

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN
ASIKUMA-ODOBEN-BRAKWA DISTRICT OF CENTRAL REGION, GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature.....Date.....

Name: Stephen Abeku Bowda Aidoo

Supervisors' Declaration

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

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at finding out students' perception of sources of conflict in senior high schools. The study was a descriptive survey involving a sample size of 300 participants. This included 100 first year students, 100 second year students and 100 third year students in the two public senior high schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District of the Central Region in Ghana.

Besides the literature search, a 43-item questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaires administered were 300 and all were retrieved for analysis. Five research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The research questions were answered on the basis of available data using descriptive statistics while the hypotheses were tested using t-test of independence.

The findings of the study indicated that, there is no significant difference between male and female students perception of the sources of conflict they experience in the home and school. Differences exist between conflict sources perceived by students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds with adults.

Peer group influences adolescent students' development and this can either increase or minimize conflict among students and adults. These results have prompted the recommendations of a number of measures that can further enhance the management of conflict among students, parents and school authorities. What is of paramount importance in the recommendations is that parents and teachers should involve the adolescent students in the discussion of issues that affect their social lives.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Lydia, my dear wife for her consistent support and my three lovely kids, Emmanuel, Joan and Amos.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Views about the inherent nature of students' conflict in schools, information obtained by the researcher from primary sources and media reports on conflicts in schools constitute the background to the study. The school is a social unit that fosters a lot of interaction between students and those in authority. As a human institution, however, its interactive process generates conflicts. Fisher, Ludin, Williams, Abdi and Smith (2000) said "conflict is a relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups) who have, or think they have, incompatible goals" (p. 21). It can originate between two or more people, or between two or more groups. Owen (1970) shared the view that conflict is pervasive in all human experiences and for that matter, an important aspect of an organisational behaviour in education.

A potential for conflict exists whenever and wherever people come into contact (Baker, Kathy, Kittie & Robert, 2001). As people are organized into groups to seek a common goal, there is the probability of conflict increasing since individuals may dislike certain people with whom they frequently come into contact with. There are disagreements with family members, friends, and co-workers and even with people we meet for the first time.

Students' conflict involves disagreement between their peers on one hand as well as parents, adults and school authorities on the other hand. Hall as cited in Commonwealth Secretariat (1998) indicated that, certain developments within adolescents (like emotional stress and self doubt) are capable of disrupting their behaviour, thereby leading them into conflict. Hall argued that even when adolescents appear to be calm and confident on the outside, they are experiencing considerable turmoil on the inside. Hall further stated that this is a universal phenomenon, which would occur in the life of every adolescent.

The socio-cultural evolution has in recent times compelled students to adopt role behaviors that do not replicate the behaviour of the adults or parents regarding their needs and desires. In Ghana, there has been a great outcry about students' promiscuity and sexuality in the media. Stories of teenage pregnancies and girls going into relationship with older men abound and is a cause of concern to many people. Davidoff (1987) was of the view that because so many things are happening and the young person is beginning to be responsible for important decisions, adolescence is often a time of turbulence. However, cross-cultural studies by Coleman (1992) indicated that although a small minority may show disturbance, the great majority of teenagers seem to cope well and to show no undue signs of turmoil or stress.

The issue of violent student demonstrations resulting in attacks on authorities, teachers and/or their dependants, destruction of school properties and other drug-related offences are prevalent in our society. This is summed up by Cudjoe (1996) as one which students ignore the channels of communication and

embark on actions such as strikes and in most cases are led by colleagues who are influenced by drugs. Rapport and Rapport (1980) indicated that this is the time when, because the teenager is struggling to shake off the authority of parents or school teachers, there may be much quarrelling and answering back.

Rapport and Rapport (1980) further stated that in the earlier sub-phase, say 13 – 16 years, young people are mainly concerned with the push for independence from their parents, and the conflicts between dependence and independence that this involves. In the later sub-phase, say 16 – 19 years, the emphasis is on forging a separate identity, distinct from those of the authority figures who have run their lives hitherto.

A case in point is the report by Mensah in the 10th October, 2003 issue of the Daily Graphic. In this report, the Headmaster of Aduman Secondary School near Kumasi in Ashanti Region in Ghana was forced to flee the school by students. These teenage students gave 48 hours ultimatum to the education authority to transfer the Headmaster to forestall any further action.

Students as young people typically dislike older people organizing or making plans for them – which is one of the factors that make it hard for adults to give them guidance, especially to those young people who most need it (Rapport & Rapport, 1980). Teenagers therefore spend much more time with their peers or friends of the same age, with popularity being a strong motivation for many of them. Peer pressure becomes very strong, cliques become visible, groups and crowds become more mixed and varied (Seifert & Haffnung, 1991). The young person is then confused whether to listen to his/her peers and become accepted by

them or listen to adults and become ostracized by his/her peers (Montemayor, 1983). A typical case is a police report on a planned demonstration by male boarding students of Breman Asikuma Senior High School (BASS) in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in Central Region on 29th May, 2003 where these students went on rampage on campus. They alleged among other things that the masters persistently prevented them from visiting their female counterparts in their dormitories especially during the night. They destroyed properties and attacked a policeman who was rushed to the hospital for treatment.

Rapport and Rapport (1980) are again of the view that teenagers become conscious of the world beyond, and sometimes the people who have most influence on them are quite remote – a pop idol, the leader of an exotic religious sect, or even a figure from a novel. Elkind as quoted by Gross (1992) pointed out that teenagers constantly play to an imaginary audience; they think they are very special and have a personal fable which they tell to themselves, which is not true. They also have a strong sense of immortality. This point is of particular importance when we try to analyse why students engage in risk behaviour which then results in serious conflict.

Another unfortunate incident occurred on 19th March, 2007 by some students of Breman Asikuma Senior High School believed to be members of an occult group. They wrote an unanimous letter of threat to the Branch Manager of Brakwa-Breman Rural Bank at Breman Asikuma instructing him to deposit an amount of ₵20,000,000.00 (GH₵2,000.00) at a specified location or else he would be killed. These students were later arrested by the police.

A significant dimension of conflict in the senior high schools relates to students showing resistance to corrective or disciplinary measures. Greenfield (1995) indicated that, students find their relations with teachers strained by the continuing press for uniformity and compliance with standards of conduct not of their making, which are increasingly distant from their life experience outside school. A verbal account of conflict situation occurred at Tsito Secondary Technical School in the Ho District in February, 2002. Two senior students broke bounds by travelling outside the school without permission. The Senior Housemaster punished them and on the night after the punishment when there was power outage, stones were hurled onto the roof-top of the Senior Housemaster's residence possibly by the irate students who were being vindictive.

The transition from Junior High School to Senior High School for instance is a stressful time characterized by uncertainties. Students may move from the top position in Junior High School to the lower position in Senior High School. These students may be the youngest, smallest and least powerful in their new school. They need to adjust to this new position or environment and if not guided properly, would result in conflict with their peers and adults. This might cause dropping out of school which has been a serious problem for decades (Greenfield, 1995).

Within the family, Kwawukume's report in 4th August, 2007 issue of the Mirror indicates that there is a greater transfer of control from the parents to the adolescent, but there is still the boundary of co-regulation. Adolescent students begin to push for autonomy and responsibility which can puzzle and anger parents

which often cause conflicts. According to Kwawukume, this push for autonomy by the adolescent is a process, though, and they continue to keep some strong attachment to their parents.

Teenagers who have grown up with adults they have been able to trust are likely to form stable, trusting relationships with new people they meet. Conversely, children who have grown up in an atmosphere of suspicion and anxiety will find it much more difficult to develop trusting relationships in adolescence, while the desperate wish to have someone to trust may precipitate unfortunate involvements in which they are exploited (Rapport & Rapport, 1980). According to Collins (1982), the security of the home is doubted by some adolescent students while others are influenced to a large extent by their peers. For other adolescents, leaving home for the boarding institution becomes a traumatic experience which leads to conflict with peers and adults.

Conflict has been viewed by people as a negative force operating against successful completion of individual or group goals. Conflict becomes negative when it escalates and produces accusation and threats, which damage the already existing relationship. Coser and Rosenberg (1994) stressed that not every type of conflict will benefit groups neither can it perform the same functions for all groups.

Robbins (1972) argued that not all conflict is bad. It can be harmful to groups but may also serve some potentially positive functions depending upon the type of groups within and among which it occurs. Conflict becomes positive when it leads to constructive development of the individual as well as the

organization. Conflict viewed as a way of understanding the needs of a difficult person and how to influence the achievement of the needed goal is also positive.

Conflict which is productive has positive effects on groups. Some positive effects of conflict include the improvement of quality decisions, stimulating involvement in discussions and building of group cohesion. Individuals and groups can use conflict as a strategy to achieve their goals and change existing conditions. They may instigate conflict to gain recognition and call attention to their message. This is usually the case when they want their problem to be addressed by people higher in the power structure (Robbins & Clifford, 1974).

Cooper (2005) indicated that besides creating turbulence, conflict can also breed opportunities for significant change. By so doing, people may be able to extract benefits from such turbulence. Hence conflict can generate innovations and also provoke actions that can improve the lives of individuals or groups caught up in conflict situation. In effect, it is almost impossible to get rid of conflict within a group setting like students in Senior High Schools because without conflict, individuals will be shallow-minded for lack of stimulation. Societies will also collapse under their own weight because they are unable to adapt to changing circumstances.

Since the present students are our hope for the future, there is the need to mould them to become very responsible people who will make positive contributions towards humanity. It then behooves on us to critically study the sources of conflict that may arise during this period in order to curb them or put in place interventions that will help make these students well adjusted and be able to

overcome most of their social problems. This has therefore compelled me to research into students' perception of sources of conflict in relation to their parents (other adults), peers and school authorities.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, students in general have been labeled as the “terrible teens” due to the numerous conflicts that they encounter. Students who are teenagers are exposed to a much wider array of socializing agents such as peer groups and the mass media which may convey different values from those encountered in the family (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1998). Peer influence during adolescence is known to be very great (Simon & Ward, 1982).

Students' conflict in the two public senior high schools in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district (Bremam Asikuma SHS and Odoben SHS) if not properly tackled, would have the capacity of leaving most of the students in crisis. Evidence indicates that many of today's young people have serious problems with drugs, alcohol, sex and crime (Adelson, 1979). It is therefore imperative to identify these and other specific concerns relating to this critical phase of life.

Conflict, however, has a positive effect when it is managed constructively. The issue is not whether conflict occurs, but rather how it is perceived and managed.

The school environment with the rules and regulations and the need to conform to them as well as the attitudes of teachers to the students at Bremam Asikuma SHS and Odoben SHS could be possible sources of conflict to such students. These need to be examined to see the level to which they can be a

source of conflict. It is not clear whether male or female students are more resilient to conflict when it occurs. Establishing clarity in this context is critical in understanding how senior high school students perceive sources of conflict within the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. Yet little research interest has been shown in this area. It is this gap that necessitated the study.

Purpose of the Study

Conflict if not properly handled, can ruin friendships as well as relationships and divide one group against another. Conflict can fuel feelings of mistrust, fear and injustice within a community. Most certainly, conflict has the potential to become disruptive and violent. It is for these reasons, therefore, that the researcher sought to:

1. Ascertain senior high school students' perception of conflict in the schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District.
2. Look at the extent to which the school environment promotes conflict among students.
3. Understand the role peer group plays in generating and promoting conflict for the student.
4. Find out whether male or female students are more vulnerable to perceived conflict that they experience with adults.
5. Ascertain whether socio-economic background can contribute to students' conflict.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What school environmental factors do students of SHS in A.O.B District perceive to produce conflict between them and school authorities?
2. How do the influences of peer group in SHS in A.O.B District perceive to contribute to student conflict with adults?
3. What differences exist between the perception of sources of conflict by male and female students in SHS in A.O.B District?
4. How does socio-economic status of parents of students in SHS in A.O.B District is perceived to contribute to student conflict with adults?

Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses were generated:

1. There is no significant difference in perception of male and female students regarding conflicts they experience in schools.
2. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds regarding conflicts they experience.

Significance of the Study

The study will be significant to parents, teachers, headmasters and all those concerned with students of senior high schools. The knowledge gained will facilitate understanding of the types of conflict prevalent among students and parents/school authorities so that preventive measures can be planned.

In another respect, the study will prepare the minds of prospective school administrators and teachers towards the various student conflict situations they may face in their administrative and teaching tasks. This way, they may be better disposed to discharge their professional responsibilities.

Furthermore, as the headmaster becomes equipped with a fair knowledge of students' perception of conflict in the school, he/she will be able to offer good orientation to newly appointed staff members and if possible, parents of students in the school. This will help them function with little likelihood of generating avoidable conflict.

The findings will also provide information to guidance and counseling coordinators in schools and other social set-ups by exposing them to the problems students encounter. This will help them put in place measures to curb such problems.

Finally, the study will stimulate others to research into other areas of conflict like conflict management between the headmaster and students or longitudinal peer mediation and conflict management in the senior high schools.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to students' conflict. The study specifically looked at interpersonal conflict between students on one hand and adults/peers on the other hand. The adults and peers included parents, school authorities, teachers, peers and socio-economic status of parents. The study further ascertained the level to which these factors would become a source of conflict for students.

The study was carried out in the senior high schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District of the Central Region of Ghana. This was because the researcher hailed from the district and was aware of the prevailing situations in the schools which were of concern to him.

Limitation

The limitations of the study were:

1. The fact that the study is focused on the two senior high schools in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District may affect the generalisability of the findings to the whole country.
2. It could be expensive in terms of finance and time since respondents are located at two geographical areas within the district.
3. Respondents may not provide appropriate answers to questions since some of the questionnaire involved the use of structured questions.
4. Furthermore, respondents may have the tendency to look ahead, skip around or compare their responses with those of their colleagues and

friends when completing the questionnaire. This then may distract from the basic assumption that an individual is free to express his/her own opinion.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were operationally defined for the purpose of the study:

Socio-cultural evolution: The gradual development of social and cultural practices of a particular group of persons.

Socio-economic status of parents: The social and economic position of parents in relation to others. Usually, this refers to the level of importance that is given to somebody.

Inter-personal conflict: Misunderstandings between students and their peers.

Organization of the rest of the Study

The remaining chapters are two, three, four and five. Chapter two covers the review of related literature. The topics treated include: the definition of conflict, theoretical standpoints of conflict, conflict in the political arena, conflict over ideals and ideas, conflict paradox, sources of conflict, types of conflict and sources of conflict among others.

Chapter three treats the methodology for the study. This chapter deals with the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, the instrument, its administration and the technique for data analysis.

Chapter four provides information on findings and results of the study. The research findings are presented under the following sub-headings:

- a) Home factors responsible for conflict between students and adults
- b) Environmental factors that produce conflict between students and school authorities
- c) Influences of peer group towards student conflict with adults
- d) Sources of conflict between male and female students
- e) Contribution of socio-economic status of parents to student conflict with adults.

Finally, chapter five deals with the summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The issue of students' conflict has been of great concern to many scholars, writers, school authorities and parents due to its impact on society. In order to comprehend fully students' perception of conflict, some of the existing literature on the subject that are relevant to the study is reviewed to give the study a conceptual framework.

Though various studies have been undertaken worldwide on students' or adolescents' conflict, few studies have been undertaken in Ghana on this subject. Anyagre (1996) investigated adolescent students' perception of the role behavior of teachers in their transition to adulthood in Ashanti Region, Ghana. Forde (1997) investigated self-perceived and personal social worries of Ghanaian adolescents in Greater Accra, Ghana. Micah (2001) studied parent-adolescent conflict in Cape Coast Municipality in Ghana. Abomah (2005) also investigated the perceived sources of inter-conflict for adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Hohoe District of Volta Region, Ghana.

The review of literature covers topics as: the definition of conflict, theoretical standpoints of conflict, conflict in the political arena, conflict over ideals and ideas, conflict paradox, sources of conflict, types of conflict and

sources of conflict. The rest are family and peer relationship, effects of parent – student conflict, sibling conflict, empirical studies, and summary.

Definition of Conflict

There are many different perspectives, and therefore, definitions of conflict. Some require signs of visible fighting or open struggle as criteria for the existence of conflict. Other definitions focus on competing claims to scarce resources. The following definitions illustrate this perspective:

Conflict is ... a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first person cares about (Robbins, 1994, p.565).

Conflict is a ... social interaction in which a minimum of two parties strive at the same moment in time to acquire the same set of scarce resources (Wallensteen, 1988, p.119).

Warren (2005) argued that conflict in the strict sense of the word is a situation where parties either refuse to recognize the issue or oppose the change agent's proposal. These are as a result of sharp value and belief differences among the parties. The inability to recognize and deal with the issue at stake pushes the conflicting parties to attack personalities instead of addressing the real issue.

In behavioural terms, Deutsch (2001) viewed conflict as an action, which prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures or renders ineffective another action with which it is incompatible. By inference, in the senior high school situation discontentment with leadership performance could lead to tension and confrontation between the headship and their subordinates. This illustrates a state of conflict.

Mullins (2005) also saw conflict as behaviour meant to obstruct the achievement of other person's goals. He affirms earlier assertions made by Deutsch (2001) that conflict is based on the incompatibility of goal and arises from opposing behaviors.

Odetola and Ademola (1985) explained conflict as usually involving a measure of confrontation and sometimes leading to violence. Conflict by this explanation connotes the understanding of student disturbances in schools.

Pondy (1967) indicated that conflict can be best understood if it is viewed as a dynamic process made up of five stages. These stages are the latent, perceived, felt, manifest and conflict aftermath. Fisher, Ludin, Williams, Abdi & Smith (2000) reiterated that latent conflict is below the surface but may need to be brought into the open before it can be effectively addressed. Manifest conflict, also known as open conflict is visible enough and may require actions that address both the pedigree and the visible effects so as to break the conflict cycle from revolving.

Table 1

Pondy's Dynamic Process of Conflict

Stage	Process	Cause of Conflict
First	Latent Conflict	Competition for scarce resources when the average number in demand is more than the resources. Desire for autonomy and divergence of subunit goals.
Second	Perceived Conflict	Parties involved become aware of the problem but incompatibility is perceived. It does not necessarily emerge from latent conflict.
Third	Felt Conflict	Occurring as an emotional response to the second stage. Felt conflict may find expression in fear, threat, mistrust and hostility.
Forth	Manifest Conflict	Emerges if nothing is done to resolve the felt conflict. It can result in the exhibition of behaviors ranging from physical or verbal attack to refusal to work.
Fifth	Conflict Aftermath	Follows the forth state, which is an open conflict. If there were satisfaction after conflict resolution then further relationships may be more co-operative but if conflict was suppressed then the first state will reappear.

Source: Adapted from Cook, C.W. & Hunsaker, P.L. (2001).

Regardless of the divergent views on the concept of conflict, a couple of general themes can be found in most definitions, which will help in understanding and dealing with conflict in the school context.

Theoretical Standpoints of Conflict

According to Worchel, Cooper & Geothals (1991), conflict theory began to emerge in American Sociology in the 1960's. It was mainly a revision of ideas set forth much earlier by Karl Marx and Max Weber (1920 - 1964). Although both Marx and Weber were conflict theorists and agreed with each other in important ways, they nonetheless developed different versions of conflict theories.

Both theories agree that the basic structure of society is mainly determined by the efforts made by individuals and groups to obtain scarce resources that are in limited supply to satisfy their personal needs and wants. Conflict over access is always occurring since these resources are in short supply.

Karl Marx sees social conflict as mainly arising over access to material conditions that sustain life. Max Weber however, believed that conflict occurs in a much broader way than simply in regard to essential material needs and conditions.

Weber recognizes that conflict over economic resources is a basic feature of social life but he still thinks that other types of conflict occur as well. He outlines two of these:

- a) conflict in political arena and b) conflict over ideas and ideals (Worchel, Cooper & Geothals, 1991).

Conflict in the Political Arena

According to Weber, social life is mainly a struggle for and domination by some individuals and groups over others and this struggle for power is confined to formal political organization but occurs within all types of groups such as religious, educational and other social organizations.

Conflict over Ideas and Ideals

Differences in ideas and ideals due to generational gap between parents and their children can be classified under this type of conflict. Adult – adolescent student conflict is a disagreement between adults and such adolescents. It is distinguished from other forms of interpersonal conflict by relationship of the participants and their life goals (Hall, 1987). Each generation is associated with its own problems and therefore tends to overlook, misunderstand and misinterpret the problems of the other. While the adolescent students are just going through their own development, the middle – aged parents are re-evaluating their lives, thus making adults (parents) –adolescent students' relationship a unique one which is prone to misunderstanding and thus leading to conflict (Atwater, 1986).

Hall (1904), one of the proponents of classical psychoanalytical theory was greatly influenced by Darwin's famous theory of evolution. Hall believes that all development is controlled by genetically determined psychological factors and that the environment plays a minimum role in development during adolescence. He points out that adolescence is the period from 12-23 years of age and is filled with storm and stress; a turbulent time charged with conflict and mood swings. In

Hall's view, an adolescent's thoughts, feelings and actions oscillate between conceit and humility, good and temptation, happiness and sadness.

Other theoretical standpoints on conflict have been considered below so as to help understand how the concept of conflict applies to the school organization. Views identified are the functionalist (traditional), human relations (behavioural), interactionist (current thinking) and the conflict school of theory.

According to Commonwealth Secretariat (2001), the belief that all conflict is harmful and must be avoided is functionalism. The functionalists (or traditionalists) argue that conflict is the result of poor communication, narrow mindedness and lack of trust between people, and the failure of parties to a conflict to be aware of and responsive to the needs and desires of the other party. This view, that conflict is bad, provides a clear framework for looking at the behaviour of people who create conflict, and for developing strategies to address that conflict. As all conflict is to be avoided, we tend to direct our attention to identifying the causes of conflict, and focus on programmes that help people avoid future conflict.

Although much recent research indicates that this approach to conflict reduction does not necessarily lead to improved long –term relationships between groups or individuals, many of us still evaluate conflict situations from this perspective (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001).

The human relations view according to Commonwealth Secretariat (2001) is as follows: the belief that conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any group or relationship is humanism. Humanists believe that conflict is a natural

event in all relationships and groups, and given that it is inevitable, it should be accepted. Conflict cannot be eliminated from human interaction, and there are even times when conflict may benefit those who are a part of it. Teachers and school authorities tend to punish students in the high schools by way of correcting them from their misdeeds. Students usually resist such attempts by teachers only to realize later that such corrections are for their own good.

The belief that conflict is not only a positive force in a group, but that it is absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively is interactionalism. (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001). According to this view, interactionists encourage conflict on the basis that a friendly, placid, co-operative group or relationship is prone to stand still, becoming dull, and unresponsive to the need for change. The interactionist approach encourages group leaders to preserve an ongoing undercurrent of conflict to ensure the group remains innovative and self-critical, and that individuals reach their full potential in a given situation.

The conflict school of theory according to Odetola and Ademola (1985) arose as a critique of the structural functionalist approach. They indicated that

- a) while the notion of a functional unity is logical, it is not always correct or real,
- b) relationships are not harmonious all the time and often relationships are in conflict.

The view holds that conflict relations are normal and should not be looked upon as abnormal. That is, it is not possible that a system is always directed towards a state of equilibrium. Odetola and Ademola (1985) argued that conflict

can be normal in the sense that the harmony we envisage on the surface of human activity is far more apparent than real. Thus the normative structure which we perceive is not the real level at which action takes place. To illustrate this viewpoint with the high school situation, it can be said that in the school community, it is wrong for a boarding student to go to town without exeat. If he/she is caught by school authorities then conflict arises. Hence at the level of real human action, conflict is endemic.

Hale (1990) stated that “the psychoanalytic forces of Freud draw attention to strong rebellious forces deep within the human personality which are at best only partially restrained by internalized social values” (p. 29).

The Conflict Paradox

If one should accept and acknowledge the interactionists’ position that conflict is necessary for a group to achieve its goals, then why are so many people uncomfortable with conflict? The answer is that many societies in the Commonwealth are founded on the traditional view (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001).

Tolerance of conflict is counter to many cultures in our societies, where home, school and religious institutions are generally the most influential during our childhood years, when we are developing our attitudes. For the most part, these institutions have traditionally strengthened the importance of getting along with others and avoiding conflict.

Parents generally set the standards that they expect their children to observe and comply with. School systems reinforce this model of authority, and

set exams in which students are rewarded for getting their answers to agree with those the teacher has determined are correct.

According to Commonwealth Secretariat (2001), most religious institutions have also supported anti – conflict values, emphasizing peace, harmony and obedience to authority. By way of example, when the head of the Roman Catholic Church or the Imam of a Mosque speaks officially on religious matters, he is held to be infallible by his congregation. It is not surprising therefore, that the traditional perspective on conflict continues to receive wide support, in spite of contradictory evidence.

Sources of Conflict

Rice (1984) indicated that the focus of conflict parents have with their adolescence may be in any of the five areas stated below:

1. Social life and Customs: This he observes creates more conflict than any other factor. The common sources of friction are : Choice of friends or dating partners.
 - a. How often they are allowed to go out.
 - b. Curfew hours.
 - c. Choice of clubs, activities and societies.
 - d. Choice of clothes and hairstyle.
 - e. Age allowed for dating, riding in cars and participating in certain events.

2. Responsibility: Parents observe and become critical of adolescents who do not show proof of being responsible. Parents and adolescents do show responsibly in
 - a. Earning and spending money.
 - b. Use of telephone.
 - c. Performance of family chores.
 - d. Care of personal belongings, clothes and rooms.
 - e. Use of family property: furniture, tools, supplies and equipment.
3. Moral and Values: Parents are concerned especially with
 - a. Drinking, smoking and use of drugs .
 - b. Sexual behaviour.
 - c. Language and speech.
 - d. Basic honesty.
 - e. Going to church/mosque or worshipping days.
 - f. Obeying the law and staying out of trouble.
- 4 Family Relationship: Rice (1984) indicated that conflict arises in the home on issues like
 - a. General attitude and level of respect shown to parents.
 - b. Relationship with relatives, especially aged grandparents in the home.
 - c. Quarreling with siblings.
 - d. Immature behaviour.

5. School: Parents are usually concerned about the following:

- a. Behaviour in School.
- b. Study habits and homework.
- c. Grade and level of performance
- e. General attitude towards school studies and teachers.

Conflict arises whenever adolescents (including students) fall below the expectation of parents (Rice, 1984).

Individuals with wide differences in age working together can also generate conflict of some sort. Seltzer (1989) argued that students in adolescent years value opinions of their peer group above other reference groups hence conflict management programmes must capitalize on the importance of peers in the lives of typical students. Mullins (2005) shared the same view when he indicates that age gap between older employees and younger managers would want to demonstrate power whilst the older employees on the other side exhibit experience.

Snowden and Gorton (2002) are of a different view as regard the sources of conflict. They cite a study conducted by Lindelow and Scott in 1989 outlining the types of social conflict, which are prevalent in schools. According to Snowden and Gorton (2002), four primary sources of social conflict with the schools are communication problems, organizational structure, human factors such as personality and limited resources. They argued that communication problems increase with the absence of feedback. It is true that regular feedback about performance is very important since it boosts morale. The absence of it

may initiate poor morale and negative attitudes resulting in an unwillingness to work.

When effective communication is lacking, the result may be manifested in the form of a misunderstanding of organisational objectives. Hatch (1997) indicated that the speaking of different languages most often leads to disagreement on issues of mutual concern. The differences in professional language may be due to ethnicity but there are differences in professional language as well. She cited the doctor and the administrator in the hospital setting by stating that conflict between the two categories of professionals can be traced in part to the different ways in which they communicate. Whilst the doctor is trained to focus on care rates for medical techniques and practices, the administrator emphasizes costs and return on investments in expensive facilities and equipment. In the midst of this, the doctor and the administrator may not be speaking the same language professionally.

Robbins (1983) reiterated that semantic difficulties, insufficient exchange of information and noise in the communication channel are all barriers to communication, which is a potential source of conflict. When individuals in a group speak different languages, there is the greater tendency for them to disagree on issues. Conflict is more likely to occur when communication is not clear and when there is confusion about what is valued and rewarded.

Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) in their discussion on the issue of spreading gossip among individuals as a source of conflict intimated that this is behavioural. Furthermore, they asserted that it is through the making of

unreasonable demands that one can lie or spread unkind gossip about others. To enjoy some level of peaceful co-existence, institutions should not harbour such character-traits in any form whatsoever.

Hatch (1997) shared a different view concerning the fact that personality incompatibility, which is a human factor, can also lead to conflict. To her, attributing instances of conflict within the organization to individual differences or blaming one party or the other is neither here nor there; instead, conflicts in organizations are associated with conditions at the group or organizational level of analysis. Hatch affirmed that individual differences rarely provide a complete explanation of conflict in organizations. However, Brinkman & Kirschner (1994) added that most of the conflicts attributed to personality come as a result of personality incompatibilities.

Yukl (1989) also talked about a variety of sources of conflict in team, committee, workshop and organizational settings. Among these sources of conflict are instances where members in a group have strong differences in values, beliefs or goals or have high level of task or lateral interdependences. Conflict will occur when the activities of one group have a direct consequence on another group's ability to achieve its goal.

Mack (2000) contended that groups may also tend to believe that their way of thinking or doing things is not only the best but also the only right way. Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) shared a similar view that conflict occurs when parties in a state of interdependence perceive a divergence of interests or belief

that their aspirations or goals cannot be realized due to scarcity and so it can build unhealthy competition for authority.

Bateman and Scott (1999) indicated that the complex maze of interdependencies throughout organizations provide boundless opportunity for conflict to arise among groups. The level of interdependence on each other with reference to groups in an organization cannot be underestimated. Sometimes, each group may operate independently but the overall success of the organization depends on the combined efforts of all the groups involved. McShane and Van Glinow (2004) referred to it as pooled interdependence. To them, pooled interdependence, which is the lowest among the interdependence has units operating independently except for reliance and a common source of resource or authority. Students experience pooled interdependence when they are lined up in front of their bookshop to collect their textbooks before they get finished.

According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), competition for limited resources can also inhibit the desired performance of a school setting. I tend to agree with these authors that inadequate or limited resources can heighten tension so far as students are concerned. This is because students are supposed to operate at every point within a specific time hence the inadequacy of resources be it learning or recreational may lead to students putting undue pressure on one another in order not to be left out of the race.

Boachie-Mensah and Marfo-Yiadom (2005) also agreed that limited resources have always been the source of conflict. It is sometimes surprising to find out that even managers fight for what is best for them and their groups

instead of what is good for the organization. This is because the resources are highly inadequate.

The sources of conflict in youth groups according to Aganga-Williams (1998) include the following:

- (i) Shared resources: When there is a limited amount of resources in the group that must be shared by the members, lack of co-operation and eventually open conflict can emerge because everyone strives at the same time to get hold of the same set of scarce resources.
- (ii) Differences in goals: Conflict can be generated when individual's goals in the youth group are inconsistent with those of the group. At times this could lead to formation of different "camps"(sub groups) within one association or club.
- (iii) Differences in perception and values: This occurs when an individual in the group may place high value on his time. He may really want to work on the group's activities but at the same time may accord a lot of importance to spending time with his / her family. This is an obvious value system conflict. In the same vein, a leader and some of his members may have conflicting perceptions of a situation, yet their goal remains the same.
- (iv) Disagreements in role requirements: An individual member of a group may have conflicting demands placed upon him / her by both the group and other institutions he belongs to. For instance, a female student may be required by the school to work on an activity on a Saturday when she is

supposed to attend the Seventh Day Adventist Church Service, on the same days of the week.

- (v) Nature of work activities: This concerns the quantity of work assigned in the group in performing the group's activities. Individuals may compare workloads relative to the other. If there is inequity, conflict can result. This type of situation would be more manifest in a youth enterprise group.
- (vi) Individual approaches: People have different styles and approaches in their interaction with others in a group situation. For example, a student may be reflective, speak little, but deliver goods of wisdom when ready to talk about an issue. Another student in the group may adopt an argumentative approach. This may generate conflict.
- (vii) Internalized conflict: The mountainous challenges encountered by young people today including students leave them with internalized conflicts.

A student who moves to a boarding institution for the first time, for instance, is worried about his family, not satisfied with the meals being served him / her, would wish to have the desired freedom to go about things, but these are far-fetched.

Nubgen (1978) identified communication problems, structural factors within an organization, human factors and conflict promoting interactions as possible sources of conflict. Communication problems according to Nubgen (1978) have to do with semantic difference in language usage. She explains that words mean different things to people and varying connotations can distort and impede communication. She added that insufficient exchange of information also

contributes to communication problems since it may leave ambiguities in points of view.

On structural source of conflict, Nebgen (1978) explained that the size of organization, for instance, has been found to correlate with amounts of conflict. The larger the school, the greater the number of conflict and the higher the intensity. Robbins (1983) strongly agreed with Nebgen when he claimed that the larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the likelihood of conflict.

Nebgen (1978) indicated that conflict-promoting interactions are those that involve competition, domination and provocation. She explained that in a competitive interaction, each side is trying to gain something that the other wants. She also noted that when interaction involves dominance, one party is attempting to control the behaviour of the other party. She finally contended that in provocation, intentional and unintentional harm is inflicted on one person or group by another.

A seminar paper (International Education and Exchange Services [IEES], 2001) discussed the sources of conflicts in schools pertaining to students, teachers/students, and teachers/heads as follows:

Among students, conflict may arise from the socio – economic background of parents. Some students may have everything they want at their beck and call at home but do not have the same facilities or opportunities at school so they find it difficult to cope or adjust. This becomes a source of conflict.

In mixed schools, male student – female student relationships and male teacher - female student relationships also cause conflicts.

Drug usage and abuse become a source of worry to school heads and administrators. This bad attitude is sometimes caused by peer pressure or the desire for adventure which starts gradually until it gets out of hand.

The influence of the media, especially electronic, is having a negative impact on the youth especially students. Foreign culture is portrayed as superior to ours so whatever is shown on the screen is right hence the display of “macho” and “violence” which our students are copying. Students may also have emotional problems which they may not share with any other person eg. coming from a broken or polygamous home.

Empowering such young persons requires information, education, counseling, communication and provision of the wherewithal to facilitate improvement of their welfare.

Types of Conflict

The sources and conditions which cause conflict, have created varieties of patterns in which conflicts occur. Some authors prefer using the terms “forms” or “levels” instead of “types” when discussing conflict. The researcher will limit the discussions to the most common types of conflict for the purpose of this study.

National conflict is the type that engulfs the entire nation, particularly resulting from political activities. This type of conflict namely erupts from social, political, economic and cultural sources. Sawyer (1997) mentioned political conflict as the type of conflict which requires the involvement of the mechanisms

in the political system for their management. A vivid example of a national conflict is the Liberian conflict which lasted well over a decade.

Ethnic conflict is another aspect of national conflict that engulfs two particular ethnic groups. What is so worrying about this type of conflict is that it can spread to other groups if appropriate steps are not taken to handle it. A typical example of ethnic conflict that Ghana has experienced is the Kokomba and Nanumba clashes that have destroyed lives and properties in the northern sector of the country.

Religious conflict is also the type that ensues between two religious bodies. Conflict erupts between these religious bodies as a result of doctrinal differences and ideological practices. As a result of the introduction of “sharia” law by the Moslems, Nigeria for sometime now has been experiencing religious conflict between Christians and Moslems.

Vertical conflict occurs among superiors and subordinates in an organization whereas horizontal conflict occurs among members of the same level or departments. Vertical conflict is sometimes institutionalized in union groups and normally occurs between management and labour while the horizontal conflict is common among the departments of a functionally structured division or organization (Hatch, 1997).

Personality, group and organisational conflict are other categories of conflict that need mentioning. Personality conflict, which exists within and among persons, can be grouped under intra-personal and inter-personal.

Nnadi (1997) explained intra-personal and inter-personal conflict as follows:

Intra-personal conflict: This is conflict within an individual having various needs. For example, a student is faced with needs for which the resources available cannot meet and this student becomes torn between which of the needs to satisfy at that time.

Inter-personal conflict: This is the form of conflict characterized by group members openly expressing their antagonism to the ideas and views expressed by other group members, as a result of which group consensus cannot be achieved and group cohesiveness is jeopardized. This type of conflict manifests in the following forms:

- (a) Conflict between individuals or groups.
- (b) Conflict between individuals, like the house master and a boarding student.
- (c) Group versus an individual, for example, a whole class and the mathematics teacher.
- (d) Group versus group, for example, the whole staff against the student body.

Kinard (1988) also intimated that intra-personal conflict often results from conflicting needs or frustrating situations. By this he submitted that a person entering an organization such as a fresh student admitted into the university might have ambitions of obtaining a first class degree at the end of the programme. Achieving this goal might mean sacrificing something equally important such as

time with friends in the halls of residence or spending time in the television room watching one programme instead of another.

Wright and Noe (1996), Huffman, Vernoy and Vernoy (1994), Wilson and Hanna (1990) grouped intra-personal conflict into three categories as: (a) Approach-approach conflict, (b) Avoidance-avoidance conflict, and (c) Approach-avoidance conflict.

Approach – approach conflict is a condition where two alternative ideas or views or values are equally attractive and conflict arises in trying to make a choice between the two. For example, a female student may have to choose between accepting the proposal of a young well – to – do man and pursuing a promising academic interest. Either choice will be desirable to her.

Even though there are the approach tendencies towards two alternative goals, there is a limitation and that is choosing only one of them. Among the three types of intra-personal conflict, the approach-approach variety tends to be least stressful in the sense that each alternative chosen has a reasonably happy ending. Due to this pleasant reality, it is relatively easy to go ahead and make a choice.

Avoidance – avoidance conflict is a condition in which the two alternative ideas or views available are equally unattractive but a choice must be made one way or the other. For example, a headmaster may have to choose between retaining an irresponsible teacher at post or effecting his / her release from the staff only for the affected classes to remain without a vital subject teacher for a term or longer. It is obvious that none of these alternatives is favourable.

Huffman, Vernoy, & Vernoy (1994) point out that this conflict leads to a great deal of ambivalence.

The approach – avoidance conflict is experienced where a person is both drawn to and repelled by a goal or cause of action. For example, a student may be willing to attend chemistry practical but he is scared by the recent gas explosion in the chemistry laboratory. This student may be confused because of this conflict.

The researcher tends to agree with Wright and Noe (1996) and other writers regarding the approach-avoidance type of conflict in the sense that at times one gets confronted with options that carry with it merits and demerits. The researcher on the other hand holds a different view in connection with approach-approach and avoidance-avoidance conflict because in most instances one alternative is bound to overdo the other. Conflict sometimes exists because one would want to have both alternatives at the same time. When the alternatives are redefined continually, one of them will over-ride the other.

With regard to inter-personal conflict, Rao, Rao and Narayana (1987) observed that the most commonly cited reasons for this type of conflict are personality differences, perceptions, clashes of values and interests, power and status differences as well as scarce resources.

Inter-personal value conflict has to do with personality conflict in the sense that just as people have different styles that may or may not be compatible, they also embrace incomparable combinations of instrumental and terminal values that inevitably promote disagreement (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004).

Bundy and Wasserman (1970) in their study conducted in an academic library, found that about two-thirds of the disputes involved conflict between individuals. According to them, inter-personal conflicts originate from disagreement due to differing values or aspirations. Personality differences of individuals in the same organization may result in conflict. The researcher then agrees with Wright and Noe (1994, p.687) when they refer to inter-personal conflict as “personality clashes”.

Inter-personal conflict as Berne (2004) indicated, results from the individual’s play for power or need for power. Sometimes, as job structure expands, roles certainly increase thus reducing inter-personal conflict between employees. However, with greater job structure, employees also feel greater inter-personal role conflict persists since they become confined by routinisation, rules and regulations. Role conflict may result in the loss of job satisfaction, decreased confidence in one’s superior, and often times the tendency to avoid the unpleasant work situation.

Kinard (1988) shared similar views with Berne (2004) when he observed that inter-personal conflict most often occurs when two people compete for the same job or for the limited resources. He further said that conflict can exist between an employee and the employer on the inter-personal level.

Johnson and Johnson (1995) also classified conflict into four different types as controversy; conceptual conflict; conflict of interest and developmental conflict. However, their classification falls under the two types of personality conflict namely intra-personal and inter-personal conflict.

A controversy occurs when one person's ideas, information, conclusions, theories and opinions are incompatible with those of another person and the two seek to reach an agreement.

With conceptual conflict, incompatible ideas exist simultaneously in the mind of a person or information received by an individual does not seem to fit with what he/she already knows. This situation is created when the engagement of ideas and arguments are presented differently from one original point of view thus leading to a controversy within oneself.

The third classification which is conflict of interest is an inter-personal conflict which occurs when the actions of one person attempting to maximise his or her goals prevents, blocks or interferes with other people's interests. Attempting to have control over resources and a range of issues that affect relationships, often result in name-calling, casting of insinuations, threats or physical aggression.

Developmental conflict as the name suggests occurs between an adult and a child and in this state of conflict, there are opposing forces of stability and change within which the child cycles in and out, a process that helps develop the child cognitively and socially.

Wolman (1973) traced the basic cause of conflict to emotion. He referred to Dewey's conflict theory of emotion which states that "an emotion is a state of conflict," and argues that "without a conflict, there is no emotion; with it, there is" (p.755). Broom and Selznick (1963) were of the firm belief that conflict is a result of poor communication and that conflict arises because people do not understand

each other. They however admitted that “increased contact and improved communication may intensify conflict by making groups aware of their differences, increasing their fears, and revealing opposing interests of which they were unaware” (p.34). They also stated that conflicts are caused by mutually inconsistent needs and aspirations of groups. Nnadi (1997) attributed the causes of constant confrontation and conflicts in an institutional environment like the senior high school to its diversity of interest groups including professionals, semi – professionals, skilled, unskilled and technical as well as student population, parents and government officials attempting to focus on policies and objectives. Fisher (1972) indicated that personal desire for autonomy, people’s desire for increased control over their work and the desire to share in decision –making are factors that lead to conflict.

Effect of Adult – Student Conflict

Atwater (1986) indicated that some families and schools are able to manage parent-adolescent and teacher-adolescent conflict. Proper management of conflict facilitates individuality and independence in the adolescent as well as improving their psychological development. Montemayor (1983) explained that improper conflict management creates greater risk of serious problem behaviour. He continued that conflict between adults and children predisposes some children to delinquent behaviour thereby making them less likely to abide by socially sanctioned behaviour and strategies designed to meet individual needs.

In general, high levels of parent-student conflict are associated with a wide range of non-specific acting-out behaviour during adolescence. These include

mundane family matters such as schoolwork, social life and friend, home chores, disobedience, disagreement with siblings and personal hygiene (Montemayor, 1983). Parents and students rarely argue about “hot” issues such as sex, drug, religion and politics. Evidence of where students have serious problems with drug, alcohol, sex and crime is at least partly the result of stressful parent-adolescent relationship (Forde, 1997). Many students who are not involved in these kinds of serious problems still report that they have some difficulty relating to their parents (Laster, 1993). This attests to the fact that students really pass through some form of conflict.

Montemayor (1983) concluded that it is possible that a low pattern of conflict is a characteristics of normal relation between parents and adolescent students. Abnormal pattern is one in which conflict pervades, virtually, every area of the relationship. It is then difficult to know if parents and adolescent-student conflict causes problems for students or if the relation between parents and adolescent students is strained and unpleasant as a result of the problems that students may already have.

Investigation by Garotab (1990) on perceived source of conflict for adolescents indicated that dramatic differences exist for males and females in their strategies of coping with the conflict they experience. This means that there should be sex differences in how students respond to conflict. For this reason, the study seeks to find how different sexes are vulnerable to sources of conflict for students.

Family and Peer Relationship

Dragunova cited in Santrock (2001) retorted that if the adult initiates the process by providing a relative opportunity for the teenager, there is more often a smooth transition, which does not occur when the adolescent initiates the process. Parents who are caring, who make appropriate demands on the teenagers, give reasonable punishment, use sound argument and explain rules often reduce conflict in the family. However, those parents who are authoritarian come into conflict with the teenager.

Each adolescent's development occurs against a cultural background of contexts. These contexts include home, schools, peer groups, churches, neighbourhood, communities, each with meaningful historical, economic, social and cultural legacies (McLoyd, 1998). Cases of student behavioural problems have been outlined as modeling from films, home discipline practices and peer attitudes. Friendship is very important among their peers as they tend to support and become influenced by one another.

Grinder (1973) argued that peers facilitate young people's transition from reliance on their families to relative freedom in adolescence and a new pattern of responsibility in adulthood. He argued further that families can provide a small range of role –participation opportunities but peers' interactions offer them trial runs in preparing themselves for places in the social structure. Furthermore, group gives each adolescent opportunity to assume roles in society: to be temporarily a leader or follower, a deviant or conformist. There is then profound pressure on students to conform to group behaviour or norm. This can be a source of conflict

if there is deviant behaviour in the group with regard to what parents consider as inappropriate.

Sibling Conflict

According to Cobb (2001), adolescents growing up with brothers and sisters experience a different family life, and are affected differently by it than those without siblings. He explained further that most adolescents find that despite the conflicts that inevitably arise, they develop close bonds of affection with siblings.

The quality of relationships siblings enjoy with each other is motivated, in part, by the relationships their parents have with other children in the family. This is especially true for their parents' relationships with the older child (Brody, Stonemann & McCoy, 1994).

Although problems with siblings certainly exist, the impact of siblings on the social development of children is more positive than negative. Children learn many social skills from brothers and sisters, and sibling influence is especially valuable in many cultures throughout the world in which older siblings act as caregivers of younger siblings. Where there are siblings in a family, however, there are inevitable spats and conflicts. Although parents may fail to appreciate it at the time, these interactions usually have a positive influence on children's developing ability to resolve conflict. Furthermore, unilateral oppositions of young children are likely to be imbedded in the midst of positive interchanges, and after their mild spats, young children are likely to remain near one another and to continue their positive interaction (Heath, 2009).

How parents respond to young children's conflicts with their siblings makes a difference in how children resolve these conflicts, how they feel about themselves in relation to their siblings, and whether or not they will benefit from sibling rivalry and conflict. Heath (2009) summarized the following parental influences on siblings' ability to resolve conflict.

First, punitive parenting approaches are associated with high levels of sibling conflict. Second, conflicts are minimized when children's emotional needs are met by their parents and there is no favored child in the family.

Third, when parents act as mediators of siblings' conflicts by referring to moral principles as well as to children's feelings, young children engage in relatively mature forms of conflict, using justification for their actions and moral reasoning themselves. Fourth, parents need to be sensitive in their interventions, keeping in mind that parental interruption of constructive sibling conflicts might deprive young children of the opportunity to develop necessary social problem-solving skills. Finally, although sibling rivalry is inevitable and often has a positive impact on children's development, high levels of sibling jealousy often signal problems in family relationships.

Empirical Studies

Studies of school teachers and students' mutual attitudes indicate that the nature of the interaction between the two groups has always been determined by how they perceive each other. Noel, Kozee and Trait cited by Santrock (2001) determined from their study that students' perception of teachers depends on teachers attitudes towards them. They also indicated that students' perceptions are the most direct influence of what parents come to believe about the effectiveness of the school. These findings indicate that the perception and the reaction that exist between parents and teachers on one hand and students on the other hand are influenced by role attitude of parents and teachers.

A study was conducted by Harrison (1986) on adolescents' view of who adults are in the American society. In this study, they concluded that the environment has substantial effects on the perceptions and attitudes of adolescents about adults. They stated further that although it is agreed that adolescents' life in American culture is filled with misunderstanding with adults, the situation varies from one setting to another within the American Societies.

These empirical findings buttress the assertion by the social approach harming theories that social factors influence the conflict adolescents experience with adults. There is little conflict when adolescent students see parents as co-operative agents in the developmental process of teenagers.

Seifert and Hoffnung (1991) indicated in their study of junior high school boys that peer group influences adolescent development. They asserted that the pattern of identification with teachers, school values and peer groups appears to

be related and this could either increase or minimize conflict among adolescents and teachers. Conflicts between the demand of peer groups and school environment are, therefore, related to under-achievement. Congruence between the school, peers and home values reduces conflict and helps to foster social development of adolescents (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1991).

Teenage students like popularity which is normally linked to a particular clique and the crowd. Membership in a clique allows the adolescent to have few selected friends whom he/she views well and who shares the same interest with a much broader group of peers on a more casual and informal bases (Rapport & Rapport, 1980).

Peer pressure makes adolescent students to become conformists to peer students. On the other hand, non- conformity occurs when individuals react in opposition, to a group's expectation and intentionally move away from the actions and beliefs of the group (Sanctrock, 2001). Senior high students' choices of dress, music, language, values and leisure are in conformity to peer influence. Sanctrock (2001) explained that adolescents who conform to peer pressure tend to engage in some sort of negative conformity behavior. The adolescents use obscene language, steal, vandalize and make fan of parents and teachers. Those who refuse to conform to peer pressures are accepted by parents (adult) but are however rejected by their peers.

Sanctrock (2001) further explained that the influence of peers on an adolescent is great and sometimes makes the adolescent vulnerable to the peers. Accepting all peer statuses results in good relationship with peers but creates

conflict with school authorities and teachers. Rejecting peer pressure by conforming to parental and teachers' guiding principles leads to conflict between the adolescent student and peers.

Socio-economic status of parents influences the conflict adolescent students face with parents (McLoyd, 2000). He further explained that students in poverty often face problems at home and at school and that creates barriers in their learning. At home, low socio-economic status parents normally are not able to set high educational standards for adolescent students and cannot also assist them in doing their homework. Parents of low socio-economic background find it difficult paying for educational material and expenses such as books and educational trips. Such students he said, are sent to school with fewer resources.

Shade, Kelly and Oberg (1997) indicated that adolescent students from poor families tend to have lower academic achievements. At home, in their neighbourhood and at school, such students face problems that present barriers to effective learning. They concluded that adolescent students from impoverished background challenge parents for being partly responsible for their underachievement. They then commented that this increases the conflict between the adolescents and parents.

A study on tobacco use, particularly cigarette smoking and its control in nine secondary (high) schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana came up with evidence that 31.1% of students have smoked before and that 10.3% smoke cigarette regularly. A significant number of those who had never smoked (32.6%) came from high socio-economic homes as exemplified by the level of education

of the father (Amonoo-Lartson & Pappoe, cited by Wellington in The Health Courier, 1995).

In another study on tobacco smoking habits of secondary school students in the Accra District of the Greater Accra Region, Adanu as cited by Wellington in The Health Courier (1995) found out that 4.1% of the students in a particular mixed school (sample size of 100) had smoked before and 2.0% (1 male and 1 female) smoked cigarette regularly. The data indicated that two of them started smoking in primary school class 6 and one of them in Junior Secondary School. The reasons for smoking were the following: one student picked the habit from films and advertisement; another felt that smoking was a sign of maturity; and another smoked in response to peer pressure. The age onset in this study ranged from 12-14 years.

Wellington concluded that smoking exists among secondary school students though it is a minority of students who smoke. In spite of this small number of smokers, 88.8% of the students feel that smoking is currently a problem among secondary school students that has to be checked. It seems knowledge of school rules against smoking did not appear to influence a student's smoking habit in anyway, since all those who smoke know that there are school rules which say that students caught smoking in school are punished and can be suspended if caught another occasion. Of those who still smoke, the reasons given were that smoking helps one to forget social and financial problems and that smoking makes students attractive to friends.

Results of such studies show that though the numbers of people smoking are small, it appears tobacco smoking is more a problem of the youth than the old. Many people are not aware of the addictive nature of tobacco.

There does not seem to be any documentation on the types of health risks associated with tobacco use in Ghana and neither is any information on the incidence of cancer, mortality in relation to tobacco use as well as prevalence of cancer mortality in relation to tobacco use (Wellington, 1995).

Smoking is seen as a problem among the youth and this is perceived to create conflict between the youth and their parents as well as school authorities.

Coffman and Palen (2007) conducted a research into why High School Seniors drink. They have it that most high school seniors drink because:

1. They want to experiment with alcohol
2. Some drink for the thrill of it
3. Because it helps them relax and
4. They drink to get away from problems and deal with anger or frustration issues.

The purpose of their study was to identify the major motivations for drinking; find out if motivations were different for boys and girls, and understand how the different motivations for drinking among boys and girls were related to drinking initiation; frequency of drunkenness and daytime drinking.

Coffman and Palen (2007) asserted that, boys were likely to belong to the higher risk group of thrill seekers, while girls were more likely to belong to the lowest level of risky drinking, the experimenters. Both boys and girls who drink

just to experiment with alcohol are also more likely to initiate drinking at a later age, compared with those who drink for other reasons.

Kids with multiple reasons to drink including reasons related to coping with life, show the heaviest and most problematic drinking behaviors (Coffman & Palen, 2007).

Another study was conducted primarily to find out the perceived sources of inter-conflict for adolescent students in Senior Secondary Schools in Hohoe District of Volta Region of Ghana (Abomah 2005).

Based on findings of the study, Abomah (2005) concluded that there is no difference between adolescent males and females about the sources of conflict they experience in school. However, differences exist between adolescents from low and high socio-economic backgrounds regarding the sources of conflict they experience with adults. Adolescents from high socio-economic background with appropriate parenting style experience less conflict with adults. However, adolescents from low socio-economic background with poor parenting style experience more conflict between them and adults/parents.

From the findings of the study, the main sources of conflicts at school are clothing, drinking of alcohol and flouting school rules for males while females have sources of conflict which include the clothing they wear, haircut and their choice of friends. The main sources of conflict between adolescent boys and parents at home are choice of friends while for girls, it is the type of clothing they wear. Finally, Abomah (2005) in his study established that peer has an influence on the conflict adolescents experience with adults.

Summary

From the literature review, the theory has it that:

- (i) Conflict is the result of poor communication, narrow mindedness and lack of trust between people, and the failure of parties to a conflict to be aware of and responsive to the needs and desires of the other party (traditionalist view). As all conflict is to be avoided, we tend to direct our attention to identifying the causes of conflict, and focus on programmes that help people avoid future conflict.
- (ii) Conflict is a natural event in all relationships and groups, and given that it is inevitable, it should be accepted (humanist view). Teachers and school authorities tend to punish students in the high schools by way of correcting them from their misdeeds. By so doing, it creates conflict between students and school authorities.
- (iii) Conflict is not only a positive force in a group, but that it is absolutely necessary for a group to perform effectively (interactionist view). This approach encourages leaders to preserve an ongoing undercurrent of conflict to ensure that group remains innovative and self-critical, so that individuals reach their full potential in a given situation.

Even though the interactionist position is seen to be necessary for a group to achieve its goals, so many people are uncomfortable with conflict. This stems from the fact that many societies are founded on the traditional view.

The sources of conflict experienced by students are many. It is for these reasons that this study has developed research questions and hypotheses to find out students' perception of sources of conflict in the senior high school.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, the instrument and its administration and the technique for data analysis.

Research Design

Research design is simply a plan or blue print, which specifies how data relating to a problem should be collected and analyzed. It also provides the procedural outline for the conduct of any investigation. Gay (1992) explained that, research design indicates the basic structure of a study, the nature of hypothesis and the variables involved in the study. Perception, just like attitude, is a hypothetical structure. It cannot be measured directly. One can measure perception through its expression in what a person does and says (Oppenheim, 1992). Thus inferences are given as the main tool of tapping perception and attitudes (Gatumu, 1998). Against this background, the research design considered most appropriate for the study is the descriptive survey design. The survey method of social investigation is adopted to collect data on students' perception of conflict in senior high schools. The descriptive sample survey is an attempt to collect data from a population in order to determine current status of that population, with respect to one or more variables (Gay, 1992).

Gay (1992) explained further that the descriptive survey method is useful for investigating variety of educational problems including assessment of opinions, attitudes, demographic information, conditions and procedures. Descriptive data are usually collected through questionnaires, interviews or observation. Akimboye (1983) also indicated that descriptive survey is applied where an investigator starts inductively from observation and carefully studies existing attributes of particular events in the real world and attempts to derive the situation that exists.

Since the research is focused on educational issues with reference to senior high students, the instruments used in the collection of the data were questionnaires and interview schedules.

Surveys are used for descriptive reasons and are mainly used in studies that have individual people as the unit of analysis. In a survey, detailed data are collected on a phenomenon to describe and justify existing conditions and practices or to make plans for improving them. It is the best design available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly.

For a study involving individual students of a large population of 1400 from two public senior high schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District, descriptive survey is crucial in its analysis.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) indicate that a descriptive survey involves asking the same set of questions (often prepared in the form of a written questionnaire or ability test) of a large number of individuals whether by mail,

telephone or by person. The survey method when used with a careful probability sampling provides a group of respondents whose characteristics may be taken to reflect those of the larger population. Another advantage of survey method is that it can be used with greater confidence with regard to a particular question of special interest or value to a researcher. It is also useful because carefully constructed standardized questionnaire provides data in the same form from all respondents. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) further indicate that the greatest advantage of survey research is that it has the potential to provide the researcher with a lot of information obtained from quite a large sample of individuals.

Based on the exposition by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), a careful probability sample size of 300 respondents were selected for the study. With the construction of carefully structured standardized questionnaire in the same form from all respondents, it is hoped that the researcher would get a lot of information from the sample of individual students.

Even though survey design is useful, it has some weaknesses. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) identify three major difficulties associated with descriptive surveys. The first difficulty is ensuring that the questions to be answered are clear and not misleading. The second is getting respondents to answer questions thoroughly and honestly. The third has to do with the difficulty of getting sufficient number of questionnaires completed and returned for meaningful analysis to be made.

The Population

Population, according to Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (1999), refers to the complete sets of individuals (subjects), objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher intends to study. Koul (2002) also refers to population as any collection of specified group of human beings or non-human entities. Sarantakos (2005) explains that population is the total of all items in the group of items in which the researcher wants to study. According to Fink (1995), the criteria for the inclusion of a unit in a survey are based on the characteristics of respondents who are eligible for participation in the survey.

The target population for the study was made up of all students in the two public senior high schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana which was 1400. This total consisted of 750 students from Breman Asikuma Senior High School with 650 students from Odoben Senior High School (source: District Education Office, Breman Asikuma). The accessible population involved both male and female students from all the streams and forms in the two senior high schools. This included 420 first, 450 second and 530 third year students, giving a total of 1400 students as the accessible population.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sampling involves the use of part of a large population in a study and it is indispensable to the researcher (Nwana, 1995). Usually, the larger population sizes and effort needed do not permit a researcher to study all possible cases to understand the phenomenon under consideration. More so, studies on sample

produce quick answers as a complete coverage may not offer substantial advantage over the sample survey. It also requires less labour since a small portion of the target population is used.

For the purpose of this study involving a large population size of 1400 students, a multi-stage sampling approach was used. Sarantakos (2005) pointed out that this involves using more than one sampling technique to select the respondents. The sample for the study was drawn from the two public senior high schools namely Breman Asikuma Senior High School (BASS) and Odoben Senior High School (ODOSCO).

First of all, the students selected from these schools were stratified by sex before a simple random procedure of table of random numbers used to select the male and female students for the study. Kerlinger (1973), described the simple random sampling as the assignment of objects of a population in such a way that for any given assignment, every member of the population has an equal probability of being chosen. Kerlinger (1973) further retorted that random sampling is important because it is required by inferential statistics. If the researcher desires to make inferences about populations based on the behavior of samples, then random sampling must be used. According to Wilson and Mensah (1979), one of the problems with the simple random sampling is that the method needs a complete list of population, which is always not available.

The school authorities assisted the researcher to obtain the number of students that was selected. Fifty students from each of the three forms comprising

25 males and 25 females were selected from the two schools. This gave a total of 300 respondents with 150 males and 150 females which were randomly selected and sampled for the study. The female/male ratio of 1:1 per class was chosen because the difference between the number of males and females in each class was insignificant.

The age distribution of the respondents showed that 75 of them fell within 14-16 years, 201 of them fell within 17-19 years while 24 of them were 20 years and above. The background data further revealed that 128 respondents representing 42.7% were day students while 172 respondents representing 57.3% boarders. This aspect of analysis was aimed at finding out the background of respondents in order to make informed decision about their perception of the sources of conflict.

The sample size for the study was determined through a statistical estimation in choosing the number of respondents from the entire population of senior high school students which is quite homogeneous. According to Sarantakos (2005), in a homogeneous population with respect to the study object, a small sample may suffice.

The sample size determination was done using the table produced by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), shown as Appendix 'C'. This table shows that a population of 1400 should have a sample size of 302. Therefore, with a population of 1400, the researcher decided to settle for 300 instead of 302 as provided by the table.

Blaike (2003) and Wesley (1996) indicated that the general rule for samples is that, the bigger the sample the better and the more accurate will be the estimates. Blaike (2003) gives three considerations in determining the sample size.

- (1) If the population characteristics are the same, a small sample size is needed and if the characteristics are wider, then the sample size will need to be bigger.
- (2) The sample size for a study depends on how much sampling error can be tolerated. If the consequence of being wrong can be serious then a larger sample size is needed for a study.
- (3) Various methods for analyzing data have different requirements as far as the number of the sample size is concerned. Nominal-level data require a larger number than ordinal-level data. Larger numbers are required for analyzing interval-level data than needed for ratio-level data.

Research Instrument

The instrument developed and used to elicit relevant data for the study was a questionnaire made up of five sections. Section A was demographic data which covered item number one to six. Items in this section sought to collect data on the background of respondents.

Section B which covered items numbered 7 to 17 was used to collect data on perceived home factors that produce conflict for students. Some of the items in this section were constructed based on the five-point Likert Scale as described by Best and Kahn (1995). An item in this section required respondents to rank

with 1 for most to 5 for least of factors on which respondents disagreed with their parents or adults.

Section C elicited information on sources of students' perception of school conflict. Item 18 to 28 sought information on factors that contributed to conflicts between students and school authorities. Some items in this section were close ended as well as open ended. Other items were similarly in the form of Likert Scale as in section B. An item in this section also required ranking like in section B.

Section D sought to elicit information on how peer group influences contributed to conflict between students and adults. It covered item 29 to 39. Item 29 required a categorical response of yes or no while item 30 to 33 were open ended statements. Others in the same section (34 to 39) were constructed using Likert Scale of five points.

Section E was designed to find out how students perceived the socio-economic background of parents to contribute to conflict they faced with adults. All items in this section (40 to 43) were in the form of five-point Likert Scale as indicated earlier. The level of conflict for both male and female adolescent students was catered for in the instrument.

The questions were carefully framed with consideration for relevance and clarity which were basic to the validity of a questionnaire. All terms were clearly explained so as to have the same meaning to all respondents.

Kerlinger (1973) indicated that, in most cases, questionnaire is widely used for collecting data in educational research. It is very effective for securing factual

information about practices and conditions on which the respondents are presumed to have knowledge. Subsequently, if properly understood and implemented, the technique helps in the stage of data analysis.

In spite of its merits, questionnaire method has some limitations. Respondents may not provide appropriate answers to questions since a questionnaire normally involves the use of structured questions. Furthermore, it is expensive in terms of finance and time if respondents are scattered over a large area (Kerlinger,1973). Sometimes, a questionnaire may give inaccurate responses. Another disadvantage is that respondents may have the tendency to look ahead, skip around or compare their responses with those of their colleagues and friends when completing the questionnaire. This problem can act as a limitation to the use of a questionnaire because it distracts from the basic assumption that an individual is free to express his/her own opinion.

After the analysis of the questionnaire, it became necessary to follow it up with an interview schedule with the respondents. The researcher hoped to obtain certain types of confidential information that the respondents might be reluctant to put up in writing.

Open-form questions were initially used in the written interview. The respondents were encouraged to answer in their own words. This was followed by voice interview and this provided greater depth of responses from respondents. Through this interview schedule, the researcher was able to explore areas not anticipated in the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

The questionnaire and interview schedule were used because the focal data for the research project were attitudes and perceptions of individuals. Thus the most direct and fruitful approach was to ask the individuals themselves. Cannel and Kahn (1966) noted that the interview schedule and the questionnaire appear as powerful instruments for social research and that perceptions, attitudes and opinions that cannot be inferred by observation are accessible through interviews.

Pilot Study

The instrument was pre-tested in a pilot study at Swedru Senior High School (SWESCO) in the Agona West District in the Central Region so as to ascertain its reliability and validity. The school was chosen for pre-testing of the instrument because it has almost the same characteristics as that of the two schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District slated for the main study. The pilot study was also conducted outside the area of study so as to avoid respondent bias during the main study.

A total of 30 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students selected from form 1 to 3 at Swedru Senior High School. Sarantakos (2005) explained that pilot studies are small tests of single elements of the research instrument and are predominantly used to check eventual mechanical problems of the instrument.

The pilot study revealed defects in the draft questionnaire which were corrected. Items on the questionnaire that expressed identical concepts were collapsed. Others that were found to be ambiguous or incomprehensible were

either deleted or made clearer. Foddy (1995) indicated that there is an emerging consensus among researchers that piloting questions on a small sample of respondents drawn from the target population is more useful for uncovering aspects of the questions that will make it difficult for respondents to interpret questions as intended.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Content validity of research instruments is very important in any study. It is one of the basic principles of social research (Sarantakos, 2005). Since one of the means of achieving content validity is by expert judgement (Gay, 1992; Borg & Gall, 1989), the instruments were modified, adapted and given to the two supervisors of the researcher who are experienced in questionnaire design for scrutiny. Their comments, corrections and suggestions in respect of both the open-form and closed-ended questions were incorporated into the instruments to help improve the establishment of content validity of the instruments. This was done because if an item in the instruments appeared irrelevant, the respondents might not take it serious or potential users might not consider the results useful.

As a result of the pattern of responses, unclear, biased, ambiguous and deficient items especially those which used the Likert scale were revised and modified for clarity. Substitutions were made for statements and /or items that were trifling before the final version was printed. Reliability of the instrument was computed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 16) was used for the coefficient of 0.76. The

reliability co-efficient before the main data collection supports the views of Sproull (1988) that reliability co-efficient of a designed instrument should be approximately 0.70. The revised questionnaire which became the final instrument is attached as Appendix 'A'.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher made initial visits to each of the two public schools in the district. Introductory letters were obtained from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), University of Cape Coast (see Appendices D and E). This helped the researcher to get the needed assistance from the Headmasters in the two senior high schools in the district.

A meeting was held with the school authorities to decide on the date and time for the exercise to be carried out. The authorities promised to inform the students and make them available on the stipulated dates and time for the administration of the instrument. On the appointed date, random sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size for the exercise. During the administration of the questionnaires in all the two schools, there was an introductory section where the purpose of the exercise was explained to the respondents. These respondents were assured of their anonymity and asked to be objective in their responses. All questions were discussed one after the other to help respondents especially those who were not clear with some aspects of the questionnaire. All questionnaires were retrieved after the stipulated time of one hour and so the recovery rate of 100% was achieved.

The researcher himself conducted the administration of the instrument and collection of data. Two weeks were used in the administration of the questionnaires. After analyzing the questionnaire, it became necessary to follow it up with the interview schedule. A total of 60 copies of the interview schedule administered to 60 out of the 300 respondents which were randomly selected from the two public schools chosen for the research. As a result, 30 respondents each were selected from Breman Asikuma Senior High School and Odoben Senior High School making a total of 60 respondents for the interview. The researcher hoped to obtain certain types of confidential information that the respondents might be reluctant to put up in writing in the questionnaire. The interview schedule was meant to throw light on the outcome of the questionnaire.

Open-form questions were asked alongside the closed-ended questions by the researcher. Respondents were encouraged to answer in their own words and this provided greater depth of response. Through the interview schedule the researcher was able to explore areas not anticipated in the questionnaire. (see Appendix 'B').

The questionnaire and interview schedule were used because the focal data for the research project were the attitudes and perceptions of individuals. Thus the most direct and fruitful approach was to ask the individuals themselves. Cannel and Kahn (1966) noted that the interview schedule and questionnaire appear as powerful instruments for social research and that perceptions, attitudes and opinions which cannot be inferred by observations are accessible through interviews.

Data Analysis Plan

Since the study is purely descriptive one, the main statistical tool that was used to support the data was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This was because the SPSS offers a full range of contemporary descriptive statistical methods. It also has good labeling and editing facilities as well as the ability to produce output in both report and table format and handles data easily. The version of SPSS used for the data analysis was SPSS 16.0.

After collecting the raw data from the field, the next stage was to process the data to find answers to the research questions. The following steps were followed in processing the data:

(i) Editing the Data

This involved scrutinizing the completed research instruments to identify possible errors, non-completion of questions, misclassification and general gaps in the information gathered from the field. Editing the questionnaire involved a thorough and careful checking of the responses.

(ii) Coding the Data

Scoring and coding of data was done based on the items per section. The respondents were expected to respond to all the items on the questionnaire. Items with Likert scale were assigned a weight of 5,4,3,2 and 1 for strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree for positive items respectively. These weights were reversed for the negative perception so that high weights always represented positive perception while low weights indicated negative perception of students' perception of conflict with adults.

Analysis of the Interview Schedule

The responses from the open-form questions in the interview schedule were grouped according to their major similarities. By so doing, the researcher was able to explore areas not anticipated in the questionnaire and this threw more light on certain aspects of students' perception of conflict in senior high schools in the district.

For the statistical analysis of the data, two types of data analysis were undertaken. The first involved the use of descriptive statistics; thus frequencies and percentages were used in describing the perception of sources of conflict for students. The percentages were used in describing biographic data and answering all the research questions.

Secondly, inferential statistics, specifically t-test, were used to analyse the data in order to test the hypotheses formulated. For the first hypothesis, a t-test (independent) was used to determine whether there was significant difference in the perception of male and female students regarding the conflict they experience in school. A t-test was again used to test the second hypothesis in order to compare the perception score of students from high and low socio-economic background regarding the conflict they experience. These tests were used because respondents to be studied were randomly selected. All the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the analysis of data are presented and discussed. The research findings are presented under the following sub-headings:

- a) What school environmental factors do students perceive to produce conflict between them and school authorities?
- b) How do the influences of peer group contribute to student conflict with adults?
- c) Are the sources of conflict the same for male and female students?
- d) How do socio-economic status of parents contribute to student conflict with adults?

Research Question One

What School Environmental Factors do Students Perceive to Produce Conflict between Them and School Authorities?

Some factors that are perceived to generate conflict in schools between students and school authorities have been identified. These factors include the choice of friends, drinking of alcohol, smoking habits and types of music played during entertainment. Data are presented on students' perception about school life, their contribution towards class discussions and what school authorities

considered as problematic behavior. The treatment given by senior students, getting assignments done on time and punishments perceived as sources of conflict are presented. The academic performance of schools and misunderstanding with some teachers as perceived sources of conflict are also presented in the data. This addresses research question 1, which states that what school environmental factors do students perceive to produce conflict between them and school authorities?

The Items in Section C (Questions 18-28) of the students' questionnaire were used to answer research question two as shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2

Nature of Perceptions held by Students in Schools

S/N	Item	Positive		Negative	
		Response	Response	Response	Response
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Relationship between Students and Teachers	250	82.4	50	17.6
2	School Life	231	76.0	69	24.0
3	Treatment by Senior Students	195	65.0	105	35.0
4	Contribution to Class Discussions	233	74.3	77	25.7
5	Problematic Behaviors of Students	241	80.4	59	19.6

6	Changing School due to Poor Performance	122	40.7	178	59.3
7	Misunderstanding with a Particular Teacher	101	33.7	199	66.3
8	Getting Assignment done on Time	258	86.0	42	14.0
9	Punishment in School	217	72.3	83	27.7

As seen from Table 2, respondents held positive perceptions in seven out of the nine items showing the nature of perceptions held by students in schools. However, only respondents showed a negative perception of 59.3% for their desire to change school due to poor performance and a misunderstanding with a particular teacher.

Item 1 in Table 2 presents the perceived relationship between students and teachers in schools. From Item 1, 250(82.4%) of respondents were of the view that there was a friendly relationship between them and their teachers while 50(17.6%) stated that their relationship with the teachers was unfriendly. The existence of unfriendly relationship with teachers could cause conflict between students and their teachers in schools. The respondents therefore do not perceive this factor as a major source of conflict between students and their teachers in the

study. The study confirms the findings by Abomah (2005) that generally, the adolescents have friendly relationship with their teachers in schools.

In Item 2, respondents are requested to indicate their perception of school life as a source of conflict. The data in Item 2 shows that 231(76%) of the respondents enjoyed school life while 69(24%) did not find school life enjoyable. In a follow up question from the interview schedule on how respondents found school life uncomfortable, they had this to say;

- 1) If you are not strong enough, you will be influenced by the way some students behave.
- 2) They want you to be part of the 'tradition' of boy/girl relationship. If you do not join them, you are shunned.
- 3) There are a lot of indecent behaviors on campus, especially in the dormitories. This makes one lose interest in school life.

Generally, students have positive perception about school life even though there are aspects of school life that they did not like.

The treatment meted out by senior students as a perceived source of conflict for the adolescent in school is shown in Item 3. The study sought to establish students' perception of the treatment they received from seniors as fair. Item 3 indicates that 195(65%) of respondents were pleased with treatment they received in school by their seniors. However, 105(35%) of participants stated that they were not pleased with treatment they received from seniors in school. Respondents who saw the treatment they received as unfair from the interview schedule indicated frequent bullying and torturing in dormitories as the major

source of conflict with seniors. Even though treatment by senior students is not one of the major sources of conflict in the study, there is the need to look at the unfair treatment meted out by senior students to their juniors in schools.

In the view of Mullins (2005), the existence of seniority calls for inequitable treatment and practices such as in rewards and punishment systems thereby leading to the creation of tension and conflict. The feeling of seniority of some students over others is in agreement with Mack's (2000) contention that some groups believe that their way of thinking and doing things is not only the best but also the only right way as they are in authority. This type of attitude if not properly checked, can generate into serious conflict between seniors and juniors in secondary schools.

Another issue that was looked at under research question 1 is students' ability to contribute to class discussions. Item 4 shows whether respondents were afraid to contribute to class discussions or not.

Item 4 indicates that 77(25.7%) respondents were afraid to contribute to class discussions while 223(74.3%) stated that they did not entertain any fear in contributing to class discussions. The participants do, therefore, not perceive contribution to class discussion as a major source of conflict in this study.

A factor that was also perceived to be a source of conflict in the school environment is students' behavior which authorities find as problematic. In Item 5, majority of students (80.4%) indicated that school authorities did not find their actions as problematic behavior while 59 respondents (19.6%) said that school authorities found their behavior as problematic. Even though respondents

generally liked school life some have problems with school authorities as seen from Item 5 in Table 2.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they wanted to change school (if possible) as a result of poor performance of their school. The result is presented in Item 6. From data in Item 6, 122(40.7%) respondents indicated their willingness to change school as a result of poor performance of their school while 178(59.3%) stated that they would like to remain in their school.

The desire of students to change school for non-performance emerged in the interview data as well. One common issue in the interviewees responses was that the process of changing school as a result of poor performance is a source of conflict. For example one respondent remarked that teachers stick to a topic for a long time and then ask students to read on their own for the rest of the topics. Yet another said that they were not pushed by teachers to perform especially with the sciences while majority of the interviewees retorted that most of the teachers were lazy and would not put in any effort to assist students.

Item 7 also shows how changing school as a result of misunderstanding with a particular teacher becomes a source of conflict for students. The data in Item 7 shows that 199(66.3%) respondents would, if possible, change school due to misunderstanding with a particular teacher in their schools. A follow up question to clarify this issue from the Interview schedule indicated that some male teachers tend to put pressure on some female students for illicit sexual encounters. Another issue which emerged was that students who perform poorly academically are ridiculed in class resulting in conflict between the student and that particular

teacher. Since majority of respondents did have misunderstandings with a particular teacher, this issue is seen as a potential source of conflict in the present study.

Item 8 shows respondents' ability to get assignments done on time as a source of conflict for students in school. It is clear from Item 8 that as many as 258(86%) respondents were able to do their assignments on time while 42(14%) indicated that they were unable to do their assignments on time. Getting assignment done on time is therefore not perceived as a major source of conflict for students in this study.

In Item 9, respondents were asked whether they were comfortable with the punishment received for not doing assignments on schedule in school. As shown in Item 9, 217(72.3%) respondents indicated that they liked the punishment they received for not doing assignments on time since it was a way of correcting them from their mistakes. However, 83(27.7%) said they did not like the punishment they received because they found it to be too much for them. From the findings, even though majority of students perceived the punishment they received as fair, excess punishment could lead to conflict between students and those in authority.

From the above discussion, the factors that were identified which respondents perceived as a source of conflict between them and the school authorities were the students' desire to change school as a result of poor performance and misunderstanding with a particular teacher.

From the study, it is seen that students have a positive perception about school life and have a friendly relationship with school authorities. Majority of

students are able to contribute to class discussions and get assignments done on time. Students are comfortable with punishment received in school as well as the treatment by senior students.

Ohlsen (1974) indicates that most of present day adolescents are genuinely searching for meanings in their daily lives both outside and within the classroom. It therefore behooves on the teachers to provide such students with the supportive climate and a guide to help fulfill their needs. The study revealed that students who reported more conflicts to parents are more likely to face problems in schools. Since 77(25.7%) respondents reported that they were afraid to contribute to class discussions and 101(33.7%) reported that they had misunderstanding with a particular teacher, such students will not have the peace of mind to study. Ohlsen (1974) attributes adolescent student problems in school to the failure of their significant others namely peers, teachers and friends to understand their unique needs and help them develop interpersonal skills required to satisfy their needs. This observation is confirmed in this study. Among the factors perceived as source of conflict between students and school authorities is misunderstanding with school authorities like choice of friends, drinking of alcohol, smoking and types of music played during entertainment.

Table 3 reveals perceived misunderstanding between students and school authorities with regard to conflict students experience.

Table 3
Perceived Misunderstanding between Students and School Authorities

Misunderstanding with Authorities	Yes	No
a) Choice of friends	147	153
b) Drinking of alcohol	195	105
c) Smoking	208	92
d) Music played during entertainment	159	141

It is seen in Table 3 that the respondents had different perceptions of issues that can cause misunderstanding between students and school authorities. For example 208(69.3%), 195(65.0%) and 159(53.0%) of the respondents perceived smoking, drinking of alcohol and music played during entertainment respectively were sources of misunderstanding. On the other hand, 153(51.0%) of respondents did not see the choice of friends as a source of misunderstanding while 147(49.0%) of respondents saw the choice of friends as a source of misunderstanding between them and school authorities.

From Table 3, majority of respondents indicated that they had misunderstanding with the school authorities while the rest of the participants did not experience any misunderstanding with school authorities. In a follow up question about choice of friends from the Interview schedule, respondents had this to say,

- (1) Teachers advice me to shun the company of the friends I make but I do not understand them. I cannot copy their bad behaviors. You do not know who you meet in the future.

(2) When teachers see something bad about my friends they caution me. I just take the advice in good faith.

(3) I only have to be careful not to copy the bad behavior of my friends even though the teachers insist that I stop moving with them.

On issues regarding smoking and drinking of alcohol, about 60% of the interviewees indicated that even though they at times engage in such activities, they have not had problems with school authorities. However, they explained further that students who were caught in the act were punished or expelled from school.

In a study by Adanu cited in *The Courier* (1995) on cigarette smoking, he concludes that smoking exists among secondary school students though it is a minority of students who smoke. Though students have knowledge of school rules against smoking, this did not appear to influence students' smoking habits in any way. The reason being that all those who smoke know that there are school rules which say that students caught smoking in school are punished and can be suspended or dismissed if caught. This has been confirmed by this study.

The way students dance to Hip-life music is also perceived to create misunderstanding between them and school authorities. Students are sometimes asked to stop playing such music during entertainment. This factor is therefore a major source of conflict between students and school authorities.

The responses that came from interviewees in the follow up questions from the Interview schedule in soliciting their views on the perceived misunderstanding

between them and school authorities revealed that both male and female students experienced almost the same conflict in schools.

Research Question Two

How do the influences of Peer Group contribute to Student Conflict with Adults?

In this section, students' adherence to peer group advice and its effect on relationship with adults has been presented. Also data on students' adherence to parents and its effect on relationship with peers have been considered.

Items 34-39 deal in general with peer group social relation with respect to acceptance of students' identity and views on issues, getting on well with friends because of students' academic ability, obtaining solutions from friends especially concerning sex and spreading of gossip.

Table 4 looks at the influence of peers on students' conflict with adults.

Table 4

Peer Influence on Students' Conflict with Adults

Peers' Advice	Frequency	%
Advice Leads to Conflict	87	29.0
Advice does not Lead to Conflict	213	71.0
Total	300	100

The data in Table 4 shows how peers can influence decisions of students. Out of a total of 300 respondents, 87(29%) indicated that friends sometimes

offered them pieces of advice that were against the wishes of their parents. However, 213(71%) of respondents said they were not influenced by peers' advice.

Respondents who indicated that their friends did not influence them against the wishes of their parents supported this assertion by saying that they did not take bad friends whose behaviors would have negative influence on them. Furthermore, their friends offered them pieces of advice that complemented that of their parents. On the other hand, respondents whose friends sometimes offered them pieces of advice against the wishes of their parents had this to say;

1. There was nothing wrong going to town without exeat
2. We were pushed to smoke but we refused
3. They influenced us to take boy or girl friends
4. We were lured to engage in alcoholism.

In a follow up question on parents' reaction to the advice given by peers from the questionnaire, respondents whose friends did not influence them negatively said their parents were very happy with such advice. However, respondents whose friends gave them bad advice asserted that their parents were not happy and told them either to avoid them or take decision that would benefit them in future.

Another follow up question on reaction of friends to students for refusing to listen to their advice, majority of respondents said their friends were annoyed and even rejected them. A few respondents indicated that friends or peers did not show any disagreement when they refused to conform to peer pressure. Even

though the findings suggest that majority of respondents are not offered pieces of advice by peers, it could be seen that peer group influence sometimes creates conflict between students and adults.

According to Collins (1988), as children develop into adolescence they begin to question parental view points and often, the only help they are able to get in this process of value clarification emanates from equally struggling peers. The analysis shows that 29% respondents indicated that friends offer them pieces of advice against the wishes of their parents.

The study is in line with Grinder's (1973) assertion that peers facilitate young people's transition from reliance on their families to relative freedom in adolescent students and new pattern of responsibilities in adulthood. Peer interaction offers opportunities to secondary students in preparing themselves for places in social structure, which is part of identity formation.

Parents consistently desire that their wards move with friends of reputable character and whose parents are also known to be good, so that their influence will be positive. This will ensure that time and resources spent on the student are not wasted but yield fruitful results. However, students feel that individuals should have the right and privilege to choose those they want to associate with and so they find it difficult to understand why their parents should be obstacles in their way.

Table 5 shows how friends of students perceived the identity of the adolescent student.

Table 5

Perception of Students' Self-Identity by Friends

Friends Perception of Student Identity	Frequency	%
Negative Perception	37	12.3
Positive Perception	263	87.7
Total	300	100

As seen from Table 5, as many as 263(87.7%) respondents said that friends gave a positive perception about their identity while 37(12.3%) disagreed that friends perceived them positively. Achievement of clear sense of identity is a challenge to some students and this sometimes creates conflict between them and their friends. From the data it is seen that identity formation by students was not perceived to be a major source of conflict between students and friends in this study.

Table 6 indicates the general perception of how friends of respondents get along well with them because of their social relationship. From the data in Table 6, as many as 260(86.7%) respondents said that they moved along well with friends while 40(13.3%) said they did not move on well with friends. In a follow up question from the questionnaire on whether respondents moved on well with friends due to their academic ability, 86.7 % of participants gave a positive response. From Items 35 and 36 in the questionnaire, it might be deduced that respondents association with friends because of the social relationship and academic background could not be a source of conflict in this study.

Table 6

Social Relationship with Friends

Social Relationship	Frequency	%
Negative Perception	40	13.3
Positive Perception	260	86.7
Total	300	100

In Table 7, friends' acceptance of respondents' views on issues has been considered.

Table 7

Friends Acceptance of Respondents Views on Issues as a Source of Conflict

Friends Accepting Views of Respondents	Frequency	%
Positive Acceptance	250	83.3
Negative Acceptance	50	16.7
Total	300	100

From Table 7, it is seen that 250(83.3%) respondents were of the view that friends accepted their views on issues while 50(16.7%) respondents disagreed with this assertion. Friends accepting students' views on issue could not be a source of conflict between students and peers in this study.

Another issue that was considered under research question 3 is friends giving best solutions to problems (questions) that respondents ask, especially

concerning sex. Table 8 shows whether respondents agreed to this assertion or not.

Table 8

Friends' Problem Solving Ability for Respondents

Best Solutions from Friends	Frequency	%
Disagreement	98	32.7
Agreement	202	67.3
Total	300	100

It is clear from Table 8 that 202(67.3%) respondents agreed that their friends often give them solutions to problems (questions) they asked, especially concerning sex. On the issue of disagreement, 98(32.7%) respondents did not support this assertion. In a follow up question from the interview schedule to clarify this point, the interviewees who agreed that friends gave them best solution to problems had this to say;

1. Experienced friends advised us not to go into any form of sexual relationship.
2. We are advised to keep our virginity.
3. On the issue of bed-wetting, we are told it is normal with every teenager.

Interviewees who disagreed with this assertion said that their friends gave them solutions to sexual problems which could lead them into trouble. The

findings show clearly that respondents perceive problem solving concerning sex as a major source of conflict between students and adults.

The issue of sex is very crucial in the life of the adolescent student. The findings indicate that students discuss sex issues with peers. Edjah (1999) argues that attitudes need to be changed from the traditional stereotype ideas about sex and contraceptive to the reality of modern times. He states further that parents should break the myth about sex knowledge and contraceptives to adolescents. This education he said should be intensified at home and in school.

The trend that emerges in this study is that peer relationship provides necessary information beyond what parents provide. Furthermore, healthy parent-student relations usually bring healthy peer relations. Parents who guide their wards in ways of relating to peers help them to experience less conflict with peers on one hand and parents on the other.

The study further looked at respondents spreading gossip about a friend in their relationship as a source of conflict for students. This problem is addressed in Table 9.

Table 9
Respondents' Perception of Spreading Gossip about a Friend

Spreading Gossip about a Friend	Frequency	%

Good	25	8.3
Bad	275	91.7
Total	300	100

From item 39 of the questionnaire, Agree and Strongly Agree were put together as Good to indicate a positive perception of source of conflict while Disagree and Strongly Disagree also put together as Bad to reflect a negative perception of source of conflict.

From Table 9, it is seen that overwhelming number of 275(91.7%) respondents indicated that spreading gossip about friends was not good for their relationship while 25(8.3%) said gossiping about a friend was good for their relationship. Since about 92% of respondents see spreading gossip as a bad behavior, gossiping is perceived as a major source of conflict in this study.

This finding buttresses Mensa-Bonsu and Effah's (2003) assertion that the source of this type of conflict is behavioral. They maintain that it is through the making of unreasonable demands that one can lie or spread unkind gossip about others, and that institutions that harbour such character-traits do not enjoy peace in any form. This is tantamount to blackmailing, which can be detrimental to lives either individually or collectively. Students must therefore learn to engage in quality conversation.

Research Question Three

Are the Sources of Conflict the Same for both Male and Female Students?

There are perceived home and school factors that generate varying conflicts for male and female students. In making this comparison, respondents were to rank in order of (4) for (most often) to (1) for (least often) from perceived factors that were sources of conflict for them in home and school. These are type of clothing to wear; choice of friends; choice of careers; time of going to bed and going out with friends of opposite sex in the home.

The sources of conflict considered in the school were choice of friends; drinking of alcohol; smoking and type of music played during entertainment. The results are presented in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10

Perceived Sources of Conflict for Students in the Home

Source of Conflict	Male Ranking Order	Female Ranking Order
Type of Clothing	1	3
Choice of Friends	2	4
Choice of Career	3	1
Time of going to bed	4	2

From Table 10, one hundred and fifty males ranked time of going to bed as (4), choice of career (3), choice of friends (2) and type of clothing as least often in the order of conflict at home.

On the other hand, 150 female students ranked choice of friends (4) as the highest source of conflict at home, followed by type of clothing (3), time of going to bed (2) and choice of career (1) as least.

In addition to the sources of conflict listed above, respondents mentioned other reasons for feeling uncomfortable at home as going out with friends of opposite sex and problems with parents for not learning during vacation.

Table 11
Perceived Sources of Conflict for Students in School

Source of Conflict	Male	Female
	Ranking	Ranking
	Order	Order
Choice of Friends	2	1
Drinking of Alcohol	3	3
Smoking	4	4
Music played during entertainment	1	2

As seen from Table 11, both male and female respondents (150 each) ranked smoking the greatest followed by drinking of alcohol as the source of conflict with school authorities. However, the males ranked music played during entertainment as the least source of conflict while the females ranked choice of friends as the least source of conflict with school authorities.

The findings from Tables 10 and 11 indicate that at home, male students considered time of going to bed as their greatest source of conflict with adults.

This is followed by choice of career, choice of friends and type of clothing. The greatest source of conflict for female students with adults at home is choice of friends. This also followed by type of clothing, time of going to bed and choice of career.

In school, both male and female adolescent students believe that their greatest sources of conflict with school authorities are smoking and drinking of alcohol respectively followed by choice of friends for males and type of music played during entertainment for female students. This study confirms the findings by Adanu cited in The Health Courier (1995) that 4.1% of students in a particular mixed school (sample size of 100) had smoked before and that 2.1% (1 male: 1 female) smoked cigarette regularly.

Research Question Four

How do Socio-economic Status of Parents Contribute to Student Conflict with Adults?

This section tends to present the outcomes of differences of socio-economic factors that students perceive as sources of conflict. The occupational status and educational levels of parents and guardians are some of the factors discussed. Data is also presented on whether students tend to have problems with their parents/guardians for not providing them with their basic needs.

Table 12

Occupational (Socio-economic) Status of Parents/Guardians

Socio-economic status	Number	%
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Lower class	191	63.7
Middle class	68	22.6
Upper class	41	13.7
<hr/>		
Total	300	100
<hr/>		

In an attempt to find out the influence of socio-economic status of parents on students conflict, Table 12 gives a vivid description of the situation. From Table 12, as many as 191(63.7%) of the respondents' parents are in the lower class with 68(22.6%) of their parents coming from the middle class. Only 41(13.7%) of respondents parents are in the upper class. As indicated in Table 12, parents' occupation may partly or indirectly contribute to the conflict that students experience.

Table 13 presents the educational levels of parents or guardians. One can deduce that some respondents from low socio-economic status coupled with low educational levels of parents might experience more conflict with parents.

Table 13**Educational Levels of Parents**

Levels	Father/Guardian		Mother/Guardian	
	Number	%	Number	%
None	19	6.3	34	
Basic/Elementary	95	31.7	161	53.7
Secondary/Commercial/Teacher/ Nursing Training	98	32.7	83	27.7
Polytechnic	30	10	6	2
University	58	19.3	16	5.3
Total	300	100	300	100

A critical look at Table 13 indicates that majority of parents either had basic education or secondary/commercial/teacher/Nursing training education. For the women, 53.7% had only basic or elementary education, while for men 31.7% had basic or elementary education. Only 19.3% of male parents (guardians) had university degree, while for the females (guardians) only 5.3% had university education.

Item 43 of the questionnaire requested respondents to indicate whether they tend to have problems with parents for not providing their basic needs. The result is presented in Table 14.

Table 14
Parents’ Provision of Basic Needs as Problems for Students

Problems with Provision of Basic Needs	Frequency	%
Does not create problems	210	70
Creates problems	90	30
Total	300	100

From Table 14, as many as 210(70%) of respondents said they did not have problems with parents for not providing their basic needs. However, 90(30%) of respondents had problems with their parents regarding provision of basic needs. In a follow up question from the interview guide, 20% of interviewees who had problems with parents concerning the provision of their basic needs had this to say:

1. They desperately needed provision and essential books to support their social and academic work
2. They became annoyed since they did not know where to get some.
3. They borrowed money from friends and paid back later after selling parents wares.
4. This has resulted in some girls going out for boy friends to support them.

Even though some interviewees did not have problems with parents regarding the provision of basic needs, they indicated with apprehension that their parents were struggling to fulfill their financial obligations in spite of their low financial background.

A comparative analysis has been made based on the occupational status of parents (Table 12), the educational background of parents (Table 13) vis-a-vis the provision of basic needs by parents to students (Table 16). This is shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15

Background of Parents and Provision of Basic Needs

Item	Description	Percentage
Occupation	Lower Class	63.7
	Upper Class	36.3
Educational Background	Lower Level	56.5
	Higher Level	43.5
Provision of Basic Needs	No Problem	70.0
	Creates Problems	30.0

Key: (1) Upper Class = Middle/Upper Class

(2) Lower Level = None/Basic Level

(3) Higher Level = Secondary/Tertiary Level

A closer look at the occupational status of parents/guardians in Table 12 showed that the Middle and Upper Classes were very close and were therefore collapsed and labeled Upper Class as seen in Table 15. Considering the educational levels of parents and guardians from Table 13, 'None' was insignificant compared to Basic/Elementary level so the two were collapsed to read Lower Level as seen in Table 15. However, from Secondary to Tertiary levels, they were also collapsed to read Higher Level as seen in Table 15. These descriptions have been shown in the key below.

From Table 15, the occupation of parents of respondents in the Lower class was 63.7% while parents with low educational background were 56.5%. On the other hand, the occupation of parents of respondents in the Middle/Upper class was 36.7% with parents having higher educational level being 43.5%. From the foregoing analysis, it could be deduced that the various levels of education and occupation of parents are partially related. This is evidenced by the fact that the percentages of both educational and occupational levels of respondents' parents are lower for those within the Upper/Higher brackets of such levels but higher for parents with lower educational and occupational levels.

Concerning the provision of basic needs by parents to students, 70% of respondents felt that it did not create problems for them. However, 30% of

respondents said it created problems for them. By inference, it is clear that almost all respondents from the middle/upper classes on the social ladder did not have problems concerning the provision of basic needs. Furthermore, almost half of respondents within the lower class level also did not have problems with regard to the provision of basic needs by their parents. This accounts for the reason why 70% of respondents felt that the provision of basic needs by their parents was not a problem to them. The trend that emerges is that parents/guardians with low educational background may also have lower financial status hence their inability to provide some of the needs of respondents.

The study confirms the findings by McLoyd (2000) as he asserts that socio-economic status of parents influences the conflict adolescent students face with parents. He further explains that students in poverty often face problems at home and at school and that creates barriers in their learning. At home, low socio-economic status parents normally are not able to set high educational standards for adolescent students and cannot also assist them in doing their homework. Parents of low socio-economic background find it difficult paying for educational material and expenses such as books and educational trips. Such students he said, are sent to school with fewer resources.

Since 70% of respondents did not have problems with parents concerning the provision of basic needs, this is not perceived as a source of conflict in the study. However, as some interviewees have negative perceptions about the provision of basic needs to them by their parents/guardians, this can be seen as a potential source of conflict between parents and students. Furthermore, once some

interviewees with lower economic backgrounds have pointed out the struggles their parents go through with regard to honouring their financial obligations, the attitude of such respondents towards their parents might naturally change should their friends later give them pieces of advice that might overturn their endurance level thus leading them into conflict with their parents.

Table 16 presents the issue of time factor with regards to the provision of basic needs to students. The findings indicated that the inability of parents to meet the needs of respondents on time is not seen as a major source of conflict.

Table 16

Provision of Basic Needs on Time to Students as a Source of Conflict

Provision of Basic Needs on Time	Frequency	%
Does not lead to conflict	242	80.6
Leads to conflict	58	19.4
Total	300	100

From Table 16, majority of respondents 242(80.6%) indicated that their parents provided them basic needs on time while 19.4% indicated that they did not have their basic needs on time.

Table 17 indicates the influence of financial status of parents on students with regard to payment of school fees.

Table 17

The Influence of Financial Status of Parents/Guardians on Payment of Students' Fees

Payment of School Fees as a source of Conflict	Frequency	%
Not often sacked for school fees	219	73
Often sacked for school fees	81	27
Total	300	100

Table 17 is significant because 219(73%) of respondents are not sacked to go home for their school fees. On the other hand, 27% of respondents were often sacked to go home for their school fees. The finding shows that payment of school fees is not a major source of conflict in this study since majority of respondents were given school fees early enough for school authorities to sack them to the house.

Table 18 shows the general perception of students about the occupation of parents with regard to their financial status.

Table 18

Students' General Perception of Parents' Occupation

Perception	Frequency	%
I am satisfied with the occupation of my parents	256	85.3
I am ashamed of the occupation of my parents	44	14.7
Total	300	100

As in Table 18, majority of respondents (85.3%) indicated that they were satisfied with the occupation of their parents/guardians. However, 14.7% said they were ashamed of the occupation of parents. The findings indicate that majority of respondents are satisfied with occupation of parents regardless of their socio-economic status and this does not contribute to students' conflict with their parents or guardians.

The study sought to establish the impact socio-economic status of parents as a contributory factor to students' conflict with parents. The findings indicate that parent's ability to provide the basic needs of wards tends to lesson the conflict that might exist between them as indicated in Table 16. Students from High and Middle socio-economic backgrounds indicate that they are more comfortable with the occupation of parents than those from low socio-economic background. Socio-economic factors therefore tend to influence students' conflict with adults.

Testing of Hypotheses

Testing of Null Hypothesis 1

In order to test for perception of male and female students with respect to conflicts they experience, the following null hypothesis was formulated.

Null Hypothesis 1 (Ho: 1):

There is no significant difference in perception of male and female students regarding conflicts they experience in the home and school.

Table 19 presents the Mean performance, Standard Deviation (SD) and t-test for conflict experienced by male and female students in the home and school. Responses to eight questions on the instrument were used to test the hypothesis. (Items 17 a, b, c, d and 19 a, b, c, d).

Table 19
Mean Performance (X), Standard Deviation (SD) and T-Test of Conflict Experienced by Male and Female Students in the Home and School

Gender	N	X	SD	t	p
Males	150	25.46	5.34655	0.164	0.87
Female	150	25.36	5.21778		

p > 0.05

With regard to the test for perception of male and female students in respect of the conflict they experience in the home and school Table 19 gives (M=25.46, SD=5.34655) for males and (M=25.36, SD=5.21778) for females with $t(300)=0.164$, $p=0.870$ (two tailed). From Table 19, it is seen that both the male and female students had almost the same means and standard deviations. From this analysis of independent samples test, it shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of conflict experienced by male and female students in the home and school. Since $p (0.870) > \alpha (0.05)$, we fail to reject the null hypothesis 1.

The finding authenticates in part the assertion by Abomah (2005) that there is no significant difference between adolescent males and females about the sources of conflict they experience in school. Table 13 supports this finding by

indicating that both male and female respondents ranked smoking and drinking as the greatest sources of conflict they experienced with school authorities.

The hypothesis tested therefore showed that there is no significant difference in the perception of conflict experienced by male and female students in the home and school.

Testing Null Hypothesis 2

In order to test for the perception of students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds in respect of conflicts they experience, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Null Hypothesis 2 (Ho: 2):

There is no significant difference between the perceptions of students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds regarding conflicts they experience. The t-independent test was employed to analyse the data at $p < 0.05$. Responses to four questions on the research instrument were used [Items 40 – 43, Appendix (A)].

Table 20
Mean Performance(X), Standard Deviation (SD), T-test of Conflict Experienced by Students form Low and High Socio-economic Backgrounds.

Status	N	X	SD	T	p
Low socio-economic	191	12.1675	2.75933	-2.475	0.014
High Socio-economic	109	12.9633	2.53102		

$p < 0.05$

In respect of the perceptions of students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds regarding conflicts they experience, Table 20 shows ($M=12.1675$, $SD=2.75933$) for students from low socio-economic background and ($M=12.9633$, $SD=2.53102$) for students from high socio-economic background, with $t(300) = -2.475$, $p=0.014$ (two tailed). We deduce from Table 20 that since $p(0.014) < \alpha(0.05)$, there is statistically significant difference in the conflict experienced by students from low socio-economic status and those from high socio-economic status. It can be deduced from the table that the result is insignificant and therefore there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis 2.

Table 15 affirms this study by deducing that the various levels of education and occupation of parents are partially related. This is evidenced by the fact that the percentages of both educational and occupational levels of respondents' parents are lower for those within the Upper/Higher brackets of such levels but higher for parents with lower educational and occupational levels.

Concerning the provision of basic needs by parents to students, 70% of respondents felt that it did not create problems for them. However, 30% of respondents said it created problems for them. By inference, it is clear that almost all respondents from the middle/upper classes on the social ladder did not have problems concerning the provision of basic needs while almost half of respondents within the lower class level have problems with regard to the provision of basic needs by their parents. The emerging trend from the study is

that parents/guardians with low educational background may also have lower financial status hence their inability to provide some of the needs of respondents.

The study confirms the findings by McLoyd (2000) as he asserts that socio-economic status of parents influences the conflict adolescent students face with parents. He further explains that students in poverty often face problems at home and at school and that creates barriers in their learning. At home, low socio-economic status parents normally are not able to set high educational standards for adolescent students and cannot also assist them in doing their homework. Parents of low socio-economic background find it difficult paying for educational material and expenses such as books and educational trips. Such students he said, are sent to school with fewer resources.

The finding further confirms the studies of Abomah (2005) which states that there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the adolescents from high and low socio-economic background regarding the sources of conflict they experience.

Shade, Kelly and Oberg (1997) also indicate that adolescent students from poor families tend to have lower academic achievements. At home, in their neighbourhood and at school, such students face problems that present barriers to effective learning. They conclude that adolescent students from impoverished background challenge parents for being partly responsible for their underachievement. They then comment that this increases the conflict between the adolescents and parents.

The hypothesis tested showed that there is a significant difference in the conflict experienced by students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings as well as recommendations based on the findings of the study. The study explored Senior High School students' perception of sources of conflict in Asikum-Odoben-Brakwa District of Central Region, Ghana.

The study was a descriptive survey and research participants drawn from two public senior high schools namely Breman Asikuma Senior High School and Odoben Senior High School. The instruments used for the collection of data was questionnaire and interview guide. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences – version 16.0. The study was pre-tested at the Swedru Senior High School, Agona Swedru.

Summary of the Study

The school as a social unit fosters a lot of interaction between students and those in authority. As a human institution, however, its interactive process generates conflicts. It is clear that conflict is pervasive in all human experiences and for that matter, an important aspect of organisational behavior in education.

Students' conflict involves disagreement between their peers on one hand as well as parent, adults and school authorities on the other hand.

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain Senior High School students' perception of sources of conflict in the Asikum-Odoben-Brakwa District and in their homes. The study was to probe further into how peer groups promote conflict and also to look at how the socio-economic background of parents can contribute to students' conflict.

The following findings were made from the data analysed.

There is no significant difference between male and female students regarding their perception of sources of conflict they experience in the home and school. However, differences exist in conflict experienced by students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds with adults.

The major sources of conflict at home that students perceived to be responsible for conflict between them and adults were

- (i) Adolescent students going out with friends of the opposite sex.
- (ii) Students not learning during vacations and
- (iii) Parental influence on students' social life.

The school environmental factors that students perceived to produce conflict between them and school authorities included the following:

- (i) The desire to change school as a result of poor performance and
- (ii) Misunderstanding with a particular teacher in the school.

At home, the greatest sources of conflict perceived by male students with adults was the time of going to bed while for the female students, it was the choice of friends.

In school, both male and female students perceived that the greatest sources of conflict they experienced with school authorities were smoking and drinking of alcohol respectively.

The socio-economic status of parents as a perceived contributory factor to students' conflict with adults revealed that parents' ability to provide the basic needs of wards tends to lessen the conflict that might exist between them. Furthermore, students from High and Middle socio-economic backgrounds were more comfortable with the occupation of parents than those from low socio-economic background.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that there is no difference between male and female students about what they perceive to be the sources of conflict they experience in the home and school. Furthermore, differences exist between students from low and high socio-economic backgrounds regarding the sources of conflict they experience with adults.

Based on the finding of the study, the greatest sources of conflict perceived by male students with adults is the time of going to bed while for the female students, the perception of source of conflict is the choice of friends. In the school, the greatest sources of conflict perceived by both male and female students with school authorities are smoking and drinking alcohol.

Finally, the study indicates that peer group influences adolescent students' development.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations have been made as follows:

1. Since learning during vacation is perceived as a major source of conflict between students and parents, it is recommended that the Guidance and Counseling department of institutions should enlighten students about time management especially during vacation.
2. The findings indicate that both male and female students perceived smoking and drinking of alcohol as their main sources of conflict with school authorities. It is recommended that regular health talks should be organized by school authorities to educate students about the dangers associated with drugs.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are indeed, other issues related to the study that could not be investigated and discussed. The researcher, therefore recommends the following areas for further study:

1. Conflict management practices among teachers and students in the Senior High Schools (SHS)
2. Conflict management practices among headmasters and students in the Senior High Schools (SHS)
3. Longitudinal peer mediation and conflict management in the Senior High Schools (SHS)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

Personal Data

Instruction: In this section some questions require you to fill in the responses. With others, you are required to tick [] the option most relevant to you.

Please read carefully and answer appropriately

1. Indicate your age range:

a) 11 – 13 []

b) 14 – 16 []

c) 17 – 19 []

d) 20+ []

2. Indicate your sex: Male [] Female []

3. In which year/form are you?

SHS One []

SHS Two []

SHS Three []

4. Indicate whether you are a day student or a boarder

a) Day student []

b) Boarding student []

5. Indicate the occupation of your parents in the appropriate cells below

Please tick [√] the appropriate cell

	Tertiary Occup. (e.g. Manager/Di rector of a company, Lecturer, Doctor, Snr Accountant, Pharmacist, Engineer.)	Secondary Occup. (e.g. Teacher, Nurse Secretary, Jnr. Accountant, Education Officer)	Primary Occup. (e.g. Farmer, Driver, Trader, Tailor, Carpenter, Baker)
a) Father/guardian occupation			
b) Mother/guardian occupation			

6 What is the highest educational level of the following relations? Please tick [√] the appropriate column.

	None	Basic/ Elementary	Secondary/ Commercial Teacher Nursing trg.	Polytechnic	University Degree
a) Father/Guardian					
b) Mother/Guardian					

SECTION B

Perceived Home Produced Conflict

Instruction: Below are a number of problem statements. After each statement are responses numbered 1 to 5 and which have been abbreviated. Please tick [✓] the one you think is most appropriate.

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|
| 1. | Strongly Disagree | SD |
| 2. | Disagree | D |
| 3. | Undecided | U |
| 4. | Agree | A |
| 5. | Strongly Agree | SA |

		SD	D	U	A	SA
7	My parents punish me when I go wrong					
8	My parents consult me when taking decisions on matters that affect my interest					
9	I am forced to take part in religious activities that I do not like					
10	I am able to discuss personal problems with my parents/guardians					
11	The household chores I perform are difficult for me					

12	I encounter problems with my parents when I go out with friends of the opposite sex					
13	My parents tend to defend my siblings when I quarrel with them					
14	I have problems with my parents for not learning during vacation					
15	I am proud of my home					

16. What other factors do you think contribute to a conflict between you and your parents?.....
.....

17. Listed below are different attitudes which you tend to come into conflict with your parents or adults. Indicate by ranking with 1 for strongly disagree,2 for disagree.3 for undecided,4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree in question 17.

- a) Type of clothing you wear []
- b) Choice of friends []
- c) Choice of career []
- d) Time of going to bed []

SECTION C

Perceived School conflict

18. What is the relationship between students and teachers in your school?

Tick only one.

- a) Very unfriendly []
- b) Unfriendly []
- c) Undecided []
- d) Friendly []
- e) Very friendly []

19. Which of the following do you think cause/s misunderstanding between you and your school authorities? Rank them from least often as 1, less often as 2, undecided as 3, often as 4 to most often as 5.

- a) Choice of friends []
- b) Drinking of alcohol []
- c) Smoking []
- d) Types of music played during entertainment []

20. List other sources of misunderstanding which you encounter with school authorities.....

Instruction: For each of the following statements indicate the most appropriate option to your situation by ticking [√] the appropriate cell using the scale SD, D, U, A. and SA

		SD	D	U	A	SA
21.	I enjoy school life					
22.	Senior students in my school treat junior students like slaves					
23.	I am afraid to contribute to class discussions					
24.	The school finds my actions as problematic behavior					
25.	I want to change school(if possible) as a result of poor performance of my school					
26.	I want to change school as a result of misunderstanding with a particular teacher in my school					
27.	I am able to get assignments done on time					
28.	I like the punishment I receive for not doing assignment on time					

SECTION D

Perceived Peer Group Conflict

Instruction: In this section please tick [] where appropriate and provide answers where necessary.

29. Do your friends sometimes offer you pieces of advice that are against the wishes of your parents?

a) Yes [] (b) No []

30. Give reason to your answer to item 29

.....

31. How do your parents react to your friend's advice?

.....

32. What is the reaction of your friends to your refusal to listen to their advice?

.....

33. What is the reaction of your friends to your acceptance to listen to their advice?

.....

Instruction: For each of the statements, indicate whether you strongly disagree (SD) disagree (D) undecided (U) agree (A) or strong agree (SA) by ticking [√] the appropriate cell.

		SD	D	U	A	SA
34.	My friends accept my identity for whom I am					
35.	My friends get along well with me because of my social relationship					
36.	I get on well with my friends because of my academic ability					
37.	My friends do not accept my views on issues.					
38.	My friends often give me best solution to problems (questions) that I ask, especially concerning sex.					
39.	Spreading gossip about a friend is good for our relationship					

SECTION E

Perceived Socio-Economic Background of Parents

Instruction: For each of the statements, indicate whether you strongly disagree (SD) disagree (D) undecided (U) agree (A) or strong agree (SA) by ticking [√] the appropriate cell.

		SD	D	U	A	SA
40.	I am satisfied with occupation of my parents / guardians					
41.	I am often sacked to go home for my school fees					
42.	My parents / guardians provide me with my basic needs on time					
43.	I tend to have problems with my parent / guardians for not providing my basic needs					

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NameSex.....

1. Indicate the occupation of your parents.
2. What is the relationship between students and teachers in your school and why?

For each of the statements below, give a reason why you agree or not that assertion.

3. My friends often give me best solutions to problems (questions) that I asked especially concerning sex.
4. I enjoy school life.
5. The school finds my actions as problematic behavior.
6. I want to change school (if possible) as a result of poor performance of my school.
7. I want to change school as a result of misunderstanding with a particular teacher in my school.
8. My parents punish me when I go wrong.
9. My parents consult me when taking decisions on matters that affect my interest.
10. I am forced to take part in religious activities that I do not like.
11. I am able to discuss personal problems with my parents/guardians.
12. I am satisfied with the occupation of my parents.
13. I am proud of my home.

