Conflict Resolution Mechanism in Public Senior High School in Ghana and Its Impact on School Administration: A Case Study of Schools Greater Accra Metropolis

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Abstract
This article looks at resolution of conflict embarked upon by the school administration in the Senior High Schools in the Greater Accra Metropolis, Ghana. The article looks at resolution of conflict from a different perspective thus, discussing and analyzing the root cause and source of school conflict in the administration of schools. The researcher obtained information by the use of quantitative and qualitative techniques to bring to bear the variable under study. This study used descriptive research designs to enable the researcher to work efficiently. The sample for the study comprised the head teacher, representatives of Board of Governors, teachers, students and education officers to investigate the understanding, perception and impact of conflicts resolution mechanism in their respective schools. The research instrument included a questionnaire and an interview schedule, which were administered to respondents. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative research designs and these were analyzed using SPSS, percentages and pie charts were used to present the data. The results of the analysis revealed that teachers tend to use authoritarian and power based methods to resolve conflicts with students. Authoritarian methods rely on coercive and position power to force-students to comply. They included punishment and force of different kinds. The research also shows that authoritarian and power based methods of resolving conflict in Senior High Schools tend to have short term benefits only. The research again found that some school managers use competitive and authoritarian methods to resolve conflicts which involve students. However, there is a definite effort by some managers to employ problem solving methods such as mediation and negotiation to resolve conflicts with students. Where problem solving methods were used, positive relationships were enhanced. In some cases, new ways of doing things in the schools were developed. The extent to which other methods like avoidance and accommodation are used to deal with conflict was highlighted. The outcomes of these in schools were also shown. The research further indicated that, culture, socio-economic and political history of education has created a great potential for conflict in the Senior High schools in Ghana. It was again indicated that schools in Ghana are in a situation where education does not adequately fulfill needs of students. As a result a lot of frustration occurs and students displace their feelings by resorting to socially disapproved phenomena like bully, barbarism and other forms of violence. Other variables such as clash of values between teachers and students, misperceptions especially by students and lack of student involvement in decision making also contribute to conflict. Observations made by School managers indicated that, students also deal with conflict in aggressive and competitive ways. They demand whatever they believe they are deprived of; they become violent or resistant to school authority. Further, the study concluded that some teachers and school managers increase the potential for conflicts in schools through defective resolution styles and negative interaction with students. The latter, namely negative interaction with students was seen to be either part of estranged student-teacher or student-manager relationships or, in some cases, a result of poor communication and interpersonal skills of teachers or managers.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Single Spine Salary Structure, Teacher-Student, Student-Student and head teacher-Teacher Conflicts

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1. Introduction

Institutional performance depends on either Positive or Negative nature of conflict and how well head teachers and administrators are able to handle. In every organization particularly educational this helps to increase output Armstrong (2009). If conflict situation is unbearable, it militates against efficiency.

Flippo (1980), in his research indicated that conflict has become inevitable in human existence and indeed a lot of institution, organization, and individuals have put in enough resources in order to curb such a phenomenon. Harold (1998) supported the view of Flippo by indicating that conflict is part of change and therefore inevitable. It is therefore not shocking news of high rate of conflict in the senior high schools. This study is paramount since it’s timely due to the ongoing debate on the single spine salary structure, creating conflict in the school system in Ghana. The partial implementation of single spine salary structure for workers in the country after a long delay did not help matters. These have become potential sources of industrial conflicts. Oladepo (1985), indicated in his research work that “salary is so poor to the extent that, society would not accord me respect as a teacher for I am regard as one of the wretched on earth. When the opportunity came, I called it quit instantaneously and had no regret ever since”. The researcher is of the view that digging into the causes and effects will broaden the scope of educational administrators in dealing with conflict in their area of jurisdiction.

Conflict has become inevitable when two or more people meet. Conflict is when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and have not been aligned or agreed yet, including: within oneself when you are not living according to one’s value; when values and perspectives are threatened; or discomfort from fear of the unknown or from lack of fulfillment (McNamara, 2007). Conflict resolution is the process of attempting to resolve a dispute or a conflict. Successful conflict resolution occurs by listening to and providing opportunities to meet the needs of all parties and to adequately address interests, so that each party is satisfied with the outcome (Weaver, 2003). Conflict practitioners talk about finding the win-outcome for parties involved, verses the win-lose dynamic found in most conflict while conflict resolution engages conflict once it has already started.

Educational institutions have administrators who are charged with the responsibility of maintaining stability in order to achieve institutional goals. Conflicts in Ghanaian Senior High School are on the rise in the recent past; Daily Graphic, May 10, 1987). According Mankoe (1989), the government said that, he was concerned over the disturbances in learning institutions where in some cases, students have destroyed property and even attacked teachers. This arises due to unresolved conflict between the students and the school’s administrators. Some of the emergencies that arise as a result of unresolved conflicts include; arson attack, riots and violence which results in injury and loss of property and life. Education experts equally agree that most schools now spend little time on academic because the quest for discipline in the schools, consumes for much time. This has had negative impacts on the academic standards and performance. Violence against teachers’ students and destruction of school property both in schools and immediate surroundings has greatly increased in the past years (Mankoe, 1987)

Problem Statement

Conflicts in schools have led to unpleasant relationships between teachers and students, students and students, teachers and school heads and school and the community. Some conflicts have resulted in struggle for power in schools. Such a state of affairs has disrupted teaching and learning and general state of the school environment. In some instances conflicts have culminated in physical destruction of school building and in the loss of lives of certain school members.

Again, conflict Resolution as a component of the syllabus in social studies courses in Junior High School and Senior High School do not seem to have laid sufficient emphasis and so creates knowledge gap-in extensive and various conflict resolution strategies. This is not to argue that a lack of qualification in conflict resolution explains the widespread occurrence and seeming escalation of conflict in the school system. However, an absence of training in conflict resolution is a disadvantage to the people promoted to
headship. The fact that there are a significant number of school administrators who have had no training in conflict resolution suggests a shortage of people who can handle conflict in the school system.

One can argue that, partly as a result of this shortage, there is a pronounced degree of undue suffering by administrators, teachers and students as a result of conflict situation.

The following illustrate this point. Mankoe (1990), makes a silent point about a conflict situation that occurred in a Senior High School in Ghana where about twenty (20) students gathered around the school administrator’s office at 11am. They shouted that they were tired of waiting for the examination paper they were to write. The paper, it was said, was supposed to have been written at 9am. The school administrator came out of the office and angrily told the students that he knew the paper should have been written at 9am. He explained to them that the duplication machine was broken. As he spoke, a few boys howled at him. He responded by insisting that they would write the paper later, whether they like it or not. This statement seemed to infuriate some students. As they dispersed, they threw stones at some office windows and damaged other school property.

Had the school administrator had some experience or training in conflict management and resolution this incident would probably not have taken the turn it did. School administrator and teachers often punish students by suspension, expulsion, physical/manual labour, stroke of the cane, among others. The foregoing information indicates the resolving conflicts in the school system have been an age-old challenge to educators.

Ogosia (2009) explain that if there has to be a positive culture of teaching and learning in schools, the learning environment must be safe, orders and conducive to learning. Conflicts are a natural part of life and therefore a natural part of school life. Learning to constructively deal with conflicts is a life skills that the school community members need when members learn to resolve their own conflict, the atmosphere at schools more pleasant for everyone.

In such an environment, teachers and students can spend more time teaching and learning respectively. Many educators believe that students’ behavior affect academic achievement (Adeyemi 2009). Therefore, negative behaviour has always been a concern for educators. Whatever the causative agents to institutional conflicts may be, educators, parents, and policy makers (Collard 2003, Abosede 2006) have consistently counseled on the need for quick resolution to organizational conflicts (Collard 2003) & (Abosede 2006). It is important for school administrators to pay attention to this call because studies by Lynch (2000) and Onoyume (2007) show that when conflict is not adequately resolved, or when there is undue delay in the resolution of conflict, properties, lives and academic hours of unimaginable magnitude are lost. Delay in resolution of school conflict has resulted in disruption of school calendars leading to economic as well as psychological exertion.

Furthermore, the Ghanaian Senior High Schools are faced with myriad of problems ranging from, inadequate facilities, and teachers to the curriculum. Other problems include: how to cope with increased student enrolment, poor performance of students in public examinations, inadequate funding, conflicts between and among staff and students, personality factors, and role conflicts that may hinder inter-personal relationships.

Today, the institutional performance of schools in terms of academic results, sports, indiscipline and teachers attitude towards administration tends to be abysmally low. The Schools in Ghana for instance, one finds situations whereby wives of top civil servants and politicians, clergy, businessmen are posted to schools as School Administrators or subject teachers. These ‘highly connected’ teachers flout school regulations and absent themselves from school as they wish. Under this situation, the Directors of education, School Administrator and the Board of Governors find himself/herself in a dilemma with regard to how to discipline such erring staff.

This kind of conflict between the teachers and the School administrator often result in polarization of the schools, those supporting the school administrator on one hand and those on the side of the teachers. No institution can function effectively or achieve its goals if the individuals are polarized and working against
each other. Any conflict situation is bound to inhibit the smooth running of the school and by extension its overall performance. It is in recognition of the crucial role of managers leadership in conflict management and concern about the quality in education in the region and the nation as a whole, that this study is being undertaken to find out whether the traditional disciplinary committee used by management in conflict resolution has been effective or not in the resolution of Teacher-Teacher conflict, Teacher-Student conflict, Head teacher-Teacher conflict so that new models could be used to compliment or entirely replace the old system to enhance institutional performance.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to contribute the general body of knowledge by determine various mechanisms applied in resolving conflicts within public Senior High Schools in Accra, metropolis. The specific objectives of the study are;

- To establish the understanding of the term conflict resolution by both the students and the administrators in the context of the school environment.
- To determine the major areas of conflict in public Senior High Schools in Accra metropolis
- To determine the mechanism applied by the school administrators in resolution of conflicts and
- To determine the mechanisms applied by the students in resolution of conflict.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

- What is the understanding of the term “conflict management” by both the students and the administrators in the context of the school environment?
- Which are the major areas of conflict in public Senior High Schools in Accra metropolis?
- What are the mechanisms applied by the school administrators in resolution of conflicts and
- What are the mechanisms applied by the students in resolution of conflict?

Justification of the Study

This study is very valuable to the management both private and public Senior High Schools since it seeks to provide vital information about conflict resolution in schools. This in turn, would help the school administrators to determine suitable way in dealing with conflict in the educational sector. The study would also be important to the management of organizations and government agencies for education in their bid to deal with conflict in schools and improve standards in the education.

The study would assist the ministry of education in developing a curriculum that can be used to enhance the capacity of the administrators, the teachers and the students in handling conflicts in schools. The study is worthy because it addresses the causes of institutional conflict and be able not only is propose solutions to improve stability in the educational institutions but also public organization prove to all sorts of conflicts.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was all public Senior High Schools in Greater Accra metropolis. The sampling frame was obtained from the metropolitan and municipal Education offices. The study included the schools heads, teachers and students. The metropolitan and municipal areas included Ga-South municipality kuku municipality, Accra metropolis, Ga-central municipality, La municipality, Dadekpotopon municipality and Ayawaso municipality.
2. Literature Review

The Concept of Conflicts

Conflict may be viewed as occurring along cognitive (perception), emotional (feeling) and behavior (action) dimensions. These three-complexities of conflicts and why conflict sometimes seems to proceed in contradictory direction (Mayer, 2001). As a set of perceptions, conflict is a belief or understanding that one’s own needs, interests, wants or values are incompatible with someone else’s. There are both objective and subjective elements to this cognitive dimension. Conflict also involves an emotional reaction to a situation or interaction that signals a disagreement of some kind. The emotions felt might be fear, sadness, bitterness, anger or hopelessness or some amalgam of these. And in conflict, it does not take two to tango. Offensive conflicts exist because one person feels in conflict with another, even though those feelings are not reciprocated by or even known to the other person. The behavioral component may be minimal, but the conflict is still very real to the person experiencing the feeling. Conflict also consist of the actions that we take to express our feeling, articulate our perception and get our needs in a way that has the potential for interfering with someone else’s ability to get his or her needs met. This conflict behavior may involve a direct attempt to make something happen at someone else’s expense. It may be destructive conversely; this behavior may be conciliatory, constructive and friendly. But, whatever its tone, the purpose of conflict behavior is either to express the conflict or to get one’s needs meet. Again, the question of reciprocity exists. Obviously the nature of a conflict in one dimension greatly affects its nature in the other two dimensions people can go rapidly in and out of conflict, are the strength or characters of conflict along each dimension can charge quickly and frequently. And even though each of the three-dimensions affects the others, a change in the level of conflict in one dimension does not necessarily because a similar change in the others dimensions. Sometimes an increase in one dimension is associated with a decrease in another dimension (Mayer, 2001)

Conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. Because of the wide range of potential differences among people, the absence of conflicts usually signals the absence meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive. (Deutsch and Coleman, 2000)

Conflict is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings towards other (Fisher, 1990). The incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may be perceived by the parties and the hostile emotions are very real hallmarks of human conflicts. Conflict has the potential for either a great deal of destruction or much creativity and positive social change (Kriesberg, 1998). Therefore, it is essential to understand the basic processes of conflict so that; we can work to maximize productive outcomes and describes some common sources of conflict, the nature of conflict in modern organizations and the general strategies of approaching conflict that are available.

Concept of Institutional Conflict

Rocoff (1987) stipulated that institutional conflict occur when members engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other collectivities, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization (p.496). This definition can be broadened by conceptualizing conflict as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities (that is individual, group, organizations etc) calling conflict of an interactive process does not preclude the possibilities of intra-individuals conflict, for it is known that a person often interacts with self. Obviously one also interacts with others. Conflicts may occur when, A party is require to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests, when a party holds behavioral preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person’s implementation of his or her preferences; when party wants some mutually desirable resource that is in short supply, such that the wants of everyone may not be satisfied fully; when a party possesses attitudes, values, skills and goals that are helps in directing his or her behavior but are perceived to be exclusions of the attitudes, values and goals.
held by the other(s); when two parties have partially exclusion behavioural preferences regarding their joint actions and when two parties are interdependent in the performance of functions or activities.

This definition is much more inclusive, which implies that conflict can relate to incompatible preferences, goals, and not just activities. It should be recognized that in order for conflict to occur, it has to exceed the threshold level of intensity before the parties experience (or become aware of) any conflict. This principle of conflict threshold is consistent with Baron’s (1990) contention by parties for conflict to exist. Kirkwood (2002) identified various types of conflict that exist in institutions include data conflict, structural conflict, relationship conflict and interest conflict. Conflicts can lead to disputes, grievances, lawsuits, complaints, strikes and disciplinary actions. Conflict in your head between opposing motives or ideas is shown by your “internal dialogue” and is at the intrapersonal level. Beyond that, the primary concern here is within social conflicts that are conflict between people whether they are acting as individuals, as members of groups, or as representatives of organization or nations. Interpersonal conflict occurs when two people have incompatible needs, goals or approaches in their relationship. Communication breakdown is often an important source of interpersonal conflict and learning communication skills is valuable in preventing and resolving such difficulties. At the same time, very real differences occur between people that cannot be resolved by any amount of improved communication.

“Personality conflict” refers to very strong differences in motives, values or styles in dealing with people that are not resolvable. For instance, if both parties in a relationship have a high need for power and both want to be satisfied and a power struggle ensues. Common tactics used in power struggles include the exaggerated use of rewards and punishment, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail and flattery or ingratiating. Unresolved power conflict usually recycles and escalates to the point of relationship breakdown and termination (Fisher, 2000).

Role conflict involves very real differences in role definitions, expectations or responsibilities between individuals who are independent in a social system. If there are ambiguities in role definitions in an organization or unclear boundaries of responsibilities, then the stage is set for interpersonal friction between the persons involved.

Unfortunately, the conflict is often misdiagnosed as resolution is then complicated and misdirected. The emotional intensity is often quite high in role conflict since people are directly involved as individuals and these is a strong tendency to personalize the conflict (Fisher, 2000).

Inter-group conflict include occurs between collections of people such as ethnic or racial groups, departments or levels of decision making in the same organization, union and management. Competition for scarce resources is a common source of inter-group conflict and societies have developed numerous regulatory mechanisms such as collective bargaining and mediations, for dealing with inter-group conflict in less disruptive ways.

Social-psychological processes are very important in inter-group conflict (Fishers, 1990). Group members tend to develop stereotypes (oversimplified negative beliefs) of the opposing group, tend to blame them for their own problems (scape-goating) and practice discrimination against them.

These classic symptoms of inter-group conflict can be just as evident in organization as in race relations in community setting. Inter-group conflict is especially tense and prone to escalation and intractability when destructive inter-group conflict can be extremely high for a society in both economic and social terms.

Multi-party conflict occurs in societies when different interest groups and organizations have varying priorities over resource management and policy development. These complex conflicts typically involve a combination of economic values and power sources. This complexity is often beyond the reach of traditional authoritative or adversarial procedure and more collaborative approaches to building consensus are required for resolution (Cormick et al, 1996) international conflicts occurs between states at the global level. Competition for resources certainly plays a part, but value and power conflict are often intertwined and sometimes predominate. The differences are articulated though the channels of diplomacy in a constant game of give and take or threat and counter threat and counter threat, sometimes for the higher of stakes.
Mechanism of propaganda can lead to many of the same social-psychological distortions that characterize interpersonal and inter-group conflict (Fisher 2000)

**Resolution of Conflict in Schools**

The school administrator is the responsible for the overall organization, control and maintenance of standards in the school as specified in the education Act of 1984. A school Administrations is therefore accountable for all happens in the school. He is charge of a community of variety of staff and students and it is to him that they look upon for guidance and direction (Travo, 2002) and Kochhar, (1988), emphasize the importance of the school manager whom he notes is the key cornerstone in the arch of school management and has the steering wheel in his hands. Kochhar asserts who knows how to involve people, arrange conditions and initiate process that bring out the best in each participant that is the school personnel who include employer (teachers, non-teaching staff) and the students. The manager stimulate the teamwork, coordinate their efforts, plans what to be done, directs the finding of solutions to common problems of the institute and evaluates performance to get reasons for failure or success.

Otigi (1977) added that, the school repetition largely depends on the school manager who can make or mar the school.

Kochhar (1988:125) continued to add that schools are bad or good, in a physical condition flourishing or perishing as the manager is capable, energetic of high ideals or the reserve schools rise to fame or sink to obscurity as greater or lesser managers have charge of them. It is said that “the school is as greater as the manager because everything in the school, the plant, the staff, the curriculum, methods and techniques of teaching among other human relationships, bear the impress of his/her personality and the way conflict resolution are handled”

Schools do not become great because of magnificent buildings but on the role of management conflict resolution.

The school manger therefore occupies a very paramount position in any educational system. To be effective he needs among others things, drive, energy, vision, personality and management of conflict Resolution technique. Organizations, especially large and complex ones employ different group of people who have to be coordinated in the best way possible in order to achieve both individual and organizational goals. This means that the management has to create an environment in which members can cooperate with each other. However, work group usually have a tendency to compete for limited resources, power and status, to the extent of disrupting the cooperative efforts. Besides internal conflict, management also faces conflict from external forces. These may include government, trade unions and economic conditions, (Van wyk 1989)

According to Griffin (1994), a school manager’s public and professional reputation will depend more on the standard of stability in his school than on any other single factor that is good stability brings good insults in every field of school endeavour. The school manager who lets any from of conflict out of his hands is risking trouble. Should an instance of mass conflict occur, the wise manager will resist the temptation to find a scapegoat, be it the Ministry of Education, the Board of Governors, politicians, parents and staff, but will instead it take a long hard look at his own conflict management methods. If his school becomes unstable in any way, then it implies that, foundations of management in conflict resolution were not established in the school, and the blame for this is his/hers.

**Theories of Conflict, With Special Reference to School Conflict**

**Contingency Conflict Theory**

The contingency theory of strategic conflict management, which began as an elaboration, qualification and extension of the value of symmetry, has over the last decade, come into its own and emerged as an empirically tested perspective contingency theory argued that the completely in strategic communication was best represented by a continuum of stance, not by a limited set of models of excellence (Fisher and Keashly, 1988). This meta-theoretical analysis, while acknowledging using the inspiration of the excellence theory,
celebrates the maturing of the contingency theory by consolidating the development and advances the theory has made since 1997; documents the discoveries that have either added new insights to the theory or refuted postulation; charts the streams of research that have been extended and expanded from the original framework; and records the outgoing dialogue the theory has offered to the field to continually challenge prevailing presumptions and pre-suppositions (pang et al 2007)

Contingency theory in conflict resolution was pioneered by fishes and Keashly. In brief, the theory which comes mainly from organizational psychology is that, at different point during a conflict different types of third party intervention are more or less effective. The implication is that the distinction which Burton makes between disputes and conflict-noted above, is not necessarily useful.

Research from organizational psychology analogously applied to deep-rooted conflict suggests movements at which substantive issue /interest are most silent whereas at other times miscommunication and misperceptions block attempts to resolve. The assumption is that subjective element get worse as conflict escalates fisher and Keashly (1988) summarized their argument as; A contingency approach to third party intervention is based on the assessment that social conflict involves a dynamic process in which objective and subjective elements interacts over time as the conflict escalates and de-escalates. Depending on the objective-subjective mix, different intervention will be appropriate at different states of the conflict,” (P.34)

Although, Fisher did, in a later article, consider Burton’s human needs approach as the basis of analytical problem solving, this seems to have been a brief foray-and later work discusses a contingency approach without reference to basic human needs. Where fisher does not engage our view he seems to view needs-based problem solving as part of a boarder peace-building process and separates conflict resolution from a needs approach: “ The analysis of protractor inter-group conflict as rooted in denial of basic human needs explains why such disputes defy traditional methods of conflict management and resolution (fisher, 1993 : P.248). fisher places needs-based “ peace building” within a contingency frame work as, activities designed to improve the relations and meet the basic needs of the parties or order to de-escalate the conflicts and tender to amenable to peacemaking. Peace building can then its place as the essential conflict resolution in an organization practice depends on a circumstance that is a contingency. Contingency theory recognizes the influence of given solution on organizational behavior patterns. This is no one best way to do things. Difficult on determining all relevant contingency factors are showing the relations can be very complex.

The Sociological Conflict Theory

Conflict as accepted as a central fact of society, every society has its peculiar conflicts. Greek thinkers from Heraclitus to the sophists treated conflict as a primary social fact. Jean Bodin, the harbinger of modern theories of sovereignty, expanded the ideas of conflict from Niccolo Machiavelli who founded the origin of the state and its key institutions in the same place. Thomas Hobbes (1951) developed them into a materialistic rationalism. There are two destruct traditions of conflict theory useful for the study. The power relations tradition of political philosophy, reflecting view of: Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes and mosca who have analyzed conflicts in the policy in terms of power relationship as well as seeing the state as the object of analysis

Sociological conflict Theory is largely a synthesis of these two traditions focusing on the unequal distribution of rewards in society. While Karl max is its leading architect, Wright mills, Ralf Dahrendorf, Irving Louis Horowitt, lewis coser, Herbert mucus, Randall Collins and Andre Gunder Frank are among the noted conflict theorists of contemporary sociology, understanding the role of conflict in the public institutions

The Human Needs Theory

The concept of “Needs” will be used in this section to refer to important requirement for survival and satisfaction. Maslow (1970), argues that there exist in people in a wide range of needs which determines behaviour and motivation. In his hierarchy of needs Theory, he postulates that people have physical needs such as a need for shelter and food. People, he also states, have needs for security, for love, for recognition, for esteem and fulfillment. The theory of needs as driving forces for needs action has been advanced by other
scholars, such as Adair (1985), Jones and Jones (1985:66) for example, maintain the failure to satisfy the needs mentioned above, results in frustration, insecurity, withdrawal and a persistence to fulfill them even in socially unacceptable ways. They postulate that when children feel that their sense belonging is threatened; they are likely to withdraw and seek attention through unproductive means. Jones and Jones, further, argue that a need like self-esteem is met out of the satisfaction of other needs, such as recognition, security, love and competence. When these needs are not realized, either in the family or in the school, children strive to acquire significance, competence and power by methods which adults disapprove of.

The views that human needs play a vital role in influencing behaviour has been emphasized by Druikers (1972:34–41) Druikers argue that there are subconscious goals that motivate misbehaviour, such misbehaviour as attention seeking power and revenge is seen by Druikers as an indication of needs for belonging, security or warmth when an individual finds problem in satisfying in ethically approved ways. The Human Needs Theory thus emphasizes that conflict is a product of unsatisfied human needs. Burton sums this theory up succinctly, as follows: Conflict is not over objective differences of interest that involve scarcity. It is over fundamental values of security and identity.

Burton (1987:139), goes on to say, that there are universal onto logical needs that must be satisfied in the sense that individuals will be disruptive if they are frustrated in their pursuit. The Human Needs Theory of conflict seems related to other theories such as deprivation and interaction theories as well are shown later.

It seems clear that needs for belonging, identity, esteem and fulfillment characterize human beings. It is also obvious that failure to meet these can generate many problems and frustration what seems lacking in this theory is the point that the awareness, frustration and tolerance thresholds of individuals is a factor in determining the eruption or otherwise of conflict. Filley (1975:13 – 14) point out that the potential triggers of conflict (what he calls antecedent conditions) only generate conflict when people perceive them and they feel them.

3. Research Methodology

Research Instrument and the Rational For Using Them

The study adopted a descriptive research design where the researcher conducted a field survey in selected public Senior High Schools. The survey design was based on the use of questionnaire that was used as data collection instruments. The population of the study was scattered since the schools are located separated from each other, therefore the survey was appropriate. The major purpose of descriptive research design is a description of the state of affairs as it exist at present (Kothari, 2003). The researcher applied this design to investigate the current situation on the conflict resolution mechanisms applied in public senior high schools in Greater Accra Metropolis. This design was adopted because it allows the collection of large amount of data from the target population.

The target population of this study comprised of the senior High school administrators, teachers and the students drawn from Greater Accra Metropolis. They formed the respondents of the study.

The sampling frame for the schools was the list of all senior High schools as obtained from the Regional Education office. To ensure representativeness, Greater Accra Region was subdivided into five circuits namely: Southern, Western, Central, Northern and Eastern.

A random sample of respondents was drawn from each circuit. The respondents to be interviewed were then selected through simple random sampling from selected schools within each cluster. This ensured that there was no bias in sampling giving that the universal population of the schools, teachers, students and administrators in Greater Accra Region is large. Selection of administrators and teachers was done through purposive sampling.

According to Kothari, (2003), purposive sampling is applied where the researcher intends to pick subjects that satisfy a given criterion. This category of the sample shall therefore comprise of the head teacher, a representative member of the board of governors, class teacher and head of guidance and
counseling. Students were driven from all class levels (forms) irrespective of then stay experience at the school. The class teachers assisted in selection of the students for the interview. Table I present a summary of the sample design

![Table I: The Sampling Design](image-url)

**Data Collection Methods**

The main focus during the field survey was to gather primary data. This is factual data collected for the first time to address the problem at hand. The questionnaire was the principal tool in collecting primary data. The questionnaire contained structured, semi-structured and open-ended questions. According to Kinofi (1998), semi-structured questions may elicit adequate qualitative and quantitative data.

The questionnaire was structures into four sections. The first section requested the general information of the respondent. The second captured information on the understanding of the term “conflict resolution” by both the students, teachers and the administrators in the context of the school environment. The third section captures information on major areas of conflict in public Senior High Schools in Greater Accra Region and finally, the fourth section captured data on the mechanism applied by the school administrators in resolution of conflict. The interview guide was used to gather data from the key information that was drawn from the heads of reduction offices at the district, municipal and metropolitan levels.

**Data Collection**

After obtaining a research permit from the Regional Education office, the researcher sought authority from the District Directors of Education and Education officers in order to facilitate interview with the selected informants. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents from within the respective schools. A deadline was set by which completed questionnaires and interviews were ready. To ensure high responsive rates, the researcher interpreted each of the sections of the questionnaire to the respondents to
ensure that they fully understood the questions before answering. Secondly, the researcher ensured that the respondents picked were not in a hurry and had adequate time to ensure the questionnaire.

**Data Analysis Methods**

All the questionnaires were adequately checked for completeness. The information was coded and entered into a spreadsheet and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was checked to ensure that the output was free from outlines and the effect of missing responses was at minimum. Qualitative analysis involved generating descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics included frequency tables and their corresponding percentages scores. The findings were presented by using tables and charts as found appropriate. Quantitative analysis involved categorizing of data from interviews and field roles into common themes and presented using frequency distribution tables and charts.

4. Results and Findings

**Introduction**

The general objective of the study was to determine various mechanisms applied in resolving conflict within public Senior High Schools in Greater Accra metropolis.

This chapter presents interpretation and discussion of results derived from the field study. The findings were drawn from teachers, students and administrators from a sample of 20 Senior High Schools.

The chapter addresses all the study objectives

**General Profile of the Sample**

The sample for the study was gathered from 100 teachers, 120 students and 40 members of administration draw from schools.

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Students’ Sample**

![Diagram 1](image1.png)

Source: survey data (2013)

**Table 3: Demographic Profile of the Teachers’ Sample**

![Diagram 2](image2.png)

Source: survey data (2013)
Profile of the Students’ Profile

Table 2 shown and presented the demographic characteristics of the students’ sample. The sample comprises of 76% of boys and 24% of girls. A majority of the respondents (47.2%) were drawn from the form three, while 36% were drawn from the form four. Remainder was drawn from the form one and two. This shows that most of the sampled students were drawn from the upper forms and hence, were well versed with the cultures of their respective schools.

Profile of the Teachers’ Sample

Table 3 shown and presented the demographic characteristics of the teachers’ sample. The sample comprised of 62% of male teachers and 38% of female teachers. A majority of the sampled teachers (44.0%) were specialized in teaching language subjects. The findings further indicate that a majority of the respondents (57%) had teaching experience of more than ten years. This shows that most of the sampled teachers were well trained with the cultures of their respective schools as well as the teaching profession.

Respondents’ Understanding of “Conflict Resolution the Students’ Perspective

The sampled students were requested to give their understanding of the term “conflict resolution “ in the context of public Senior High School. The respondents gave varied opinions in regard to the concept of conflict refers to the way to solve conflict between individuals who have disagreement in certain issues; settling conflict or grudgers between different people by uniting items managing of misunderstanding and disagreements among parties involved in the school that is administration, students, prefects; solving of disputes among students, teachers and workers; in case of any misunderstanding one is able to refrain from it by not contributing eg: a strike; being able to solve issues without violence; it is a way of bring two parties together after they had a conflict; it is the act resolving disputes among teachers, students and the school administration by coming up with possible solution after identifying the cause of the conflict; the ability to maintain peace and unity; an act of dealing with students who are in disagreement either with themselves, successfully arrive at a resolution; the ability to understand and be able to manage a misunderstanding between two parties; managing or resolving conflict in an institution; management of disagreement between students and administration; the act of presenting and controlling conflict when they occur without hiring any of the people involved; different methods of stability indifferences in people; a process of solving disagreement between two people; and it is the process whereby disagreement between two or more parties can be solaced, so as to come to an agreement immediately as possible.

The findings indicate that from the student’s perspective “conflict resolution is a process as well as an act. This means that, an intervention has to be put in place in order to solve indifferences between two or more parties in case of a public Senior High School; the parties include the students, teachers and the school administrators. The findings also indicate that the process of conflict resolution can be initiated after the root cause of the conflict has been identified. The findings of table 4 indicate that most students (82%) experience indifferences with their fellow students, while the teachers account for almost half of the conflict (508%) while the school administration contributes (44.8%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Sources of Conflict to the Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow students (N=122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teachers (N=118)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school administration (N=116)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey data (2012)
The Teachers’ Perspective

The simplest teacher was requested to give them understanding of the term “conflict resolution” in the context of public Senior High School. The respondents gave varied opinions in regard to the concept. According to the findings, conflict resolution refers to: taking care of the differences that may occur in between individuals eg: teacher-student, student-management and teacher-management; settling and resolving misunderstanding or dispute two people in an institution; resolving conflict arising out of the school activities; resolving or managing any misunderstanding or problems that may arise in school and interfere with smooth running of the institutions; handling conflict between school management authority and students; the ability to solve a problem amicably within the institutions; the ability to solve a problem within the institutions; the ability to solve a problem within the institution or between individuals; how conflict is handled when it occurs and how it is presented; resolution of order and stability; bringing into control or curbing the disagreement in the school by devising methods of avoiding conflicts and creating peace among the students and the teachers; ability to effectively communicate with students and approaches to control misunderstanding among teachers, students, administration and subordinate staff.

The finding of Table 5 indicates that, the finding from teachers is similar to those reported by the students. That is, most teachers (90%) reported that they usually experience indifferences with their fellow teacher than when compared to the students (72%) and the school administration (67%). This observation indicates that the teachers are largely in conflict in each of the three categories. This is because their work involves make of interaction with the fellow teachers, the students and the administration. In case of the students, they mostly interact with their fellow students and the teachers and they rarely interact with the school administrations.

Table 5: Sources of Conflict to the Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Conflict</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fellow teacher (N=100)</td>
<td>90 90.0</td>
<td>10 10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students (N=100)</td>
<td>72 72.0</td>
<td>28 28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The administration (N=96)</td>
<td>65 67.7</td>
<td>31 32.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey data (2013)

Causes of Conflict in Public Senior High School

Causes of Conflict between Students- Students

The second research objective sought to determine the major areas of conflict in public Senior High Schools in Accra metropolis.

Table 6: Causes of Student - Student Conflict in Schools (n=123)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of student - student conflict in schools</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination from the top student leadership(captains, prefects etc)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of superiority of some classes or from levels or others</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in perceptions on certain issues</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential treatment of certain students by the teachers or administration</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in individual capability</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in their social-cultural background back at home</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited resources (finance, matured facilities etc)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in target goals among students</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings are grouped by each category of respondents: Table 6 indicate a multiple response analysis at respondents regarding the cause of conflict between the students and their fellow students.

The findings are arranged in a descending order of prevalence. The finding indicate that, the five top most causes of student to student conflict are; discrimination from the top student leadership namely; captains and prefects; feeling of superiority of some classes or forms over others; difference in perceptions on certain issues; and preferential treatment of certain students by the teachers or the school administration. Other conflict arise due to differences in individual capabilities; differences in their socio-cultural background back at home; limited resources (finances, materials, facilities etc) differences in target goals among students; and differences in religions affiliated.

Table 7: Causes of Teachers to Teachers Conflict in Schools (n = 97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Conflict</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of the total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences in perception on certain issues</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of superiority of some subject teachers over others</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited resources (finance, materials, facilities etc)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in socio-cultural background</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential treatment of certain teachers by the administration</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in target goals among teachers</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward of individuals based on their individual performance rather than the overall school performance</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in individual teaching capabilities</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in resources affiliations</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work interdependence that is pooled</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey data (2013)

Tables 7 indicate the leading cause of conflict among teachers which is differences in percentage on certain issues (89.7%). Other major causes include; feeling of superiority of some subject teachers over others; limited resources (finance, materials, facilities etc) ; differences in their socio-cultural background ; preferential treatment of certain teachers by the administration; differences in target goals among teachers; and instances where individuals teachers are awarded based on their individual performance rather than to over all school performance.

The findings indicate that rarely does conflict arise among teachers due to differences in individual teaching capabilities, religions affiliated and work interdependence that is pooled.

Table 8: Causes of Conflict between Students and Teachers in Schools (n=117)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Conflict</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dictatorship among Teachers</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential treatment of certain students</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in perception on certain issues</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic academic targets of students of the teachers</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unethical teaching practices</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward of teachers based on their students performance rather than to their performance appraisal report</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey data (2013)
The findings of table 8 indicate a multi-response analysis of responses regarding the causes of conflict between students and teachers, from a student’s perspective. The cause is arranged in a descending order of prevalence.

The findings indicate that students mainly have conflict with teachers when they portray a dictatorial tendencies (81.2%), when they demonstrate preferential treatment of certain students (73.5%) and when they differ with teachers on how to approach or resolve certain issues (64.1%) other instances occur, when teachers set for students unrealistic academic target as well as when they demonstrate unethical teaching behaviors.

Rarely do students conflict with their teachers as a result of the reward system applied by their respective schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Conflict between Teachers - Students in Schools (N=117)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictatorship among teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic academic targets for students by the teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in perception on certain issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferential treatment of certain students by the teachers or administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward of teachers based on their students performance rather their performance appraisal reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unethical teaching practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: survey (2013)

The findings of table 9 indicate a multi-response analysis of responses regarding the cause of conflict between the teachers and students from the teacher’s perspective. The causes are arranged in a descending order of prevalence. The findings in a concur with the finding from the student’s perspective. This is, students mainly conflict with teachers when they portray dictatorial tendencies; when they demonstrate preferential treatment of certain students; when they differ on how to approach or resolve certain issues; and when teachers set unrealistic academic targets. Rarely, do students conflict with their teachers as a result of the reward system applied by their respective schools as well as teaching ethnic?

**Causes of Conflict between Students- School Administrations**

The sampled students were requested to indicate the causes of conflict between students and the administration organs of public Senior High School Greater Accra region.

The respondents were of the view that, it is at times dictated by the way of democracy towards the students and the entire school fraternity. It may arise in cases where the school administrator fails to sufficiently provide the necessary resources for effective learning. Eg; food and learning aids. The students perceive this as ignorance on the point of administration.

Conflict also arises when the administration seeks to impose things on students instead of pursuing dialogue. In addition, there are times when the school administrator of rules and regulation which students find unrealistic to adhere to in the school environment.

Some respondents were of the view that arbitrary increase of school fees charged puts the administrator into a collision path with the students.

Favoritism was also identifies as a source of conflict. For instance, this occurs when teachers and the administration dismisses some students whilst favoring others. Expulsion or suspension from the schools was perceived by students to be unjustified since they are not given a chance to be heard. One of the student respondent said: “there are times we note dishonesty among school administrators. For instance, they may favour some students because they come from wealthy background since they are likely to receive something small from them thereby discriminating against students from poor background” lack of proper channel of
communication between students and school administration was also cited as a source of conflicts between the two parties.

Other causes of conflict identified by sampled students included: application of harsh disciplinary measures; hostile punishment subjected to some students; administration being too strict to the students; lateness among students; general indiscipline where non-participatory decision making (governance where students are not fully involved or represented; and failure by the administration to take not of student’s opinions and also failure to promptly respond to the complaints. This makes the students to revolt since they feel like they are being treated as a minority group instead of being treated as a key stakeholders.

**Causes of Conflicts between Teachers - School Administration**

The causes of conflicts between the teachers and the school administration were as well varied. They concluded: lack of proper communication to teachers; imposition of strict deadlines for various activities; difference in perception on management of certain issues in the school; dictatorial tendencies on the part of school administration; poor physical working condition, lack of administration support in provision of learning aids as well as psycho-social support when they are in need; where administrators use school resources for personal selfish gains; inability to perform tasks assigned ( failure to meet) deadlines); unauthorized absenteeism, tribalism, setting unrealistic targets for teachers; setting goals that are not specific; engaging teachers in “crush programmes” where they have to cover wide sections of syllabus in fraction time; laxity in implementation of school policy; unreasonable demands by school administration; favoritism and finally laxity among teaching.

**Methods of Resolving Conflict in Public Senior High School**

The third objective of the study had sought to determine the mechanism applied by the school administrators in resolution of conflicts from the administrator’s perspective, five main approaches were identified. They include: having regular meetings where the agreed parties can air their grievances, inviting resource persons from the regional education office; dialogue with the parties involved in conflict with the guidance department, regular consultation with the referees to identify areas of conflict; and punishing the involved parties by assigning them harsh tasks, corporal punishment and giving suspensions.

However, the fourth objective of the study had sought to determine the mechanism applied by the students in resolution of conflicts. The findings are presented in Table 10. The findings indicate that, the most popular student include: instilling firmness in pursuing own side of the issue; attempting to investigate the issues in conflict so as to find a solution acceptable to them; trying to satisfy their expectations; trying to investigate the issue of conflict so as to find a solution acceptable to all; trying to bring all concerns out in the open so that, the issues be resolved in the best possible way’ exchanging accurate information with the parties in conflict in view to solve the problem together; embracing negotiations so that of a compromise can be reached; avoiding open discussion of differences between conflict parties and sticking to the right solution to a problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10: Methods Applied By Students in Resolution of Conflict</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The case was argued with them to show the merits of his position (N=120)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was negotiation so that compromise can be reached ( N=121)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To try to satisfy their expectations (N=119)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To try to investigate the issues in conflict so as to find a solution acceptable to them ( N= 119)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be firm in pursuing the side of the issue ( N=121)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To attempt to avoid being “put on the spot and try to keep a conflict with them to oneself (N=119)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>28</th>
<th>23.5</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>15.1</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>26.1</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>17.6</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>17.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To hold on to the solution to the problem (N=121)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>22</th>
<th>18.2</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>10.7</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>28.9</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>18.2</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>24.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To use “give and take” so that, a compromise can be reached (N=119)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>35</th>
<th>29.7</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>16.1</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>20.3</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>6.8</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>27.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To exchange accurate information with them in view to solve the problem together (N=117)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12</th>
<th>10.3</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5.1</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>29.9</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>13.7</th>
<th>48</th>
<th>41.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To avoid an open discussion of some differences with them (N=119)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>29</th>
<th>24.4</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>13.4</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>17.6</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>20.2</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>24.4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To accommodate their wishes and more on (N=119)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>36</th>
<th>30.3</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>12.6</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>22.7</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>16.8</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>17.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To try to bring all their concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way (N=117)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12</th>
<th>10.3</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>8.5</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>27.4</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>17.9</th>
<th>42</th>
<th>36.9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To propose a middle ground for breaking deadlines (N=115)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>23</th>
<th>20.0</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>22.6</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>25.2</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>8.7</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>23.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To go along with their suggestions (N=112)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>19</th>
<th>17.0</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>15.2</th>
<th>42</th>
<th>37.5</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>13.4</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>17.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To try to keep a disagreement with them to oneself in order to avoid hard feeling (N=116)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>35</th>
<th>30.2</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>19.0</th>
<th>33</th>
<th>28.4</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3.4</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>19.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: survey data (2013)

5. Conclusion

The research has depicted that, the concept of “conflict resolution” refers to the act and also a process resolving disputes between two or more parties with the view of coming to a resolution. At school level, it emerged that perceived conflicts occurs because of ignorance, poor communication, and lack of proper people management.

Actual conflict generally occurs when there are multiple paths to accomplish the same goal. Study showed that, when the students are faced with a conflict through constructive approaches such as instilling firmness in pouring own side of the issue; attempting to investigate the issue-conflict so as to find a solution acceptable to all; trying to bring all that concerns out in the open; so that, the issues can be resolved—the best possible way, exchanging accurate information with the parties in conflict in view solved the problem together; embracing negotiations so that a compromise can be reached; avoiding conflicting parties; and sticking to own solution to a problem. It is however important to note that when students react as a group they are likely to be influences by group behavior which in most cases is very destructive scenes especially when resolution of conflicts between groups or teachers does not find an amicable solution. Effective communication is therefore essential in analysis of conflicts in public schools as well as in identifying their root causes. The findings showed that the causes of conflicts in public Senior High Schools are varied. Resolution of various forms of conflicts would therefore require specific strategies since the root cause may be unique.

The study revealed that, conflict usually arises in schools due to application of classed systems of governance. Therefore, school administrators and teachers should seek to embrace open system where everyone is let to air their views and the areas of conflict discussed openly.
In addition, they should encourage democratic representation in the choice of leaders namely; prefect, PTA members and Board of Governors (BOG). They would help in eliminating the perceived feeling of discrimination or favoritism amongst teachers and students. The schools should also seek to educate all the stakeholders on the best way of solving peer educators’ movement that all create awareness to students about the negative effect of conflict and act as mediators in conflict resolution in schools.

It will also serve to identify the parties involved in conflict and exposing them to the whole school, so that, they face shame and deter them from doing the act in future.

The teachers and the administration should try to treat the students in the best way as possible. The school should embrace dialogue in resolution of conflict. This can be enhanced through building of strong relationships between the teachers and the students to an extent that they are free to break out on issues that affect both parties.

The schools should give equal opportunities to all students no matter how little it is. Teaching should implement a system that promotes students to own the school rules instead of imposing to them. The schools should regularly undertake stakeholders. The schools should also embrace guidance and counseling programmers since its one of mechanisms of resolving both personal and group conflicts especially amongst students. Guidance spread of bad inner feelings.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations Directed To School Management and Teachers

(a) Schools managers and teachers should through their teacher association establish resource centres. In these centres, facilitators or mediator of conflict should be employed together with other specialists like curriculum ones. A facilitator specializing in conflict resolution and management will assist school managers, teachers and many events will assist school manager’s teachers and students to resolve conflicts. He or she could also be involved in the running of resolution courses for teachers as well as conducting research into school administration.

(b) School managers and teachers could. In addition to (a) make use of skills of conflict resolution facilitators from agencies like the ministry of education. This could be done where there is no local (school) expert to help resolve conflict.

(c) Where teachers need the school manager’s support in handling student conflict, managers should not do so alone. They could resolve the conflict with teachers, or facilitate the process. Otherwise, teachers lose control of their classes if managers take the job of resolving class conflict away for them.

(d) School managers and teachers need to initiate ways as creating a culture of we-versus the problem in schools, rather than let the culture of teachers or managers-verses students reign. In this exercise, teachers and school managers need to solicit students’ participation.

As part to the above, both school managers and teachers need to develop schools as communities and strive for a climate of team spirit with students.

(e) As part of staff development and self-development, school managers and teachers should develop a wider range of methods for solving problems which give rise to conflicts. Issues, such as consensus, interest based bargaining, negotiation and integrative decision-making are examples. School managers should initiate school based or circuit based in-service programmers on class or school management and on conflict resolution.

(f) School managers and teachers should try to keep communication channels open between them and students at all times. Where communication flows freely it is easier to detect conflict before it erupts into unsafe proportions.

Further, open communication is one way to safeguard trust and clarify misperceptions, even during conflict.

(g) If teaches have to use corporal punishment, they must do so to a minimum extent. They should also supplement it with methods that encourage students to reason solutions to conflict and to be
intrinsically motivated to behave correctly. If children come late to school, for instance, the teachers should establish reasons for unpunctuality with the child and help the child to achieve solutions rationally, rather than punishing him/her. Besides, corporal punishment appears to have negative outcomes. Scott (1986) in his writing cited in an extensive research and indicated the harmful effects of corporal punishment. The research suggested their corporal punishment is associated with later social violence. Although corporal punishment appears to bring about short term compliances, in the long term it may be counterproductive and may exacerbate problems.

(h) Student’s admissions and the delegation of teachers to handle these needs to be well prepared for by school danger. Expectations from candidates and patently regarding admissions must be communicated clearly and in time to all concerned. The duties and responsibly of teachers regarding admissions. Should be co-ordinate by mangers. Students should be told which teacher to go to and when, as they register. Such step will alleviate conflicts created as a result of poorly managed admissions.

(i) School managed and teachers could exercise preventive conflict handling as much as possible. This they can do through effective management of classes and school. This can be brought about through responding to recommendations (a) and

(j) Teachers and school managers need to motivate students to tolerate the views of other people, especially those which differ from theirs. This can start at a class will where teacher would encourage debate and a challenging of the views of others, including theirs (teachers). They need to debate over an issue is not synonymus with attack on those who raise different opinions.

(k) In view of the frequently made request by students that they need a vibrant students. Representative councils, school mangers should involve students in decision-making. However, managers could determine the extent to which students can be involved where students cannot be involved in decision-making, school managers need to provide students with the necessary information. Budgets are examples of issues about which students at Senior High School level need to be informed.

Recommendations Directed To Colleges of Education and the Ministry of Education

(a) Colleges of Education should introduce a component on conflict resolution for teachers. This could be part of the school administration courses. In teaching the component on conflict resolution, case studies from conflicts in schools should be used. This would infuse a practical component into theories of conflict. Case studies would help to contextualize the course, and ground it in the Ghanaian education system

(b) A mandatory course for school managers on conflict resolution could be organized by the ministry of education. This could be an integral part of management courses.

Recommendation Directed To Government and the Stakeholders of Education

(a) All those with a stake in education, particularly Senior High School level, have to pass for the introduction of alternative education by the government. The new education system should respond equally to the varied needs and interests of all students in the country. It should be education that has a comprehensive curriculum.

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