

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN KUMASI GIRLS'
SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

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Supervisor's Declaration

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

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ABSTRACT

Student conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools are disturbing factors that can mar the administration of the schools. Academic work cannot go on smoothly if there are student unrests in the schools.

The study investigated conflict management practices in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School. Three sets of questionnaire were used. A total of 140 respondents, comprising 20 teaching staff, non-teaching staff and 100 students were selected through random sampling.

The results revealed that dialogue between students and school authorities was the most popular conflict management technique used by the school authorities to solve misunderstandings that arise between the two parties in the school. Also students preferred dialogue or collaboration style of managing conflicts to autocratic ways to dealing with conflicting situations. Suggestions from students on conflict management include meetings between students and their class teachers so that students could channel their grievances through their teachers to the school authorities, provision of suggestion boxes and parents teacher and students fora. Others are that offending students should be referred to the school counselors, students should be advised by P.T.A and the school's Board of Governors.

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DEDICATION

To Kwabena, my son, who is yearning for knowledge.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Conflict occurs in all spheres of life. Wherever human beings are, conflict seems to be indispensable. Deutsch (1973) stated that “conflict exists whenever an action by one person or a group prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures or in some way makes less likely the desired action of another person or a group” (p10). Conflict, in this regard may occur between groups of people or individuals. Thus conflict may be between mother and child, friends, brothers and sisters or students and their teachers.

Tedeschi, Schlenker and Bonoma (1973) also say that “conflict is an interactive state in which behaviours or goals of one actor are to some degree incompatible with the behaviours or goals of another” (p.32). This definition implies, for example, that if teachers want to enforce discipline in a school and students are not complying, the incompatibility in the goals of teachers and students can result in conflict.

Opong-Mensah (1999) defined conflict as “a situation in which an effort is made by someone to off-set the effort of another by some form of blocking that will result in frustrating the other in attaining goals and interest”. (p.1). Conflict is a situation where there is an attempt by a person or group of persons to thwart the effort of another or group of persons so that the goals set by the individual or group of persons may not be achieved. Hellriegel, Slocum, Jnr and Woodman (1989) opined

that conflict results when there are incompatible goals cognitions, or emotions within or between individuals or groups, that lead to opposition or antagonistic interaction. (p.109). That is the reason for which Owen (1987) cited in Mankoe (2007) said that a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. To Owens, two things are essential in any conflict: divergent views and incompatibility of those views.

According to Owens, these divergent views and incompatibility of those views produce dilemma. Conflict then becomes the pursuit of the incompatible or at least seemingly incompatible goals, such that the gains to one side come at the expense of the other. The conflicting parties see each other as unreasonable and may resort to calling each other names, sabotaging or even fighting physically.

A conflict which arose between some final year students of Konongo – Odumasi Secondary School and the school authorities over the organization of cost-free vacation classes led to the destruction of school property worth thousands of new Ghana cedis. Those students did not understand the reason for which 22 of their colleagues were asked to stay home for not attending extra classes. Conflicts in schools occur over the country resulting in destruction of property. The school as an institution needs to be run smoothly in a peaceful environment. However, this is not so and school administrators find it difficult to manage conflicts in their various schools.

Conflicts, no matter where they occur, are sources of discomfort, even though Robbins and Stuart-Kotze (1986) believe that conflict in an organization can be a positive force. Their views are that functional conflicts support the goals of the organization. Robbins et al see conflict as a positive force and contend that conflict causes people to seek effective ways of dealing with it resulting in improved organizational functioning with reference to cohesiveness, clarified relationship and

clearer problem-solving procedures. However, Robbins et al also describe conflicts as dysfunctional because they lead to outright hostility and people exhibit aggressive behavior such as destruction of property.

Scholars like Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1992) perceive conflict as something which must be avoided. According to them the disagreements can cause the group to be ineffective and fragmented. The personality clash happens not only between superiors and subordinates but also among members of groups. (p.369) Conflicts are also sources of organizational ineffectiveness. For the organization to function well to achieve its goals there is the need for people working within it to work and see each other as partners in development.

Ali, Boulden, Eaton, Holden, Johnson, Langdon, Bruce and Tee (2002) postulated that conflict should be viewed as a chance to understand the needs of the difficult person and how to influence that person to achieve the results you need. To them, there is the need to face conflict openly by giving feedback on the effects of what you are observing, whether it is passive resistance, active resistance or serious aggression. (p.410).

Ali et al further explained that by working through conflict effectively, the manager improves his working relationship with the previously difficult team member. A failure to resolve the conflict leads to the loss of a valuable team member. To buttress their point, Ali et al added that friction between managers, teams, and even between departments is an all too common feature of corporate life. Destructive conflict can erode the efficiency and morale of the whole organization. By stepping in to mediate between adversaries, you will be able to diffuse anger and bitterness and restore a common sense of purpose. (p. 273)

Statement of the Problem

In the face of scarce resources especially in the education sector, students' conflicts resulting in losses to the state are a matter of great concern to all stakeholders.

Some scholars such as Oppong-Mensah (1999) have done some work on conflict resolution by heads of Senior Secondary Schools in some parts of the country. It is a fact that conflict resolution is not the sole responsibility of the school head so in spite of the efforts of school heads and authorities these conflicts do occur as happened at Konongo-Odumasi Secondary School.

The researcher would like to find out how conflicts are managed in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School and whether the methods used help to resolve the conflict or contribute to the intensity of the conflict.

Purpose of the Study

The researcher would like to find out whether conflicting situation do not occur in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School or that they do occur, and if they do whether the management practices used prevent them from being blown out of proportion. The study also tried to determine the methods adopted by the conflicting parties in the school to resolve conflict. Specifically, the study tried to:

- a) identify the nature of conflicts that occur between students and school authorities in the school.
- b) find out the causes of conflict in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School.
- c) identify the conflict management practices that exist in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School.
- d) ascertain whether the management techniques used help to intensify or reduce conflict in the school.

Research Questions

1. What type of conflicts are common between students and school authorities in the school?
2. What are the causes of conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School?
3. How frequently do conflicts occur in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School?
4. How are conflicts managed in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School when they occur?
5. To what extent are techniques used help to resolve or contribute to the intensity of conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School?

Significance of the Study

The study was aimed at identifying and analyzing the nature, causes and management of conflicts at Kumasi Girls' Secondary School. This, it was hoped would help the school administrators to be aware of conflicting situations in the school and take steps to minimize their occurrence.

It would help the students of the school to appreciate the need for dialogue with school administrators as well as the need to be law abiding.

It should also help to prepare the minds of prospective teachers and administrators with regard to the various conflict situations they are likely to face in their chosen professions so as to enhance their preparedness to deal with conflicts.

Finally, it was hoped the study would stimulate others to research into conflict management in other schools in the region.

Delimitation

The study was confined to Kumasi Girls' Secondary School in the Ashanti Region. This was convenient due to the constraints of time and finances. The researcher would study conflict between students and the school authorities. Other

conflict areas like conflict between the headmaster and staff were left out. Their inclusion would make it too broad an undertaking. The findings of the study would be limited to the area of study. Nevertheless schools in the district, region and other parts of the country might benefit from the outcome of the study.

Limitation

The study was aimed at identifying and analyzing conflicting situations at Kumasi Girls' Secondary School and how they were managed. It could have covered all the people in the Secondary School. This would enable the researcher to find out and analyse conflicts that occur in the school as a whole entity. However, time constraint and inadequate material did not permit the researcher to carry it out. As a result a sample of 20 teachers, 100 students and 20 non-teaching staff were taken.

Organization of the Study

The study comprises five chapters. Chapter one deals with background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study and research questions. Other issues addressed are significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study. Chapter Two contains review of related literature on conflicts and conflict management. The methodology is discussed in Chapter Three. The chapter looks at data collection procedure, the instrument and procedure for the analyses of data. Chapter Four deals with the analyses of the data collected. Chapter Five, which is the final chapter, discusses the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The subject of conflict management has attracted the attention of many scholars such as Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1992) and Robbins and Stuart-Kotze (1990). There is a considerable amount of literature that deals with the subject. In this chapter some of the relevant and related literature has been reviewed to form the theoretical framework of the study. The review of literature was done under the following subheadings:

- a. Meaning of conflict.
- b. Differing views of conflict.
- c. Types of conflict.
- d. Causes of conflict
- e. Conflict management.
- f. Studies on conflict management.

Definitions of Conflict

Kriesburg (1973) defined conflict as a relationship between two or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals (p.17). Costley and Todd (1987) defined conflict as the inability to choose between two or more alternatives. Johns cited in Mankoe (2007) stated that conflict is a process of antagonism that occurs when one person or organizational subunit frustrates the goal attainment of another. (p. 188). Again, he stated conflicts are disruptive clash of interests, objectives or personalities between individuals and groups. (p.188). He further stated that because

conflict is pervasive in all human experience, it is an important aspect of organizational behaviour in education.

According to Mankoe, conflict manifests itself in a group setting such as a school with different interest groups like professionals, semiprofessionals skilled and unskilled and technical men as well as students, parents and government officials. All these groups of people demand that educational policies be implemented in educational organizations that make the institutions prone to constant confrontation.

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) defines conflict as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles. Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich, (1992) opined that conflict results when there are incompatible goals cognitions or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition or antagonistic interaction. They stated that conflict among members of a group can arise in a variety of ways. In the mutual acceptance and decision-making phases of group development there are likely to be disagreements over member roles, plans, schedules, and standards. These disagreements, they claim, can cause the group to be ineffective and fragmented. Coalitions and power centers emerge and create anxiety for the membership.

Robbins and Stuart-Kotze (1986) used the term “conflict” when they referred to perceived incompatible differences resulting in some form of interference or opposition. To them whether the differences are real or not is irrelevant. According to Wall and Nolan cited in Gorton and Snowden (1993) a feeling of inequity in group members can also cause conflict between members.

Differing Views on Conflict

Robbins and Stuart-Kotze (1986) stated that three views of conflict have evolved over the years towards conflict in organizations and they named them as Traditional View of Conflict, Human Relations View of Conflict and Interactionist

View of Conflict. According to Robbins et al the Traditional View assumes that conflict is bad and would always have a negative impact on an organization. To Robbins et al conflict is synonymous with violence, destruction, and irrationality and so it is to be avoided. Management has the responsibility to rid the organisation of conflict. The Traditional View of conflict is that it is undesirable and must be seen as destructive and pathological and should be resolved as early as possible.

The Human Relations View of Conflict, Robbins et al, argued that conflict is a natural and inevitable occurrence in all organizations. As a result they advocated acceptance of conflict. They also stated that conflict cannot be eliminated, and that there are times when conflict may even benefit the organisation.

The Interactionist View of Conflict, to Robbins et al, is the current theoretical perspective which encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil, and co-operative organisation is prone to becoming static, apathetic, and nonresponsive to needs of change and innovation if some level of conflict is not maintained. According to the same source the major contribution of the Interactionist approach is that it encourages managers to maintain ongoing minimum level of conflict – enough to keep units viable, self-critical and creative. However of the three views they agreed that the traditional one is probably the most widely accepted in practice.

Types of Conflict

The Encyclopedia Britannica (1992 15th ed) describes two types of conflicts. These are intrapersonal conflict and interpersonal conflict. Intrapersonal Conflict exists within an individual as a result of having various needs or as a result of an inward struggle. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (1992 15th Ed) conflict in psychology is the arousal of two or more strong motives that cannot be resolved together. It states, as an example, a young man who may want to go to dance to get the feeling that he belongs to a group and does what his friends do. For an adolescent in Western culture, that is a strong desire. But this young man is a clumsy dancer and

is sensitive to the real or imagined ridicule of his friends. Therefore, he is also faced with a motive to avoid the dance and escape humiliation. He is in dilemma, the Encyclopedia Britannica adds that whether he goes or stays by he will experience distress. This type of situation is termed, an approach-avoidance conflict which is an example of intrapersonal conflict.

The Encyclopedia Britannica states further that psychologically, a conflict may exist when the reduction of one motivating stimulus involves an increase in another, so that a new adjustment is demanded. According to the same source, another type of intrapersonal conflict is a conflict between two desired gratifications. This is termed as approach-approach conflict. The encyclopedia cites an example as a young woman who has to choose between two careers. This kind of situation, the encyclopedia adds, may lead to some vacillation but rarely to great distress. According to the encyclopedia, a more disturbing type of intrapersonal conflict is the avoidance-avoidance, where there is a conflict between two threats or dangers, as for example, where a man may dislike his job but fears the threat of being unemployed when he leaves the job.

Interpersonal conflict, according to the encyclopedia may come about as a result of one or more of the following:- Conflict between individuals, group versus an individual or another group.

Robbins and Stuart-Kotze (1986) also classified conflicts as functional and dysfunctional. To them functional conflicts support the goals of the organization while dysfunctional conflicts do not. Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1992) also talk about two types of conflicts. These are intragroup conflict and intergroup conflict. Intragroup conflict occurs among members of a group and can arise in a variety of ways. To them, in the mutual acceptance and decision-making phases of group

development there are likely to be disagreements over roles, plans, schedules and standards. According to them these disagreements can cause the group to be ineffective and fragmented. Donnelly, et al (1992) contend that coalitions and power centers emerge and create anxiety for the membership. They also assert that the personality clashes happen not only between superiors and subordinates but also among members of groups. To them individuals who are in a state of conflict with other members are also likely to be dissatisfied with the interpersonal features of the group. Additionally their assertion is that the member who is having interpersonal conflicts is likely to withdraw from engaging in most group activities.

On intergroup conflict, Donnelly et al were of the view that management prefers that groups co-operate and work toward the accomplishment of organisational and individual goals. However conflicts may develop between groups. Their views were that if the groups are working on tasks that are interdependent (i.e. department A's output flows to department B and B's output flows to C) the co-ordination and effectiveness of working together may become managerial issues. The relationship may become antagonistic and so disruptive that the entire flow of production is slowed or even stopped.

Causes of Conflict

Owens in Mankoe (2007) affirms some of the causes of conflict are competition for scarce resources, autonomy and goal divergence. Others are frustration, type of behavior, government control and conditions that influence behavior. Competition for scarce resources as a cause of conflict. Mankoe (2007) affirms that conflict occurs when there is a clash between opposing views. Competitive conflicts result when employees seek limited resources. Anger during conflict causes disruption, such that

employees may abandon pursuit of organizational goals and engage in irrational acts of aggression.

Another cause of conflict is when there is autonomy. The resistance of autonomy could bring about conflict since according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1994) conflict is a state of disagreement or argument between two opposing groups on ideas or principles. Goal divergence is another cause of conflict. Mankoe (2007) stated that when two people are working together to achieve a common goal but cannot agree on how to achieve it, there could be a conflict between them as each would like to influence the method to be used.

Again he said that incompatible styles in behaviour and policy implementation are also causes of conflict. Owens in Mankoe (2007) said that conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. He went on to say that conflict then becomes the pursuit of the incompatible or at least seemingly incompatible goals, such that the gains to one side come at the expense of the other.

Opong-Mensah (1999) talked about change versus stagnation being a cause of conflict. He saw conflict as a situation in which an effort is made by one to offset the effort of another by some form of blocking that results in frustrating the other in attaining his goals and interests.

Conflict Management

Mankoe (2007) found out that people in organizations have conflicts because there are differences in goals perceptions and ability to solve problems. He therefore stressed bargaining and getting the aggrieved parties to sit together and resolve conflicts as a means to getting the organization to function smoothly.

Mankoe (2007) contended that conflicts in organizations can be a positive force. According to him, the creation or resolution of conflicts or both often lead to

constructive problem solving. The need to resolve conflicts can cause people to search for positive change within an organization. The search for ways to solve or resolve conflicts may not only lead to innovation and change but it may also make changes more acceptable.

In the school, according to Mankoe, a negative result of conflict may take the form of turnover, alienation, apathy and indifference. Managing conflicts mean finding appropriate strategies to resolve them. If the occurrence of conflict is an everyday affair, then its management should also be on a daily basis.

To manage conflict effectively involves many techniques. The understanding and correct diagnosis of conflict are the first steps in conflict management. Hellriegel cited in Mankoe (2007) stated that conflict management consists of diagnostic processes, interpersonal styles, negotiating strategies and structural intervention that are designed to avoid unnecessary conflicts, reduce or resolve excessive conflict or even increase insufficient conflict.

Some of the management practices are the avoiding style, the accommodating style, the collaborating style, the compromising and the forcing styles. According to Mankoe (2007) the avoiding style involves behavior that is unassertive and uncooperative. An individual who selects to use this approach chooses to stay out of conflict, ignore disagreements or remain neutral. This approach might reflect a decision to let the conflict work itself out or reflect an aversion to tension and frustration.

Mankoe asserts that when unresolved conflicts affect the accomplishment of goals, it results in negative consequences in the organization or school. To him it is a good style to use when the matter that brought the conflict is not of great importance or when the person handling it does not have sufficient information at the time.

Concerning accommodation style, Mankoe was of the view that this style involves behavior that is co-operative but not assertive. People who use this management style, he says, are often seen as weak and submissive.

Mankoe further states that the collaborating style involves behavior that is strongly co-operative and assertive. He says it reflects a win-win approach to solving conflict. According to him, people who use this style see conflict as helpful if it is properly handled.

Furthermore, Mankoe asserted that the compromising style involves a behavior that is at an intermediate level in terms of co-operation and assertiveness. He says it is based on give and take and typically involves a series of concessions. It is seen as a quick way of managing conflict, without maximizing satisfaction. However, there is partial satisfaction for each of the parties because there is a fair combination of gains and losses.

Mankoe (2007) explained that the forcing style is a behavior that is assertive and unco-operative. It reflects a win-lose approach to interpersonal conflict. He claims those who use this style try to achieve their own goal without concern for others. Managers who select to use this style often threaten the parties concerned with dismissal, demotion or punishment to gain compliance from their subordinates.

Negotiation is also another type of conflict management practice. Hellriegel et al cited in Mankoe (2007) defines negotiation as “a process in which two or more parties, having both common and conflicting goals, state and discuss proposals concerning specific terms of a possible agreement” (p.206). It can be a combination of collaboration, compromise or force.

Mankoe suggests structural methods of managing conflicts. He says these methods are especially suitable for conflicts which occur in schools. They are:

Dominance through position. In this, he said, the heads try to issue direction specifying the course of action subordinates are expected to follow.

De-coupling. An organization such as a school can directly reduce interdependence among departments by providing them with independent resources and inventories to de-couple them. This, to him reduces the likelihood of interdepartmental conflict.

Buffering with inventory. The third structural method suggested by Mankoe is buffering with inventory. Completely decoupling departments or making them totally independent may be too costly therefore an organization or school may buffer the workflow between departments with inventory. The idea here is that the art department for instance could be charged to produce teaching and learning materials for English and Mathematics departments to use in teaching. Over the period, even if the art department stops producing, these two departments can still get the materials to use. This will help reduce cost, solve shortage problems and solve the conflict that might arise between departments.

Linking pin. The fourth is the linking pin which is an individual assigned to help integrate two departments that have overlapping tasks.

Integrating department. Last but not least Mankoe suggests integrating department which has formal authority to issue orders affecting tasks that interdependent departments must carry out in an integrated manner, for example, the teaching practice co-ordinator in a training college having authority to issue orders to all departments regarding the way the exercise would be organized. This would get both staff and students informed and will reduce conflict that might arise.

Barnard (1938) was also of the view that inherent in the conception of free will in a changing environment are social patterns characterised by negotiation, stress

and conflict. However it is also known that when conflicts are effectively managed they result in productive outcomes and enhance the health of the organization.

Owens (1987) says that a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. To him the two things that are essential in any conflict are divergent views and incompatibility of those views. According to him, this produces dilemma. Conflict then becomes the pursuit of the incompatible or at least seemingly incompatible goals, such that the gains to one side come at the expense of the other.

Owens observed that frequent and powerful conflicts can have a devastating impact on the behavior of people in the organisation. They often develop into hostility which also causes people to withdraw physically and psychologically.

Owens therefore suggests that it is necessary to find out whether the conflict exists between the parties or whether it is only perceived to be there. The purpose is to find out whether the parties really seek incompatible goals. He observed that this is necessary because sometimes what is seen as conflict may just be a misunderstanding that can easily be dealt with. However if the conflict does exist then he suggested that it is necessary to select the correct method that can deal with it productively.

Studies on Conflict Management

Robbins and Stuart-Kotze (1986) state that the ability to manage conflict is undoubtedly one of the most important skills a manager needs to possess. A study of middle-and top-level executives by American Management Association, for instance, reveals that the average manager spends approximately 20% of his or her time dealing with conflicts.

Robbins and Stuart-Kotze (1986) conducted a study in conflict management and found that some organizational cultures support functional conflicts in general

though the traditional view appears dominant. They found out that two reasons seem to explain why managers follow the traditional view.

1. The home, school and church have historically reinforced anti conflict values and
2. Managers are frequently evaluated and rewarded on lack of conflict within units.

This importance of conflict according to Robbins S. P. (1990) is reinforced by a survey of what topics practicing managers considered most important in management development programmes. Conflict management was rated more important than decision-making, leadership, or communication skills.

In further support of the claim, Robbins studied a group of managers and looked at 25 skill and personality factors to determine which, if any, were related to managerial success. This was defined in terms of rating of one's boss, salary increases and promotions. Of the 25 measures, only one-the ability to handle conflicts – was positively related to managerial success.

Ali, Boulden, Brake, Bruce, Eaton, Holden, Johnson, Langdon and Tee (2002) intimated that there is the need to suggest proposals that are positive and forward-looking. They further suggested that by expressing opinions in an assertive, constructive way, a more assertive response is received from a previously nervous or defensive person.

Barker, Tjosvold and Andrews (1988) carried out a field study matrix organization on conflict approaches of effective and ineffective managers. These are co-operative, confirming, competition and avoiding. They found out that co-operative approach uses mutual group goals, understanding other's views and compromising to create a mutually useful solution. Those who use confirmation approach stress

importance of communication and mutual respect for group and member competence. The competition approach is win-lose in which others must be persuaded or coerced into submission. The avoiding approach suppresses conflict and does not offer a permanent solution.

Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1992) postulated that in a typical sequence management first tries to minimize conflict indirectly, and if this fails they become directly involved. They cited avoidance as being easy in the short run.

Another method they suggested is to encourage the groups to meet and discuss their differences and work out a solution without management involvement. This they said can take the form of bargaining, persuasion or working on a problem together.

Donnelly et al (1992) described bargaining as involving the groups agreeing about what each will get and give to the other. For example, a group may agree to give another group quick turnaround time on the repairs of needed equipment if the other group agrees to bring complaints about the quality of repairs to them before going to management. Bargaining can be successful if both groups are better off. Concerning persuasion they explained it involved the groups finding common areas of interest. They attempt to find points of agreement and show how these are important to each in attaining organizational goals. They stressed that persuasion is possible if clashes between leaders do not exist. Problem solving, Donnelley et al (1992) asserted, can be an obstacle to a goal. They suggested that for groups to minimize their conflicts through problem solving the groups must generally agree on the goals. After that the group can propose alternative solutions that satisfy the parties involved.

A study on the relationship between principals' and teachers' perception of conflict was carried out by Byers (1987) at Pennsylvania state University. He found out that teachers' attribution of principals' conflict behavior is significantly related to

teachers' perception of levels of conflict and organizational commitment. He observed that teachers perceived co-operative conflict handling model, that is, confrontation and compromise as positively related to the level of conflict.

Mosser (1987) also conducted a study on Principal-Teacher perception of conflict and commitment in elementary schools in Pennsylvania. Mosser's study indicated that a significant negative relationship exists between the perception of conflict and attribution of problem-solving behaviour.

A similar study by Hoover (1990) was carried out on relationships among perception of principals' conflict and management behavior, levels of conflict and organizational climate in high schools. He found out that those who used accommodation and compromise approaches had lower levels of conflicts in their schools while those who used forcing and avoiding had higher levels of conflict.

Summary

From the literature review the following conclusions can be made. Conflicts exist when one person tries to thwart the outcomes desired by the other (Oppong-Mensah, 1999). Conflicts as stated by Tedeschi, Schlenker and Bonoma (1973) is an interactive state in which behaviours or goals of one actor are, to some degree, incompatible with the behaviours or goals of another. Also, Mankoe (2007) pointed out that conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur.

Furthermore, conflicts result when there are incompatible goals, cognitions or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition or antagonistic interaction, Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1992). Conflicts can be classified into different types. They include interpersonal conflicts, intrapersonal conflicts and inter group conflicts and stated in the Encyclopedia Britannica (1992, 15th ed).

Conflicts can be caused by goal divergence, competition for scarce resources and frustration among others. These are the views of writers like Owens (1987) and Mankoe (2007).

The management of conflicts involves negotiation, forcing compromise and problem solving. Ali, Boulden, Brake, Bruce, Eatern and Holdern recommend mediation, dialogue and problem solving. Mankoe (2007) suggested structural methods of managing conflicts which includes dominance through position, decoupling, buffering with inventory among others and Barker, Tjosvold and Andrews (1988) describe co-operative, confirming, competition and avoiding approaches to conflict management. Conflicts must be resolved as soon as they occur as Robbins (1990), Donnelly et al (1992) and Mankoe (2007) postulate.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to examine conflict management practices in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School in the Kumasi Metropolis in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. This chapter is a discussion of the methods used to collect data for the study.

Design

The study was a descriptive survey. The purpose was to generalize from a sample to a population so that inference could be made about some characteristics, attitude or behavior of the population. The descriptive survey was used because in the view of Osuala (1993) the method is appropriate for conducting a study into an on-going process. The choice of the survey method is further supported by Cohen and Manion (1995) who opined that the survey approach is useful in comparing conditions of an ongoing activity against set standards. In Kumerpor's (2002) definition, a social survey is "an objective quantitative approach to the study of a social process within a well defined area at a given time through one or more institutions by means of a schedule" (p.117). In the views of Frankel and Wallen (2000), the survey research design has a number of advantages which makes it useful for educational research. For instance, Frankel and Wallen opined that the method could be used to collect data from a number of people across a wide geographical areas. However, Cohen and Manion (1995) observe that the approach has some weaknesses which need to be considered and checked when using the design. They explain that survey takes a long

time to complete because some respondents do not usually return their copies of questionnaire on time inspite of the fact that they would be given reminders. Again, they observe that the method is expensive to use especially when research assistants have to be trained and given gadgets like tape recorders, cameras and money to go to the field and conduct interviews. The design was a cross-sectional survey. The information for the survey was collected at one point in time.

The survey depended on direct contact with those individuals whose attitude and behavior characteristics were relevant for the investigation. The survey technique was used because the desired information could not be obtained easily and accurately from any other source.

Population

The study was carried out in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School in the Kumasi Metropolis. The teaching and the non-teaching staff as well as the students formed the population for the study. The respondents were given code numbers for the sake of anonymity. This is shown in table 1.

Tables 1

Respondents Involved in the Study

Name	Code
Teaching Staff	R. A
Non-Teaching Staff	R. B
Students	R. C

Sample

The researcher used a sample size of 140 respondents, grouped into the following: 20 teaching staff respondents, 20 non-teaching staff respondents and 100

student respondents. There were 41 male teachers and 19 female teachers. The population of the male teachers was greater than that of the female teachers. This made the researcher select using a ratio of three male teachers to two females making a total of 20 teachers. The selection of the 20 non-teaching staff respondents was based on the same principle as that of the teachers.

There were 1060 students in the school. The selection of the student respondents was based on a ratio of 10 is to 1 to get the 100 student respondents. These were girls in forms two and three who had stayed in the school for more than one year.

A single-staged sampling procedure was adopted. The researcher had access to names in the population and sampled them. Every person in the sample had an equal probability of being chosen. The above teachers, non-teaching staff and students were used for the study because they all had contributions to make towards the study.

Table 2 contains the population and the sample size.

Table 2

Population and Sample Size

Name	Population			Sample		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
R. A	41	19	60	12	8	20
R. B	42	24	66	8	12	20
R. C	-	1060	1060	-	100	100
Total	83	1103	1186	20	120	140

Instrument

Data were collected by means of questionnaires. The items included dichotomous response items where respondents had to tick either 'yes' or 'no', multiple choice items, rating items and forced choice rating scales. There were also open-ended items where in some instances respondents had to supply their own responses. It was a self-designed instrument, made up of four parts, i.e. sections A,B,C and D, (see appendix A)

Section A of the questionnaire was designed to record the personal attributes of respondents such as age, position, academic and professional qualifications and number of years spent in the school. The next part of the questionnaire, that is section B, sought information from respondents on the types of conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Senior Secondary School, some causes of conflicts and frequency of conflicts.

Section C of the questionnaire dealt with conflict management in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School.

Finally, Section D of the questionnaire was made up of items dealing with management techniques used. Respondents were to show on four-point scale some of the conflict management techniques used. Basic to the validity of questionnaire is asking the right questions; therefore all efforts were made to phrase the questions in the least ambiguous way.

The meanings of all items were clearly defined so that they would have the same meaning to all respondents. With suggestions from the researcher's colleagues and her supervisor, all ambiguities were removed from the questions, ensuring content validity. The questionnaire was used because the focal data for the research project were the attitude and perceptions of individuals.

Pre-Testing and Reliability of Instruments

The questionnaires were pre-tested at Adventist Senior Secondary School. The testing was important. Its purpose was to establish the face validity of the instrument and to improve questions, format and the scales. The school in which the pre-testing was carried out was selected because it is in the same Ashanti Region as Kumasi Girls' Secondary School and has the same urban characteristics which Kumasi Girls' possess. The heads of the schools and the teachers had similar qualifications of second degree, first degree, diploma and similar number of years of experience.

The pretesting revealed a few defects in the draft questionnaires which were corrected. For example the question on gender of students was deleted. Items on the questionnaire that expressed identical concepts were removed. Others that were found to be ambiguous or incomprehensible were either deleted or made clearer. For example, the question on how students register their grievances. Respondents were given options to choose from instead of open-ended questions. Personal interaction between the researcher and respondents during the pre-testing and the analysis of the study resulted in a revision of the draft questionnaires. The revised questionnaires, that is the final instrument are attached as appendices A, B and C.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the collection of the data, the researcher had obtained an introductory letter from the Director of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (I.E.P.A) of the University of Cape Coast. (see appendix D). The introductory letter helped the researcher to get the needed assistance and co-operation from the Headmistress of the school where the study was carried out. The researcher discussed

the purpose and significance of the research with the Mistress and sought for her permission and support in the exercise.

In the school, at the request of the researcher, the Headmistress called a staff meeting at which members of staff were briefed about the study. After this a staff list as well as student list were obtained from which samples were selected. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and the instructions to the questionnaire and the items were carefully explained to them. The researcher later collected the completed questionnaires.

A return rate of 92.85% was obtained. That is, out of 140 copies of the questionnaire distributed 130 valid ones were returned. All the 130 copies of the questionnaire that were retrieved were properly filled so no questionnaire was rejected. This represents 92.86% of the questionnaire that were distributed.

Table 3

Distribution and Retrieval of the Questionnaire

Name	Number of Questionnaire			Number of Questionnaire			
	Distributed			Retrieved			% of return
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
R.A	12	8	20	12	8	20	100
R.B	8	12	20	8	10	18	90
R.C	-	100	100	-	92	92	92
Total	20	120	140	20	110	130	92.86

Procedure for the Analysis of Data

The study was a descriptive survey and the analysis was aimed at determining the following:

1. The nature of conflict in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School.
2. The management strategies the Headmistress and school authority used.
3. The effectiveness of the management technique used in resolving conflict in the school.

The responses of each respondent was scored. The scoring as based on Likert scale as described by Oppenheim (1966) and Best and Kahn (1995). Each item was scored on tally cards. For example, the number of respondents who chose a, b, c, or d was recorded. The unit of analysis was the respondent group and not the individual. The tally cards were prepared for each group on which responses of each of the respondents were scored.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was about conflict management practices in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School in the Kumasi Metropolis in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The analysis of data was based on types, causes and frequency of conflicts in the school, as well as conflict management and the management techniques used by the school authorities to resolve conflicts. The analysis has been approached in the four sections. First, the background information of respondents (bio-data) is analysed to show the kind of respondents whose views are expressed in the study.

There were three groups of respondents, namely teachers, students and the supporting staff. The second issue was types, causes and frequency of conflicts. Next is the management practices used in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School and finally, the management techniques used by the school authorities. These are analysed in this chapter.

Ages of Teacher Respondents and Supporting Staff Respondents

The researcher decided to determine the ages of the teacher and supporting staff respondents to find out whether differences in their ages are likely to have any significant impact on the views they might express regarding conflict management or whether all of them have similar views irrespective of ages.

Table 4**Bio-data of Teacher Respondents**

Age Range	No. of Teachers	%
25 yrs. & Below	1	5
26 – 35	8	40
36 – 45	6	30
46 – 55	3	15
Over 55	2	10
Total	20	100

Table 5**Biodata of Supporting Staff**

Age Range	No. of supporting Staff	%
25 yrs & Below	1	5.5
26 – 35	3	16.7
36 – 45	5	27.8
46 – 55	5	27.8
Over 55	4	22.2
Total	18	100

It can be seen from Table5 that only 5% of teacher respondents were 25 years and below while 75% were above 25years. With regard to the supporting staff respondent 5.5% were below 25 years, while 94.5% were above 25 years. The tables show that majority of the respondents both teachers and supporting staff were aged between 26 years and 45 years. This shows that there are more respondents in the older category and these could bring their accumulated experience to bear when expressing their views on conflict management.

Position of Respondents in the School

The aim of the researcher was to find out differences in the views expressed, if any, by the various respondents holding various positions in the school. This was captured by questionnaire item 1 (ii). The results are shown in Tables 6,7 and Table 8

Table 6

Characteristics of Student Respondents in School

Position	No. of Students	%
Position	10	10.9
Student only	82	89.1
Total	92	100

Table 7**Characteristics of Teacher Respondents**

Position	No. of Teachers	%
Subject teacher	7	35
Form master/Subject teacher	9	45
Counsellor/Subject teacher	2	10
Assistant Head	2	10
Total	20	100

Table 8**Characteristics of Supporting Staff Respondents in the School**

Position	No. of Supporting Staff	%
Senior Accountant	1	5.6
Assistant Administrative Officer	1	5.6
Accounts Clerk	2	11.1
Chief Cook	1	5.6
Storekeeper	2	11.1
Cooks	5	27.2
Labourers	6	33.5
Total	18	100

Information in Table (8) shows that majority of the teachers, about 90% were teachers who come into contact with the students. Concerning the supporting staff, Table 8 the labourers and cooks form a majority of 60% followed by storekeepers and accounts clerks. These were all people in the school community who have interaction with the students and whose views could be relied upon.

Table (6) shows the position of students, of which 10.9% were prefects with the remaining 89.1% being students only. These were the students who could give their views on conflicts and conflicting situations in the school

Qualification of Respondents

The aim of the researcher was to find the qualification of the respondents to determine whether the various qualifications would make any difference impact in the views they expressed. Questionnaire item 1 (iii) aimed at obtaining this information. The results are shown in Table 9 and 10.

Table 9

Qualification of Teacher Respondents

Qualification	No. of Teachers	%
Diploma Holder	3	15
First Degree	12	60
Second Degree	3	15
Others	2	10
Total	20	100

Table 10

Qualification of Supporting Staff Respondents

Qualification	No. of supporting Staff	%
MSLC/SSCE	10	55.6
Diploma Holder	1	5.6
First Degree	-	-
Others	7	38.8
Total	18	100

In Table 9, a majority of the teacher respondents, 60%, possess first degree and a total of 39% were diploma holders and second degree. Concerning the supporting staff, in Table 10, 55.6% were MSLC/SSCE holders while 38.8% have qualifications different from those in the questionnaire. The tables show that the teacher respondents were more qualified academically. Than the supporting staff.

Key:

M.S.L.C Middle School Leaving Certificate

SSSCE Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

Number of Years spent in the School

The researcher tried to find out the number of years respondents had spent in the school as this may also determine how rich in experience they were concerning conflicts and conflict management in the school. Questionnaire item 1 (iv) was used to seek this information.

The results are in Table 9.

Table 11

The Number of Years spent by Non-Student Respondents in the School

Years	No. of Teachers	%	No. of Supporting Staff	%
1 – 2	7	35	4	22.2
3 – 5	7	35	5	27.8
6 – 9	4	20	4	22.2
10+	2	10	5	27.8
Total	20	100	18	100

Table 11 shows that 14 of the teacher respondents which is 70%, had stayed in the school for a period between two and five years while the remaining 30% has been in the school for between six years and ten years or more. The results for the supporting staff were 50% for one to five years and another 50% for six years to ten years and above. The researcher was of the view that people who have spent this number of years in the school could give views which would be credible.

In summary, it can be inferred from the personal data, that the various groups were represented in terms of age, position, qualification and number of years spent in the schools. Respondents from such a cross-section of the people in the school could have knowledge in conflict management practices in the school.

Conflicts Witnessed in the School

The researcher tried to elicit from respondents conflicts that respondents had witnessed as workers in the school. This section sought to address research Question 2 which states: “What types of conflicts are common between students and school authorities in the school?” Questionnaire items 12 of the non-teaching staff was used to collect this information. The results are listed below

Student - School authority conflict	10
Student – Student conflict	3
Student – Teacher Conflict	3
SS3 Students’ birthday party	<u>1</u>
None	1
Total	<u>18</u>

The responses showed that a majority of the respondents had witnessed conflicts between students and school authorities. However, student-student conflict and student – Teacher conflicts were also significant since about one-third of the respondents had also witnessed these conflicts. The result has shown different types of conflicts and answers Research Question 1 which states” What types of conflicts are common between students and school authorities in the school?”

Causes of Student Confrontation in the Schools

The aim of the researcher was to find out aspects that bring about student confrontation with school authorities in Kumasi Girls’ Secondary School. The section seeks to address Research Question 2 which states; “What are the causes of

conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School?" Questionnaire item 3 was used to gather this information and the results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Causes of Student Conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School

Respondents	Drug Addition %	Non Performance %	Unfair Treatment %	Any Other %	Total
Teachers	-	20	55	25	100
S. Staff	-	22.22	50	27.78	100
Students	-	23.91	56.52	19.57	100

In Table 12, none of the three groups of respondents attribute the causes of student conflicts to “drug Addiction”. Over 50% of all the three groups of respondents attribute causes of student confrontation to “Unfair treatment” of students by teachers. About 20% or more of each of the groups observe that a student conflict is caused by “Any Other” reason among which were sexual harassment by teachers, lack of respect for teachers, quality and quantity of food, choice and type of good served, leakage of examination questions, wrong perception of students against teachers, school authorities as being adamant to students’ grievances and lateness on the part of both teachers and students.

The researcher realized from the table that unfair treatment was rated high among the three groups of respondents. The observation that “Non-performance,

unfair treatment and the other reasons given as causes of student conflict in the school also answer Research Question 2.

Age Group of Teachers Who Frequently Have Confrontation with Students

The researcher decided to ascertain whether it is the older teachers or the younger ones who frequently have confrontation with the students. Item 5 of questionnaire for both teachers and supporting staff were used to seek the information. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Age-Group of Teachers and supporting Staff Who Usually Have Confrontation with Students

Respondents	Below 25 %	26-35 %	36 – 45 %	46 – 55 %	Over 55 %	Total
Teachers	20	50	10	20	-	100
S. Staff	16.67	55.56	27.77	-	-	100

Table 13 presents information on the age group of teachers who usually have confrontation with students. Out of the 20 teacher respondents 70% claim that teachers in the age group of between 25 years and 35 years are the people who usually have confrontation with the teachers' claim. The two groups of respondents also agree that teachers who are over 55 years do not usually have confrontation with the students.

The researcher could infer from the views expressed that the more experienced teachers are the less likely they are to have confrontation with students.

Frequency of conflicts in Kumasi Girls Secondary School

The researcher decided to establish the rate at which conflicts occur in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School. This section relates to Research Question 3 which states: "How frequently do conflicts occur in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School?" Questionnaire items 4 was used to seek this information. Percentage responses for the item are presented for each group of respondents. These are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Frequency of Conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School

Respondents	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %	Not at all %	Total %
Teachers	100	-	-	-	100
S. Staff	72.22	27.78	-	-	100
Students	89.1	6.52	2.17	2.17	99.99

Table 14 shows the responses to item 2 of the questionnaire which sought the views of respondents on frequency of conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School. Out of the student respondents 89% of them said students "sometimes" have misunderstanding with school authorities. All 20 teacher respondents said that "sometimes" there is a misunderstanding between students and school authorities while 72.22% of the supporting staff respondents said "sometimes" conflict occur between students and school authorities.

The responses of the three groups of respondents show that conflict exists in the school. This is because a greater percentage of the respondents said conflicts “sometimes” occur between students and school authorities. This is in conformity with the views of Mankoe (2007) when he said conflict manifests itself in a group setting such as a school with different interest groups such as professional, semi-professionals skilled and unskilled and technical men as well as students, parents and government officials demanding that educational policies be implemented in educational organisations often make the institution prone to constant confrontation. Such people or groups of people often express different opinions on issues. Their views on the way they want educational policies to be implemented clash with each other resulting in conflicts.

The school as an institution cannot exist without conflicts: for as Oppong-Mensah puts it conflict is “a situation in which an effort is made by someone to off-set the efforts of another by some form of blocking that will result in frustrating the other in attaining goals and interests”(p.1).

Again, Robbins (1990) made a claim that conflict was a natural and inevitable occurrence in all organizations. According to him conflict could not be eliminated and that there are times when conflict may even benefit the organization. The observation that a conflict sometimes occurs in the school provides an answer to Research Question 3 which states: “How frequently do conflicts occur in Kumasi Girls’ Secondary School?”

Conflict Management in Kumasi Girls’ Secondary School

The researcher aimed at determining whether or not students are punished when they misbehave. This section is an answer to Research Question 4.

Questionnaire item 6 for teaching and supporting staff and 4 for students were used to enquire from respondents whether or not students were punished when they misbehaved.

The responses indicate that 95% and 100% respectively of teacher and supporting staff respondents claim students are punished when they misbehave. However, as many as 63% of student respondents say they are not punished when they misbehave. The researcher believes that either the students are not being truthful or that they have different views of the punishment given them.

Punishment Teachers Give to Students

Item 12 of the questionnaire for teaching staff and supporting staff was used with regard to the kind of punishment teachers give to students when the students flout school rules. The results are in Table 16.

Table 15

Teachers' Views on Kind of Punishment Given to Students When They Misbehave

Punishment	No.	%
Caning	1	5
Suspension	4	20
Dismissal	-	-
Any Other	15	75
TOTAL	20	100

The information in Table 15 shows that as many as 15 or 75% of the teacher respondents use “any other” punishment while 20% use “suspension”. Some of the

“any other” punishment as recorded on the retrieved questionnaire include weeding a portion of the compound, kneeling down, sweeping, scrubbing and picking litter from the school compound. The researcher realized that these other forms of punishment were popular and were mostly used by the teachers.

Whether Punishment Given Are Prescribed for Schools

The aim of the researcher was to elicit from teacher respondents whether they thought the types of punishment given to students were prescribed in the schools’ statute book. Item 9 of the questionnaire of teaching staff respondents dealt with this aspect of the analysis.

Responses indicate that 90% of the teacher respondents administered punishment that are stated in the schools’ statute book. Only 10% were of the view that punishment administered was not in line with those stated in the books. It can be inferred from the table that punishment given could not generate conflict in the school since students are aware of the punishment that go with the various offences. (They know this from the student handbook given to them on admission).

Whether Teachers’ Show Discrimination in Punishing Students

The aim of the researcher was to find out whether teachers show discrimination in punishing offending students. The information was obtained by use of item 11 of teaching staff questionnaire.

The information received shows that 30% of the teacher respondents stated that teachers show discrimination in punishing students. The remaining 70% of the respondents aver that teachers did not show discrimination in punishing students.

Even though majority of the teachers did not discriminate against students while punishing them, yet the actions of the 30% could be a source of conflict in the school.

Discrimination Intensifies Conflicts in the School

The Researcher aimed at finding the effects that discrimination could have on the intensity of conflicts in the school. Item12 of teaching staff questionnaire was used to gather the information. This issue was dependent on item 11 of the questionnaire for teaching staff.

Responses to the item indicate that a greater percentage of the teacher respondents, 85%, claimed that discrimination did not contribute to the intensity of conflicts in the school. The researcher's view is that since the percentage of discrimination is low (30%) as shown in Table 18, it is less likely that it would contribute to intensify of conflicts in the school.

How Students Show Their Grievances to Authorities

The researcher wanted respondents to state how students register their grievances to school authorities. Items 13 of teaching staff, 16 of students and 10 of supporting staff questionnaires dealt with this issue. The results are in Table 20.

Table 16

Methods used by Students to Register their Grievances to the School Authorities

Responses	RA		RB		RC	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dialogue between SRC and Sch. Authorities	13	65	3	16.7	52	56.5
Dialogue between PTA and Sch. Authorities	2	10	-	0	10	10.9
Threat of violence by Students	-	-	-	0	-	0
Dialogue between Prefects and Sch. Authorities	5	25	15	83.3	30	32.6
Total	20	100	18	100	92	100

Table 16 shows that a majority of teacher and student respondents, that is, 65% and 56.5% respectively agreed that students, through the SRC, go into dialogue with school authority when they have some grievances. None of the respondents stated that students used threat of violence, while 83.3% of the supporting staff respondents stated that prefects dialogued with school authority on behalf of students when there were grievances.

Information in the table showed that the SRC was the main means of addressing students' concern, followed by the prefects, both going into dialogue with school authorities. Dialogue is a powerful tool of conflict resolution in the school which needs to be encouraged and maintained. Again, the researcher realized from the table that the SRC and the prefectorial systems serve as effective bridges between students and school authorities and they need to be empowered to play their roles effectively. The findings in the Table answer Research Question 4 which states: "How are conflicts managed in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School?"

Reaction of School Authorities to Students' Complaints

The researcher sought responses on how school authorities respond to students; complaints. Item 14 of teaching staff questionnaire was used to obtain the required information. The responses are presented in Table 17

Table 17

Authorities Response to Students' Complaints

Responses	RA		RB		BC	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Adamant	-	0	-	0	8	8.8
Slow response	5	25	2	11.1	36	39.1
Quick response	15	75	16	88.9	48	52.1
Total	20	100	18	100	92	100

As many as 75%, 88.9% and 52.1% respectively of RA, RB and RC in Table 17 stated that school authorities responded quickly to students grievances. This implied that the incidence of conflict could be minimized as the two parties, students and school authorities were seen to be co-operating with each other. The researcher saw this as a healthy sign, but was of the view that the 25% and 39.1% who stated that there was slow response cannot be ignored. In the light of this, it was the hope of the researcher that if 100% quick responses were achieved it would be better since conflict then would be placed under total control.

But the Interactionist View of conflict encourages conflict on the grounds that a harmonious, peaceful, tranquil and co-operative organization is prone to becoming

static, apathetic and nonresponsive to needs of change and innovation. The responses gathered from the Table answers Research Question 5 which states: “To what extent do the management techniques used help to resolve or contribute to the intensity of conflicts in Kumasi Girls Secondary School?”

Whether there are Undisciplined Students in the Classes or Houses

The researcher tried to determine the presence of undisciplined students in the classes or houses of teacher respondents. That is whether there were students whose behavior left much to be desired and if so in what number in each class or house. The results are displayed in table 18.

Table 18

The presence of Undisciplined Students in Class/House

Responses	No	%
None	4	20
A few	16	80
A lot	-	-
Total	20	100

The results in Table 18 indicated that 80% of the teacher respondents admitted that there were a few undisciplined students in their classes/houses in the school. This implied that they could bring about conflicts in the school if they were not properly checked. The researcher’s opinion was that even though the undisciplined

students were few in each class or house, they could be a source of worry in terms of causing conflicts to occur if they should come together and act in unison.

This was the reason for which Mankoe (2007) said that because conflict is pervasive in all human experience, it is an important aspect of an organizational behavior in education. The school authorities should pay particular attention to conflict management by monitoring the undisciplined students who were more likely to bring about conflicts.

Methods Adopted by Teachers to Treat Undisciplined Students

The teacher respondents' views were sought on how they treated the undisciplined students mentioned in item 16. The investigation was carried out by using item 17 of teaching staff questionnaire. A number of views were expressed by the respondents as to how they treated the undisciplined students.

These were listed below;

Counsel the Students	7
Give minor punishment such as picking litter etc.	4
Treat them equally	1
Let them weed	3
Expel them from class	2
Caning	1
Warning	1
Internal suspension	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>20</u>

The researcher's observations were that counseling, minor punishment and weeding were the most common methods adopted by the teachers in handling the undisciplined students.

School Authorities' Response to Conflicts witnessed in the school.

The main objective was find out how the authorities respond to the conflicts witnessed in the school. Item 13 of the supporting staff questionnaire was used for this investigation. The responses are displayed in table 19

Table 19

School Authorities' Responses to Conflicts

Responses	RA		RB	
	No.	%	No.	%
Dialogue with students	15	75	15	3.3
Meeting with Board of Governors	-	-	3	6.7
Suspension of Students	4	20	-	-
Dismissal of ring leaders	1	5	-	-
Total	20	100	18	10.0

The information in Table 19 showed that 75% of teacher respondents and 83.3% of supporting staff respondent contended that the school authorities used dialogue with students. This implied that dialogue with students seemed to be a good method of resolving conflicts in the school. The school had no known record of conflict which had blown out of proportion. The researcher was of the view that when students were given the opportunity to express their views on issues, they were likely to abide by the outcomes of the dialogue. Robbins and Stuart – Kotze (1986) stated

that the ability to manage conflict is undoubtedly one of the most important skills a manager needs to possess. In view of this, if the school authorities were able to manage student conflicts with dialogue so that the conflict did not get out of hands then this confirms the findings in Table 16 which answers Research Question 5 which states: “How are conflicts managed in Kumasi Girls’ Secondary School?”

Whether the Management Technique Used is Appropriate

The researcher wanted to find out whether the method used to resolve conflict is the best way of resolving conflict in the school. Item 19 of teaching staff questionnaire was used to collect this information.

Responses showed that as many as 90% of the respondents agreed that the method used was the best way of solving conflicts in the school. The researcher agreed with the views of the respondents since it afforded the students the opportunity to express their views on matters affecting them.

Dialogue with the students which is similar to compromising style, in the view of Mankoe (2007), is a behaviour that is at an intermediate level in terms of co-operation and assertiveness. He said it was based on give and take and typically involved a series of concession. To him it is a quick way of managing conflict, not maximizing satisfaction but there is a partial satisfaction for each of the parties because there is a fair combination of gains and losses.

Some Offences and their Punishment

The researcher decided to find out how school authorities responded to some of the conflicts that happened in the school by asking students to list some offences and their corresponding punishment in a tabular form. In all a total of 24 offences

were listed and their punishment attached. The results are shown in Table 20 (Refer to Table 20).

The most popular offence listed by the student respondents was stealing. This was followed by examination malpractices, fighting, pregnancy and abortion.

Suggested Ways of Managing Conflicts in the School

Respondents suggested ways by which conflicts in the school could be managed. Item 20 of teaching staff questionnaire was used to gather this information.

The suggestions given are listed below

Students should be advised by P.T.A. and school's Board of Governors.

There should be meetings between students and their class teachers so that students could channel their grievances through their teachers to the school authorities.

There should be parent, teacher and student fora.

Suspension should not be used since girls have pressure on their time.

Students should channel their grievances through the S.R.C.

Teachers should avoid favouritism.

The Head should let all teachers be aware of the problem and its solution.

Provision of suggesting boxes.

Offending students should be referred to the school counselors.

School authorities should respond promptly to student grievances.

Table 20**Some offences and their punishment**

Offences	Withdrawal	Repetition	Confiscation	Cancellation	Internal Suspension	Warning	Dismissal	Suspension	Withdrawal from B/house	Weeding	Canning
1. Stealing	3						2	4	12	14	5
2. Exam Malpractices		13		9				3	3		5
3. Using Unprescribed Items			7		2						
4. Bullying					6					1	2
5. Lesbianism	2									5	
6. Fighting					11					4	11
7. Abortion	6						9				
8. Breaking Bounds							1			18	

Table 20 continued

Offences	Withdrawal	Repetition	Confiscation	Cancellation	Internal Suspension	Warning	Dismissal	Suspension	Withdrawal from B/house	Weeding	Canning
9. Flirting with Male Trs	3										
10. Pregnancy	10								2		
11. Organizing Parties											
12. Sexual Misconduct	8						3				
13. Drunkenness							2	6			
14. Smoking, Drug Abuse							2	7			
15. Incitement of Riot								3			
16. Assault								5	1		
17. Failure to do House duty											
18. Disrespect	2						1	1		4	

Table 20 continued

Offences	Withdrawal	Repetition	Confiscation	Cancellation	Internal Suspension	Warning	Dismissal	Suspension	Withdrawal from B/house	Weeding	Canning
19. Indecent Dressing										1	1
20. Falling to Attend Soc. Gathering										2	1
21. Threatening Teachers											1
22. Over staying From Holidays					1				1	3	
23. Leaving Sch. Under false Pretences						1					
24. Deliberate Distortion of Facts.								1			

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter gives a summary of the findings of the study, conclusions deduced from the findings and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The study investigated causes and types of conflicts in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School and the management techniques used by the school authorities.

The study was a descriptive survey. The subjects of the study were 20 teaching staff, 18 supporting staff and 92 students from the school. The instruments used for the data collection were questionnaires. Frequencies, percentages and means were used for the analysis.

Summary of the Study

The incidence of conflicts was rare in the school. There was no known conflict which had blown out of proportion. However, the types of conflict that all the three groups of respondents have witnessed were caused by the following.

- Food related problems
- Students being prevented from attending super zonal athletic competition
- Unfair treatment of students by teachers
- Students breaking bounds
- Students being rude to teachers, and
- Communication barriers.

Issues related to food served at the dining hall was high among the causes. Students, as well as the teaching and supporting staff respondents corroborated each other on the quality and quantity of food served at the dining hall. Student respondents complained about the fact that one laddle of porridge(koko) was served to them with a small loaf of bread whenever they take that meal.

The analysis also revealed that dialogue between students and the school authorities prevented a considerable amount of conflicts which could have had a devastating effect on the school.

However, some of the student respondents averred that they were coerced to conform in certain instances. They contended that they were suppressed by the school authorities when a student complained about lesbianism in the school. Information flow on the issue was thus ceased even though the problem existed. The study revealed that collaboration method of resolving conflicts reduced the incidence and intensity of conflicts in the school.

The findings of the study confirmed the work of Mankoe (2007).

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study.

- Conflict was not a serious problem to the authorities of Kumasi Girls' Secondary School.
- Issues relating to the food served to the students were rated high among causes of conflict in the school. This was followed by the fact that students were not allowed to go for super zonal athletic competition when the school did not qualify.

- The school authorities use of dialogue (or collaboration style as Mankoe calls it) helped to bring conflict under control. The students preferred this to the autocratic style. Students maintained uneasy calm whenever they were forced to conform to certain agitating situations.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study was restricted to management of conflict between students and school authorities in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School.

- 1 The researcher recommends that further work be done on conflict management practices between teachers and the supporting staff in the school so that the findings of this study could be generalised for the school
- 2 It is recommended that a research be carried out in other girls' schools in the region, so as to ascertain whether the findings of the present study could be generalized for the country.
- 3 It is also recommended that the management of conflicts in boys' schools in the region should be researched into so that the outcome of such research could be compared with the findings of present work .

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APENDICES

APENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHING STAFF OF KUMASI GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL

This is an academic research being conducted to find out ways by which conflict is managed in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School. Any information that is provided will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to any person or organization.

SECTION 'A'

Background information of respondents.

Please tick [✓] the correct response for the following statements

1 i) Age:

a) Below 25 years []

b) 26 – 35 years []

c) 36 – 45 years []

d) 46 – 55 years []

e) over 55 years

ii) Position in School

a) Subject Teacher []

b) Form Master/Mistress & Subject Teacher []

c) Counselor / Teacher []

d) Assistant Headmaster/Mistress []

i) Qualification

a) Diploma Holder []

b) First Degree []

c) Second Degree []

d) Others []

iv) Number of years spent in the school

a) 0 - 2 years

b) 3 - 5 years

c) 6 - 9 years

d) Over 10 years

SECTION 'B'

2 Which type of conflicts would you say are common in this school?

a) Student – Students Conflicts []

b) Student – Teacher(s) Conflict []

c) Student – Headmistress Conflict []

d) Any other(state).....

3 What do you think are some of the causes of student confrontation in Senior Secondary schools?

a) Drug Addiction

b) Non-Performance of Teachers

c) Unfair Treatment by Teachers

d) Any other

4. Frequency and causes of conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools

Please tick [✓] the correct response

Are students in constant confrontation with school authorities?

a) Sometimes [] b) often [] c) always []

5. Which age group of teachers (refer to 1(i) do students usually have confrontation

with?

a) Below 25 years []

b) 26 – 35 years []

c) 36 – 45 years []

d) 46 – 55 years []

e) over 55 years []

SECTION ‘C’

Conflict management In Kumasi Girls’ Secondary School.

Please respond as appropriate

6 Do you normally punish students when they misbehave?

a) Yes [] b) No []

7 If Yes, what kind of punishment do you give to them?

a) Caning [] b) Suspension c) Dismissal [] d) any other [].

8. If No, why? Give reasons

a).....

b).....

9 Would you say are the punishment given stated in the schools, statue books?

a) Yes [] b) No []

10, If No, why do you administer that punishment?

a).....

b).....

11 Do you think teachers show discrimination in punishing students?

a) Yes [] b) No []

12 If Yes, do you think this contributes to the intensity of conflict in the school?

a) Yes [] b) No []

SECTION D

Management Techniques Used

13 Generally, how do students register their grievances with the school authorities?

a) Dialogue between SRSC and school authorities []

b) Dialogue between P.T.A. and school authorities []

c) Threat of violence by students []

- d) Dialogue between prefects and school authorities []
- 14 How do school authorities respond to students' complaints?
- a) Adamant [] b) Slow response []
- c) Quick response []
- 15 Are the response given by the school authorities causes of student conflict in the school? A) sometimes [] b) Most of the time []
- c) Not at all []
- 16 Do you have undisciplined students in your class, house etc? (Depending upon your position in the school)
- a) Non [] b) A few [] c) A lot []
- 17 How do you threat them?
- a)
- b)
- 18 Do you think it is the best way of solving conflicts in the school?
- a) Yes [] b) No []
- 19 Do you think that the management technique used contribute to the intensity of conflict in the school?
- a) Yes [] b) No []
- 20 If Yes, what kind of punishment would you recommend?
- a) Weeding portions on the compound []

b) Caning of affected students []

c) Suspending affected students []

21 If No, why? Give reasons

a)

b)

22 By way of recommendation, suggest some ways by which you wish conflicts
in the school could be managed.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS OF

KUMASI GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL

This is an academic research being conducted to find out ways in which conflict is managed in Kumasi Girls' Secondary School. Any information that is provided will not be disclosed to any person or organization. You are therefore entreated to answer the question as frankly and honestly) as possible.

SECTION 'A'

Background information of respondents

Please tick [✓] the correct response for the following statements

1. i) Age a) 14 years []
b) 15 years []
c) 16 years []
d) 17 years []
e) above years []
- ii) Class a) SS1 []
b) SS 2 []
c) S,S. 3 []
- iii) Position in school
a) Prefect []
b) Student []

SECTION ‘B’

Frequency and cause of conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools

Please tick [✓] the correct response

2. What are some of the causes of student confrontation in the school?

- a) Student drug addition []
- b) Non-performance of teachers []
- c) Unfair treatment of students by Teachers []
- d) Any other (specify)

3. Are students in constant confrontation with school authorities?

- a) Sometimes [] b) Often []
- c) Always [] d) Not at all []

SECTION ‘C’

Conflict management in Kumasi Girl’s Secondary School

Please respond as appropriate

4. Are you normally punished by the school authorities when you fail to attend classes for three or more days?

- a) Yes [] b) No []

5. If no, why do you think you are not punished?

- a)
- b).....

6. Do you see punishment as an infringement on your right?

- a) Yes [] b) No []

7 Give reason(s) for your answer

a)

b)

8. Do you sometimes break some of the rules and regulations?

a) Yes [] b) No []

9 What kind of punishment is given to students for going contrary to school rules?

a) Caring [] b) Weeding [] c) Suspension []

10 Do teachers show partiality in punishing students for wrong-doing?

a) Yes [] b) No []

c) Sometimes [] d) Not at all []

SECTION 'D'

Management Techniques Used

Please respond as appropriate

11 Generally, how do students register their complaints with school authorities?

a) Dialogue between students and school authorities []

b) Petition to the P.T.A, []

c) Threat of harm to school property []

d) Any other.....

12 How do school authorities respond to students' complaints?

- a) Dialogue between school authorities and students []
- b) Unyielding []
- c) Threat of dismissal []
- d) Any other.....

13 Are students in constant conflict with school authorities?

- a) Yes []
- b) No []

14 Mention some of the conflicts you have witnessed as a student.

- a)
- b)

15 How do school authorities respond to some of these conflicts?

State some offences and their punishments

Offences	Punishment
1	
2,	
3,	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	

16 Do you think the type of management technique used contributes to the intensity of conflicts? A) Yes [] b) No []

17 By way of recommendation, suggest some ways by which you wish conflicts in the school could be managed.

a)

b)

c)

d) Others.....

iv) Number of years spent in the school.

a) 0 – 2 years []

b) 3 – 5 years []

c) 6 – 9 years []

d) Over 10 years []

SECTION ‘B’

Please tick [✓] the correct response for the following statements

2. What type of conflicts is common in Senior Secondary Schools?

a) Student – Students conflicts []

b) Student – Teacher(s) conflicts []

c) Student – Headmistress conflict []

d) Any other (state).....

3 What are some of the causes of student confrontation in Senior Secondary Schools?

a) Drug addiction []

b) Non-performance of teachers []

c) Unfair treatment by teachers []

d) Any other (state)

4. Are students in constant confrontation with school authorities?

a) Sometimes [] b) Often [] c) Always []

b)

5. Which age group of teachers (refer to 1,(i) do students usually have confrontation with?

- a) Below 25 years []
- b) 26 – 35 years []
- c) 36 – 45 years []
- d) 46 – 55 years []
- e) Over 55 years []

SECTION ‘C’

Conflict management in Kumasi Girls’ Secondary School

Please tick [✓] the correct response for the following statements.

6. Are students normally punished by the school authorities when they misbehave?

- (a) Yes []
- b) No []

7. Give reasons for your answer

a)

b).....

8 What kind of punishment do teachers give to students for going contrary to school rules?

- a) Caning []
- b) No []
- c) Suspension []
- d) Any other []

9 Do teachers show partially in punishing students for wrong doing?

a) Yes [] b) No []

c) sometimes [] c) All times []

SECTION 'D'

Management Technique Used

Please tick [✓] the correct response for the following statements.

10. How do students register their complaints with school authorities?

a) Dialogue between students and authorities. []

b) Dialogue between P.T.A and school authorities []

c) Threat of violence by students []

d) Dialogue between prefects and school authorities []

11. How do school authorities respond to students' complaints?

a) Dialogue between authorities and students []

b) Adamant []

c) Threat of dismissal []

12 Mention some of the conflicts you have witnessed as a worker in the school.

a)

b)

13. How did school authorities respond to conflicts witnessed in the school?

a) Dialogue with students []

b) Suspension of students []

c) Dismissal of ring leaders []

14. Do you think the management techniques used are the best way of solving conflicts in the school?

a) Yes [] b) No []

15. Do you think the management technique used contribute to the intensity of conflicts in the school?

(a) Yes [] b) No []

16. By way of recommendation, suggest some ways by which you wish conflicts in the