used competing as a strategy of resolving conflict. Competition involves authoritative and assertive behaviours. Patrick, (2008) illustrates that the aggressive individual aims to instil pressure on the other parties to

achieve a goal. This includes the use of whatever means to attain what the individual thinks is right. It may be appropriate in some situations such as when issues are vital to the welfare of the organization but it shouldn't come to a point where the aggressor becomes too unreasonable (Thompson, 1967). Dealing with the conflict with an open mind is vital for a resolution to be met.

In line with this study, the strategy identified by Meyer (1994), was effective communication which he described as the best because it would make the parties in conflict aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem solving. Dzurgba (2006) noted that conflict could be settled through dialogue, meaning to engage in the exchange of views and ideas between the parties in conflict.

Likewise, Oyebade (1995) identified certain strategies as important in resolving conflict such as dialogue. Avoidance was not a successful method for achieving a long-term conflict resolution since the original cause of the conflict remained static.

The study also showed that some respondent used compromising as a strategy to resolve conflict among teachers. This is in line with Makaye (2012), argued that compromising is one of the techniques that have been used to address conflicts in secondary schools.

The study established that it is done when the parties in conflict are ready to face each other amicably, and entails intercession, bargaining, negotiation, mediation, attribution and application of the integrative decision making method, which is a collaborative style based on the premise that there is a solution which can be accepted by both parties.

It was established that compromising impacted positively on teacher class performance while competing and avoiding styles had a negative impact on teacher performance which led to frustrations.

The most conflict management strategies as highlighted by the teachers were communication, dialogue and mediation. Avoidance, confrontation and collaboration are other strategies used but not considered effective. Literature reviewed by Ndlovu(2006), stated avoidance as one of the management strategies used. He further stated that the avoiding strategy refers to low assertiveness and low cooperation. Many times people avoid conflicts out of fear of engaging in a conflict or because they did not have confidence in their conflict management skills.

In a related research by Abdul (2013) he gave avoidance as one of the strategies used to manage conflicts between teachers and head teachers, however, The strategy identified by Meyer (1994) was effective communication which he described as the best because it would make the parties in conflict aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem solving, his is in line with responses from the teachers.

However, the teachers identified dialogue as the best possible conflict management strategy that was used and should be used to manage conflicts between teachers and head-teachers. I here is therefore need to use the right conflict management .strategy to manage conflicts as there are a variety of them, this will help to manage conflicts effectively so that it do not occur over again.

However, Jordan *et al.* (2002) further suggest that the strategy used to handle interpersonal conflict is a crucial factor in successful resolution; the integrating strategy of conflict management improves Job performance when the solution to a conflict would benefit both

parties. Both conflicting parties are encouraged to satisfy their interests through exchanging information (Meyer, 2004). Satisfaction from resolving conflicts may lead individuals to exert greater efforts in achieving performance.

In regard to conflict resolution techniques, the findings concur with Robbins (2003) that resolution of conflicts could be done through smoothing, this entails playing down differences while emphasizing common interests between the conflicting parties these findings further corroborate Robbins (2003) that authoritative command is another technique of conflict resolution, this is where the management uses its formal authority to resolve the conflict then communicate its desires to the parties involved.

The study also found that some head teachers used competitive and authoritarian methods to manage conflicts which involved students. However, there was a definite suggestions by some head teachers to employ problem solving methods such as negotiation to solve conflicts with students. Where problem solving methods are used, positive relationships are enhanced. In some case new ways of doing things at school are developed.

5.3 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has discussed findings of the study using the research objectives as the discussion has established that more of the respondents were of the view that lack of trust, scarce resources, punishment of pupils, and lack of training and scarce of resources were major causes of conflict in schools.

It was established that conflict management styles were widely used such as accommodation, compromising and competing. However, some respondents concluded that compromising was the best strategy of minimizing conflict among teachers.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

The fore-going chapter presented the discussions on the major findings of this study. This chapter will draw conclusion for this study and provide some recommendations based on the findings of the stated objectives in chapter one. However recommendations for the

study are made to provide the government and other stakeholders for action with an aim of combating or minimising conflict in schools.

6.1 Conclusion

The objectives of this study were firstly; an analysis of the causes of parent-teacher conflicts and different perspective and from different researchers were found that there are various reasons as to why conflict arises between parents and teachers. For the sake of this research, the respondents highlighted the following major causes such as lack of trust between parents and teachers, lack of teacher training in conflict management and scarcity of resources in the schools.

Conflict management is deemed to be successful if it has achieved its goal by reaching a win-win, or approach-approach or consensual agreement which is accepted by both parties. Prominent conflict handling styles include; competing, avoiding, collaborating, compromising and accommodating. A collaborative approach to conflict management may enhance levels of trust and cooperation between two parties. Conflict management styles can only be utilised effectively depending on the extent of the conflict in an organisation.

Organization need to have a suitable strategy for conducting conflict management, the benefits of conflict management should not be underestimated. Conflict which is managed effectively and appropriately would add substantial values to an organization, as it is considered as a healthy ingredient in business life in addition to acting as a catalyst for change.

Conflicts which are managed well might create a conducive workplace for workers where relationships, trust and respect will prevail among them. Having such working environments

would result in stimulated team spirit and increased productivity, this is crucial as good working relationships are important to achieve organizational vision and missions.

6.2 Recommendations

1. In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made. The District Education Board Secretary and PTA members should encourage team work between parents and teachers as a way of minimizing conflict through sensitization by having regular contacts among themselves to ensure the smooth running of the school.
2. The District Education Board Secretary and PTA members should put in place conflict preclusion structures to address issues that can produce conflicts before they break open. In a similar vein, conflict situations should be promptly confronted and addressed whenever they occur rather than being avoided.
3. The Ministry of Education should include a course on management of conflicts in the teachers colleges or universities programs. This will enable teachers to use different styles of conflict management so that they will apply the appropriate ones when need arise.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

The researchers to explore on the effects of conflict on teacher performance and pupil performance.

6.4 Summary of the chapter

The main focus of this chapter was to conclude the study and to provide recommendations, this study was concluded using research objectives while recommendations emerged from

research findings, the study concluded that there are a number of causes of conflict and different styles of conflict management had an effect on teachers.

Major causes of conflict included: lack of trust among teachers, educational level which made others to feel inferior, tribalism, favouritism and scarcity of resources in the schools. However, the above causes had an impact on the teachers which affected their daily activities in the school. Conflict management was deemed to be successful if it had achieved its goal by reaching a win-win, or approach-approach or consensual agreement which is accepted by both parties.

Prominent conflict handling styles include; competing, avoiding, collaborating, compromising and accommodating, there are a number of effects of conflict management styles on teachers such as reduced ability to work effectively, teacher frustration and work withdraw, the respondents showed that the ability to work effectively was affected; teacher frustrations and turnover, work withdraw and poor attitude towards work, this is anchored by the behavioural or contemporary theory which argues that performance may increase with conflict, but only to a certain level and then decline if conflict is allowed to increase further or is left unresolved, the study thus recommended that: Ministry of Education should include a course on management of conflicts in the teachers colleges or universities programs, this will enable both the head teachers and teachers to use different styles of conflict management so that they will apply the appropriate ones when need arise.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEAD-TEACHER AND DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER

I am a post-graduate student in Master of Science Peace Leadership and conflict Resolution at the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University. I am conducting a research on the causes of parent- teacher conflict at Blem Secondary school Livingstone district. Kindly allow me to interview you. The information you are going to provide will be purely for academic use.

1. What do you understand by the term conflict? [Please explain].
2. In your own understanding, what is conflict management?
3. Has your school ever had any form of conflicts since 2014 to date? [Explain].
4. In your view does parent-teacher relationship get affected by unresolved conflict?
[Please explain].
5. What are some of the common causes of parent-teacher conflict in your school?
[Give details].
6. What is the nature of this conflict between parents and teachers in your school?
[Please explain].
7. How do you resolve conflicts in your school? [Please explain in detail].
8. Which conflict management styles do you use to manage conflict in your school?

Thank you for your contributions and time