UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS IN THE

ADMINISTRATION OF CAPE COAST POLYTECHNIC

BY

PATRICK ARTHUR

A Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree, in Administration in Higher Education.

OCTOBER, 2009

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS IN THE

ADMINISTRATION OF CAPE COAST POLYTECHNIC

BY

PATRICK ARTHUR

2009

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 else where.

NAME: PATRICK ARTHUR   Signature................................ Date...................

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.

Principal Supervisor's Name: Prof. Amuzu-Kpeglo   Signature:..............Date:.......

Supervisor's Name: Rev Arko Boham   Signature:...................... Date:.............

ABSTRACT

Cape Coast Polytechnic, like any other organization, is likely to encounter conflict. This survey identified causes and types of conflict among the Cape Coast Polytechnic staff and examined the conflict management techniques employed in managing it. The sample of this study was made of one hundred and fifteen respondents selected from various departments of Cape Coast Polytechnic.

A validated questionnaire and interview guide were designed and administered to collect data on the occurrence of conflict and conflict management strategies. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

The findings revealed that personality incompatibility, poor communication, inadequate resources, power struggle, role ambiguity, time pressure, favourtism and competition are responsible for conflict in Cape Coast Polytechnic.

Again, the study revealed that management most often employed dominance and supervision methods like forcing, coercing which created a win-lose situation in which the loser ended up being disappointed and hostile. Such conflict management mechanisms, it was realized, never kept dysfunctional conflict at an appreciable level but rather, tended to resurface itself in another dimension.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that management of Cape Coast Polytechnic needs to give prompt attention to addressing causes of conflicts. The

use of dialogue in resolving conflicts should be embraced. Again it is recommended that management of Cape Coast Polytechnic should assist heads of departments or concerned parties to re-examine conflict situations. Ideally, management should both be willing to look at the situation from the other's point of view.

It further recommended that management should try as much as possible to discourage victimization in the Polytechnic. Polytechnic staff should rather be encouraged to give of their best. A complaints desk could be established in the Polytechnic to look into issues of victimization before they explode into serious conflicts. Such an avenue will serve as an early warning system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is no doubt in my mind that this thesis would not have been possible without the good will and kind assistance of a wide range of people. There are those people who contributed in conducting the research and those who provided moral support and encouragement.

In view of this, I thank my Supervisors, Prof. Amuzu Kpeglo and Rev. Arko Boham, for the time they spent on me, going through this thesis and offering excellent suggestions.

I am also greatly indebted to my family for supporting me all the time. Efforts of all and sundry are very much appreciated though, of course, I take responsibility for any errors that remain in this work.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated first, to God and second to Elizabeth Johnson who has been my constant mother, muse and best friend and also my siblings Maame Aba, Joe and Maame Ekua whose understanding and love for higher education have made me what I am today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Organisations, including Polytechnics, require people to work together and communicate with one another. Ideally, these inter-personal relationships should be productive, co-operative and satisfying. However, managers find that this is always not the case. Almost every working relationship can produce some degree of conflict with time. Indeed, anyone working in a Polytechnic may have probably experienced conflict either with colleague workers, supervisors or both. As observed by Veaner (1990) significant levels of conflict exist in academic institutions which in some cases are severe enough to demoralize personnel and impoverish service.

The effectiveness of every tertiary institution depends largely upon the manner in which participation of the leaders of the various constituencies represented on the campus is fostered. These constituencies, all of which are volatile, are made up of students, teaching staff, administrators, and non – academic support staff, and the ease with which their leaders interact determine, to a large measure the peace and stability needed to achieve the purpose of the institution (Mensa –Bonsu & Effah 2003).

1

Such interaction produces cooperation between and amongst the leaders and a willingness to collaborate on difficult issues, thereby facilitating the day-to-day running of the institution. Cooperation, however, does not occur by accident, but is achieved by the adoption of proper attitudes and policies that assure every constituency of respect and equitable treatment. It is thus of some importance that leaders of such institutions be encouraged to cultivate attitudes that are productive and produce peaceful co-existence.

Conflict is inevitable in any human institution. This is because no two human beings are so exactly alike that they can think and act the same way or agree on everything all the time. It is these differences in human beings that make educational institution inevitable of conflict. Fortunately, most human beings can be persuaded to work out any differences that might arise and keep their relationships on course. This reality, notwithstanding, it is also a fact that the way and manner in which differences may be addressed can create a difficulty for any individual or group having to work in a conflict situation.

Conflict is like a two-edged sword and the way it may be handled determines its outcome. Conflict may bring about either development or progress or negative and devastating consequences in the society. Conflict in organization can range from trivial to tragic and may occur within the individual, between people and between groups. As people come together to satisfy a wide range of emotional needs, social relations in general are swamped with conflict. As people

2

interact, they deal with differences as well as similarities; with strong dislikes as well as attractions (Zaleznik, cited in Kreitner, 1998).

Conflict, dispute, and disagreement are part of life and so are the feelings that go along with them –hurt, anger, frustration, resentment and or disappointment, especially when individuals are engaged in competition. Conflict has been defined as an active disagreement between two people or groups who have opposing opinions or principles (Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 1996). Deutsch (1973) also says conflict exists whenever an action by one person or group interferes with, injures or in some way makes less likely, the desired action of another person or group. It can be deduced from the above definitions that where there are people, particularly from heterogeneous background and within complex organisation, conflict may arise.

A potential for conflict exists whenever and wherever people have contact (Barker, Kathy, Kittie & Robert, 2001). As people are organized into groups to seek a common goal, the probability of conflict greatly increases since individuals may dislike certain people with whom they come into frequent contacts. There can be disagreements with family members, friends and co-workers and even with people we meet for the first time. These conflict situations appear with frequency in daily, public and private life and may be either on a small or large scale.

Conflict is seen as a tool that splits society apart (Dadzie-Bonney, 2003). The devastating consequence of conflict does not affect the individual alone but the whole society. Conflict is not just a problem for development but a threat to

3

human life. During conflict and civil wars, society diverts some of the meaningful resources from production to violent areas (Stern, 2003). The existence of conflict may be triggered by ethnic, racial, religious and economic differences or may arise from differences in values, beliefs and attitudes regarding issues.

The parties to conflict may be individuals or groups and since an organization brings together diverse individuals and groups, it is bound to provide grounds for conflicts of many kinds. According to Schein (1965), problems exist because as groups become more committed to their own goals and norms, they are likely to become competitive with one another and seek to undermine their rivals' activities.

One school of thought thinks the term "conflict" has a strong negative connotation, evoking words such as "rivalry", "anger" and "violence". Another school of thought, however, believes that conflict does not have to be a negative experience. It can serve as an important and positive force in the achievement of institutional goals. Conflict, however, is an everyday certainty with both benefits and costs (Baiden –Koomson, 2005). In recent times, it has been inferred that institutional conflict of any type is detrimental and should be eradicated.

However, the potential positive outcomes of conflict such as providing feedback, indicating the need for change, making supervisors aware of problems and increasing motivation are being recognized. Wright and Noe (1996), point out that because conflict is usually uncomfortable, people tend to think of it as bad. They are, however, of the view that if people handle a conflict with mutual

4

respect and trust and achieve an outcome that is favorable to the organization, conflict can be a positive force.

In Cape Coast Polytechnic, conflict is seen as a way of communication within the school. For instance, whenever any of the staff members or students feels strongly about any situation, they voice their disagreement with others who do not feel the same way. Again, in Cape Coast Polytechnic, conflict arises at any stage of discussions; there can be a conflict either at the problem defining stage or even when choosing the solution.

Dissatisfaction among staff members has led to tensions and confrontations. These tensions and confrontations have weakened effective communication processes in that each party (staff members) in the conflict lacked clear and unambiguous information regarding the other's point of view, something which is a necessary requirement for effective co-existence.

Additionally, in Cape Coast Polytechnic, when staff members study a problem together they often assume that with the same facts at everyone's disposal, they should all agree on a single analysis. This is not so, disagreement is even more likely when it is considered that in addition to natural differences stemming from the individual's background, there are other issues brought about by a range of other dimensions. These dimensions can be seen from the micro; interpersonal level through to the macro; groups such as organizations, communities and nations.

Wall and Callister, cited in Kreitner and Kinick (2001), define conflict as a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. The word "perceives" reminds us that sources of conflict and issues can be real or imagined (Krietner & Kinicki: 447). Furthermore, Thomas (1976), views conflict as a process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate some concern of his. Conflict is a process that occurs between two or more persons (groups, organisations, states) when they have different points of views, different goals, different needs and values, and they fight over limited resources to address them.

Again, it can be inferred that conflict begins when an individual or group feels negatively affected by another person or group. Conflict is not something that happens in isolation; it occurs whenever incompatible activities take place and there are parties to every conflict situation. Some of the parties to a conflict may be individuals, groups, organizations or institutions. Robinson (1972) says conflict can involve threats to behaviour and this occurs when values, policies and goals are changed as well as the redefinition of territories. To be able to cope with these threats, one must develop new behaviour skills.

However, Robinson (1972) argues that not every conflict is bad. Conflict can be harmful to groups but may also serve some potentially positive functions depending upon the types of groups within and among which it occurs. Conflict becomes positive when it leads to constructive development of the individual in particular and the organization as a whole.

6

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 the building of group cohesion. There are individuals and groups who 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 problems to be addressed by the people higher in their power structure (Robinson & Clifford 1974).

Interestingly, because organizations and institutions have greater number of people, these areas tend to be fertile grounds where conflicts of many kinds are witnessed and felt (Oppong-Mensa, 1999). It should, therefore, not be surprising that conflict is common in institutions and for that matter, institutions of higher learning including the Cape Coast Polytechnic. The Cape Coast Polytechnic, as a matter of fact, experiences pockets of conflict. This means that in tertiary institutions such as Cape Coast Polytechnic, conflicts occur on daily or even hourly basis. This may involve administrators, departments, staff, students, alumni and the community. It could also be student versus student (roommates, teammates etc.), conflict between members of the Polytechnic and the local community, employee conflicts, student versus staff conflicts and intra-or inter-departmental conflicts. Where any of the afore-mentioned feels cheated or not satisfied, the opportunity for conflict increases.

7

This calls for factions using tactics such as strikes to press home their demands. Students, for example, may agitate against lecturers who do not perform up to standard. There could also be instances where allocation of funds within the whole Polytechnic set up and supply of equipment for teaching and learning may cause a stir. Also, at the departmental level, conflict can result when it comes to the sharing of courses and allocation of lecture periods to lecturers.

Again, in Cape Coast Polytechnic, people with different qualifications bring about personality conflicts. This sometimes involves member of staff who have stayed on the job for a longer period of time with low academic qualification, as against those with higher qualification but has been on the job for a relatively shorter period. Furthermore, conflict in Cape Coast Polytechnic results when it comes to who should be given responsible positions such as a Vice Rector or Dean of a school. Also, when employees are to enjoy fringe benefits like car loans, there is this problem as to whether it should go to people with higher qualification but less number of years in service, or vice-versa.

Furthermore, in Cape Coast Polytechnic, decisions taken by the Academic Board and the Polytechnic Council may create fertile grounds for conflict to result. It must be noted that the Academic Board is made up of lecturers who may mostly want to seek their own interest. The Polytechnic Council, on the other hand, oversees the general interest of the Polytechnic community and in the course of their dealings; they may sometimes trample on the powers of the Academic Board. This situation could trigger a conflict.

It is important to remember that conflict can be created. Conflict is sometimes necessary to bring justice where injustice exists. It can provide an opportunity for new social political systems to be established and help to shape the future. However, when conflict becomes violent it will usually do more harm than good. After a violent conflict, it is often difficult to see the opportunities for a better future due to the widespread destruction of infrastructure and livelihoods, the breakdown of trust and the suffering caused through bereavement, trauma, grief and anger.

It can be explained from the above that conflict is prevalent in Cape Coast Polytechnic, touching the lives of students, members of staff, departments and administrators. Major tendencies combine to make institutional conflict inevitable. The issue here is not the inevitability of conflict but rather, how the Polytechnic management curbs destructive conflict while promoting constructive conflict. This is to say that when conflicts, associated with negative consequences do occur, certain strategies must be put in place to get them resolved or at least get them minimised them to avoid their explosion.

The potential of conflict to be destructive or constructive is determined by the circumstances surrounding it, and how effectively it is managed. It should be noted that, when conflict is handled well, it can provide priceless prospects for learning and adjustment. It can boost relationships, allow for better decision making, and also empower people to discover constructive solutions in problem solving.

On the other hand, it should also be clear that when conflicts are handled badly, they can be quite costly for the Polytechnic in terms of time, motivation, interpersonal and inter-group relations, as well as direct and indirect financial losses. Just as destructive conflict can be disruptive, its suppression can also have destructive consequences. Many available literature suggest that where little or no conflict occurs, there is likely to be consequences that include poor decision making, constricted communication, apathy and stagnant output (Bowman, 2001; Caudron, 1999; Gunn, 1999; Lewis, 1998).

Thus while conflict exists in team interaction, the key to an effective work team is to manage it. The many faces of conflict, therefore, become a contact challenge for administrators who are responsible for enforcing the goals of the Polytechnic. Institutions of higher learning need to be managed and as they are similar to corporations and companies, it becomes necessary that the tools of modern management should be applied to Polytechnics as well.

Many educational administrators seek to eliminate conflict because it has been given a bad reputation by it association with disorder and wars. However, conflict is the root of change and can lead to problem solving and creativity. Educational administrators must be well versed in the dynamics of personnel management since they constantly work with people from diverse background. Again, they are to anticipate conflict, stimulate functional conflict, and take steps to manage it if it becomes dysfunctional. Certain tools and solutions are available

10

for administrators to convert conflict into progress if only the ability and will to use them steadily are developed.

The administrator's role is to choose appropriate conflict management mechanisms and keep conflict at an appreciable level. It is against this background that a study on Conflict Management in the Administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic has become imperative.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict exists at all levels of society in all sorts of situations. Beside this, all institutions have the potential for conflict, and the level and intensity of conflict have no limit in any community. Conflict induces mainly negative and destructive outcomes such as anger, resentment, confusion, sadness and lack of cooperation, among others. It disrupts the smooth functioning of organizational processes, and creates chaos and disorder. In some organisations, conflict creates enmity, leads to demonstrations and retards progress. In effect, conflict can disturb the processes of working to achieve the Polytechnic's corporate goals and objectives.

In the workplace, a simple disagreement between team members, if unresolved, may escalate into avoidance, inability to work together, verbal assaults and resentment. In the worst cases, it may also lead to hostility and eventual separation from the organisation.

However, in some cases conflict may not only be evil; it may also determine the Polytechnic's performance. In addition, conflict in the form of

11

healthy competition is essential for an organization to perform effectively. The important aspect of conflict, according to Pierre and Peppers (1976), is how the human participants relate and respond to it.

One of the problems that have existed in Cape Coast Polytechnic has been that of perceived conflict. The Polytechnic has been characterized by petty squabbles, bickering, acrimony, rancor, and idle talk, among, others and these are disincentives to the implementation of major policy decisions.

I have worked in the Cape Coast Polytechnic for the past two years and have observed that there had been instances of conflict in the institution. These conflicts were either avoided or not effectively managed, thereby resulting in difficulty in the implementation of certain major policy decisions. The end product of these conflicts has been an inefficient service delivery and demoralized personnel. The principal objective of this thesis, therefore, is to assess the factors that engender conflict in the Cape Coast Polytechnic and to recommend how to manage them effectively.

Moreover, the essential elements of peace, co-operation, collaboration and harmonious co-existence are of paramount importance if Cape Coast Polytechnic is to remain the central focus of teaching, learning and applied research.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the nature of conflict that exists at the Cape Coast Polytechnic and also identify the causes of   conflict among staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic.

Again, the study identified types of conflict among the staff and investigated the effects of unmanaged conflict in the various departments. The study further considered mechanisms that were used by the management of Cape Coast Polytechnic to manage conflict.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of conflict exist in the Cape Coast Polytechnic?

2. What are the sources of conflict among staff in the Cape Coast

Polytechnic?

3. What are the effects of unmanaged conflicts in Cape Coast Polytechnic?

4. What conflict management mechanisms does management of Cape Coast

Polytechnic practice?

Significance of the study

The results of the study may be of immense benefit to the management of Cape Coast Polytechnic and other tertiary institutions. This is because the study will help to minimize problems arising out of conflicts in higher institutions that relate to administrative staff and academic staff, among academic staff, between

13

teaching staff and students and finally among students. Similarly, such a research will help administrators in institutions of higher education to be aware of measures that could be taken to reduce conflict occurrences.

Again, results of the study will enable chief executive of Cape Coast Polytechnic to know both the positive and negative effects of conflicts in order to bring conflicting situations down at an appreciable and marginal level to help achieve the overall objectives of the institution.

The recommendations of the study will be significant, not only to management but also to the student representatives, hall master/warden, as well as Dean of students because it is hoped that the data that will be obtained from the study will provide valuable information for enhancing policy guidelines and procedures on conflict management among students in the Polytechnic. They will, for example, find the study to be a means of improving decision-making and allocating resources and responsibilities efficiently.

Again, it is hoped that the recommendations that will be made at the end of the study will help Heads of departments in their use of conflict management mechanisms so as to contribute to the internal growth and development of the administration of the Cape Coast Polytechnic. Indeed, it is also hoped that this research will serve as the basis for future investigation into other aspects of conflict management.

14

Limitations

One of the limitations worth noting was the inability of the researcher to use a larger sample size of the target population. Nevertheless, the result obtained was a representative due to the sampling techniques the researcher used.

The other limitation of the study was the exclusion of other Polytechnics from the study. The limited area of study coupled with the sampling procedure decreased the generalization of the outcome or findings of the study. It would, therefore, be worthwhile for other researchers to undertake a similar study in other institutions of higher learning in the country.

Delimitations

The topic under investigation was conflict management mechanisms in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic. The study was confined to senior members, senior staff and junior staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic.

The study was further confined to the types of conflict, causes of conflict as well as the effects of unmanaged conflict and mechanisms employed by the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic to manage conflict. Conclusions and generalizations that were made were only applicable to the staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic. However, institutions of higher learning which may have similar characteristics may adapt the findings of this study.

15

Organisation of the Thesis

The study examines conflict management practices in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic. Chapter one of the study deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, limitations, delimitations and organisation of the study.

Chapter two consists of review of related but relevant literature. Chapter three comprises the methodology that was adopted for the conduct of the study. They are the research design, the population, sample and sampling techniques, the research instrument used for the study, the data collection procedure and the analysis of the data collected. Chapter four discusses findings of the study while chapter five presents the summary, conclusions and the recommendations of the study, as well as areas for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the review of the relevant literature. The review provided a frame for the formulation of the research questions and a theoretical frame work for the conduct of the study. Furthermore, the review focuses on the following issues: definition of conflict, theories of conflict, types of conflict, causes of conflict, conflict management technique, studies on conflict management and summary of the literature that was reviewed.

Definition of Conflict

Coser (1965) defines conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. Such may take place between individuals and collectives. Crawley (1992) defines conflict as a manifestation of differences working against one another. Robbins (1997) also defines conflict as "a process in which an effort is purposely made by one person to offset the efforts of another person by some form of blocking activity that will result in frustrating him/her in attaining his/her interests''.

17

The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary (2003) defines conflict as "an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles" p.255. The opinions consist of thoughts or beliefs with regard to basic ideas or rules of people. Conflict occurs when two or more people or organizations disagree because their needs, wants, goals or values are different.

Kriesburg (1973) views conflict as a relationship between two or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals. Gunn (2002), on his part defines conflict as an inescapable part of 'human nature' involving a misunderstanding or disagreement that causes a problem or struggle to achieve goals between people, groups, or nations.

Robinson and Clifford (1974) define conflict as a process involving behavioural threats by one party. The parties involved in a conflict see it as a threat to each other because one party seeks to attain goals or achieve interests with enough behavioural intensity to change the boundary as well as limit, if not destroy the goal attainment of the other party.

Warren (2005) argues 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 the results of sharp value and belief differences among the parties. The inability to recognize and deal with issues at stake pushes the conflicting parties to attack personalities instead of attacking the real problem.

Helliriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1995) argue that the term conflict is difficult to define, because it occurs in many different settings. They further add

18

that, the fundamental nature of conflict seems to be disagreement, contradiction or incompatibility and thus, refers to any situation in which there are incompatible goals, cognitions or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition or aggressive interaction.

Conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur (Deutsch, 2001). An activity that is incompatible with another is one that prevents, blocks or interferes with the occurrence or effectiveness of the second activity. Weiten (1986) shares similar views when he explains that conflicts exist when there is a co-existence of incompatible motives, behavioural impulses, beliefs or values.

Sawyer (1997) puts it simply, "Conflict is a clash within, between or amongst entities'' (p.5). He argues that conflict is a natural and inevitable occurrence within human society. Mullins (2005) sees conflict as behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of some of other person's goals. He affirms earlier assertions made by Deutsch (2001) that conflict is based on the incompatibility of goals and arises from opposing behaviours.

Hatch (1997) gives an interesting explanation to conflict. She says conflict is seen in terms of interference. Its occurrence is dependent on activities of one social entity interfering with the outcomes or efforts of other social factors. Interferences, be it in conversation, discussions or in someone's private or business life, are a source of worry to individuals. This same author, Hatch, (1997), cited in Katz and Kahn, as defining conflict to be "a particular kind of

19

interactions marked by efforts at hindering, compelling or injuring and by resistance or retaliation against those efforts" (p.301).

Likert and Likert (1976) define conflict as 'a state in which there is opposition or struggle between mutually exclusive desire, needs or goals within the individual' (p.56). The individual thus fight within himself as regards his needs or goals. Such drives induce tension in the individual. This means that whenever individuals or group of persons are caught between opposing needs, desires and tendencies, conflict is bound to happen.

Within the context of this discussion, conflict is defined as an active disagreement between people with differing principles, procedural practices and opinions.

Theories of Conflict

Pondy (1969) observed that although conflict may be unpleasant, it is an inevitable part of an organization. In his view, conflict may be regarded as dysfunctional; however as a natural condition, conflict is unavoidable and should be accepted. Robbins (1974) has identified three basic attitudes towards conflict in organizations: traditional, behavioral and interactionist.

The traditional view of conflict was that, conflict was unnecessary and harmful. Early managers and management writers generally thought that the appearance of conflict was a clear signal that there was something wrong with the organization. They believed that conflict would develop only if managers failed to apply sound management principles in directing the organization or if managers

20

failed to communicate to employees the common interests that bind management and employers together. If these failures were corrected, according to the traditional view, the organization should operate as a smoothly functioning integrated whole.

Hatch (1997) says conflict is generally interpreted as a sign of defective social structure, hence any introduction of conflict implies that the organization is not designed correctly. The traditionalists viewed conflict as something that has undesirable consequences such as the retarding of communication, reduction in group cohesiveness and subordination of group goals to the primacy of infighting goals. At the extreme, conflict can bring group functioning to a halt and potentially threaten the groups' potential. (Robbins, 1997).

According to Pierres and Peppers (1976), the traditionalist, following our social teaching believes that all conflicts are distractive and management role is to get them out of the organization. This confirms Robbins assertion that early managers and management writers generally taught that the appearance of conflict indicated that there was something wrong with the organization.

Gardner (1990) contends that most managers tend to eliminate conflict because social function requires some of cohesions and mutual tolerance. The tradition view therefore argues that conflict must be avoided as it indicates a malfunction within an organization. This is confirmed by Frederick Taylor cited in Stoner (1978), who asserts that if the principle of scientific management is applied the age-old conflict between labour and management will disappear.

21

The behavioural view of conflict is that conflict is a frequent occurrence in an organizational life. Organization members are human beings with varied needs and interest that can often clash. Managers of different department for example may have conflict over priorities and resource allocation. Subordinate may argue with superiors over whether or not work can be completed in the allotted time. Subordinates at the same level may disagree on the best way to complete an assign task. The behavioral view thus suggests that conflict can sometimes be functional because it can pin point problems, lead to better alternatives solution. However behavioralist also sees conflict mainly as something harmful to be resolved or eliminated ones it arises.

Pierres and Peppers (1976) observed that conflict of some form is inevitable whenever two or humans are in some interdependent relationship. This is to say that the behavioralist seeks to rationalize the existence of conflict and perceives conflict as inevitable reality of organization life. The behavioral perspective challenges the traditional view and sees conflict as the natural part of the organization due to the disparity of power and control.

The behavioral approach perceives conflict as a frequent phenomenon, natural as well as inevitable but can be dealt with. This perceptive denies that conflict is always a manifestation of abnormal organizational behaviour; it has rather the potential to be positive in determining an organization's performance. (Kelly 1970).

22

Current thinking (the interactionist view) about conflict among most management writers and growing numbers of managers is that conflict in organization is inevitable and even necessary no matter how organizations are designed and operated. This view still suggests that much conflict is dysfunctional in that it can harm persons and can inhibit the achievement of the organizational goals. This view still suggests that some conflict can be functional, because it can make organizations more effective. For example one functional aspect of conflict is that it leads to a search for solutions. Thus, it is often an instrument of organizational innovation and change.

Stoner (1978), therefore tasked managers not to suppress or resolve all conflicts but manage it, so as to minimize its harmful aspect and maximize its benefit. Such management, according to Stoner, may decide to include stimulation in situations where its absence or suppression may hinder the organization's effectiveness, creativity and innovation.

The interactionist believes that conflict is a positive force and necessary for effective performance. This theory argues that a group or department that is peaceful, harmonious and co-operative can become apathetic and unresponsive. It may lead to a 'group think' phenomenon described by Janis (1984). In this instance the interactionist view encourages group leaders to maintain an ongoing minimum level of conflict which is just sufficient to keep the group viable, self critical and creative.

23

Sources of Conflict

Fisher (1981) suggests that every conflict has a source and that any conflict that arises has its own special disposition. He notes that conflict cannot be separated from individuals, the particular organization and the unique circumstances in which the problem occurs. He emphasizes that one cannot understand the causes of conflict unless one understands certain general qualities of organization that produce conflict. This knowledge can sharpen one's ability to identify conflict and spot situations that have potential for conflict. Central to these potential sources, according to the writer, are issues of status and authority. These take several forms.

The individual's desire for autonomy, inconsistency between authority and prestige differences is some of the common ones. A personal desire for autonomy, according to Fisher, leads to conflict in many ways. When people desire to have increased control over their work and share in decision making but meet with resistance from authority, conflict may occur.

Conflict is also more likely to occur when demands are made on a group by another whose status is seen as inferior. Fisher continues that where resources are limited, win-lose conflict becomes frequent. Most notably, when conflict is viewed as win lose proposition, the loser will experience frustration; that is defeat in the effort to achieve the desired goals. However, repeated frustration tends to generate anger.

24

Baldridge (2002) argues that tertiary institutions being political organizations as opposed to collegial, bureaucratic or purely rational systems are also a pluralistic system often fractured by conflicts along the lines of disciplines, faculty sub-groups, student subcultures, splits between administrators and faculties, not overlooking rifts between professional schools.

In a study conducted from twenty-five (25) different departments of employees in the New York University on organization culture, Otto (1998) found that departments, which identified themselves as having problems with conflict managements, had lower quality or rationale in decision-making. The study's findings were that culture variables such as the quality of communication, quality or relationships and rationality influenced the effectiveness of the informal techniques.

According to Hybels, Richard and Weaver (2001), conflict generally occurs for one of several reasons. Their discussion focuses on four causes of group conflict and these are procedure, power, work distribution and substantive conflict. Procedure, which happens to be the first cause of conflict, mentioned by them, is perhaps the easiest to eliminate. This kind of conflict comes about as a result of differing views on procedures for meetings.

Members sometimes disagree with regard the form the minutes should take. Such a conflict can, however, be stopped when issues are resolved properly at the first meeting. The exhibition of differences does not occur in meetings only;

25

there are instances where discrepancies in role performances can lead to difficulties and two people could see their role differently.

The second cause of conflict, according to Hybels and other (2001), is the desire of an individual member or members in a group to wield power; a situation which nourishes power struggles. Fisher and others (2000) also say a conflict often centers on the search for power or more of it. The fear of losing power and sometimes the assumption that it is only through power that a successful change can be realized urge group members to reach for it no matter the consequences.

The type of organizational structure existing in an organization may either promote or prevent minor problem from snowballing into major incidents. The organizational structure, if not properly designed and defined, may lead to inferring job descriptions and may further result in power struggle among members involved.

Autocratic leaders who manage through highly centralized power structures often generate high level of inter-personal friction. At the other extreme, weak leaders also engender inter-personal conflict because the power vacuum at the top encourages subordinates to crave for position. The ideal situation, therefore, is balanced power structures where all involved participate in decisions at one level or the other, thereby creating a sense of fairness among members in a group.

Even though there are competitions when it comes to electing school representatives, power struggle is not so common in the school setting. Once a

person is officially assigned the responsibility of leading, the issue of power struggle reduces. There are five bases of social power and these are:

Legitimate Power: acquired through the authority vested in the position.

Reward Power: acquired through the ability to provide reward and recognition.

Coercive Power: acquired through the ability to award and withhold rewards.

Expertise Power: acquired through the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Referent Power: acquired through the ability of personal persuasion.

Nonetheless, the use of expertise and referent power yields greater satisfaction and performance of the staff than coercive power, because an organization like the Polytechnic for instance, relies predominantly on symbols rather than coercion or financial reward to influence employees hence moderate levels of power should be exhibited. This is necessary because where power is excessive, as perceived by a less powerful group, one may expect it to be challenged, and causing increased conflict (Robbins, 1997).

Psychologist David McClelland's theory on need for power reveals that people with a high need for power always want to exercise control over others and are concerned about maintaining their leadership position. The need for personalized power is rather selfish since people who desire for it use it to advance their career and other personal interest whereas those who cherish the need for socialized power want to use it as a means to help others such as increasing organizational effectiveness (Vredemburgh & Brender, 1998).

27

Unequal distribution of rewards and recognition can also make one party feel superior to or more powerful than the other party thereby contributing significantly to conflict, especially when there are difference in reward structure for the same category of people working in a department or an organization. In the view of Mullins (2005), existence of superiority calls for inequitable treatment and practices, thereby leading to the creation of tension and conflict.

Jones, George and Hill (2000) also say that conflict can occur if some individual groups or teams are more highly regarded than others in the organization. It is for this reason that managers and administrators of organizations have a responsibility to accord each individual, group or team the same level of respect and recognition.

Whyte (1949) observed a kind of conflict based on superiority in a study conducted on the activities of waitresses and cooks in the United States of America. In the restaurant where the study was conducted, Whyte (1949) found that the cooks felt reluctant to accept orders hitherto received by waitresses from customers. To the cooks, the receipt of orders from waitresses meant the former was taking instructions from the latter. Meanwhile, the reverse of it was expected because the cook, as it were, earned in terms of salary. This led to a psychological discomfort and the restaurant manager in the bid to manage the conflict to eliminate the face-to-face interaction by providing a spindle on which the written orders were placed.

28

Work distribution is the greatest and the most frequent cause of conflict in the institutional setting, this is because some employees often work harder than others. There are times, most often than not when a lot of work must be done but some employees do very little, the hard working staff feels angered and hostile. This kind of conflict is not easy to resolve since the staff will not be willing to reveal what goes on among them to their hall warden or administrator hence peer pressure is used to persuade the un-cooperating staff to change. But if this approach does not work then the hall warden or administrator will have to be informed.

Yuki (1989) also talks about a variety of causes of conflict in team, committee, work group and organizational settings. Among these causes 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 Interdependence. Conflict will occur when the activities of one group have a direct consequence on another group's ability to achieve its goal.

Mack (2000) contends that groups may also tend to believe that their way of thinking and doing things is not only the best but also the only right way. Sociologists refer to it as "ethnocentrism". Ethnocentrism is an important source of and a contributing factor to the continuity of conflict.

Mensu –Bonsu and Effah (2003) share a similar view when they state that conflict occurs when parties in a state of interdependence perceive a divergence of

29

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

Bateman and Scott (1999) reiterate that the complex maze of interdependencies throughout organization provides boundless opportunity for conflict to arise among groups. The level of interdependence on each other with reference to each group may operate independently but the overall success of the organization depends on the combined efforts of all the groups involved. McShane and Von Glinow (2004) refer to it as pooled interdependence. According to them, pooled interdependence, which is the lowest among the interdependence have units operating independently except for reliance and a common source of resource or authority. Students experience pooled interdependence which they are lined up at the registration center in a bid to register for courses before the closing date.

Sequential interdependence occurs when one group's output serves as input for another group and hence the failure of the first group in its output will reflect in the work of the second group's input and if this runs through for all the other groups then the indication will be that, work output in the organization will be low until such a time that all the conflict relating to differences in goals, perceptions and greater demand for specialties within the group have been managed if not resolved.

Reciprocal interdependence, the highest level of the interdependence occurs when work output is exchanged back and forth among individual or work

30

units. Due to the exchange of work involved in the reciprocal interdependence the delay of an individual or work unit affects the performance of the other individual or work unit at the other side.

Structural arrangement such as bureaucracy and departmentalization can also be of harmful effect in situations where individuals will have to work in a pyramidal structure characterized by the "chain of command" where each person has one person to whom he / she reports, who in turn reports to someone higher in the hierarchy. (Bundy & Wasserman, 1970). Allred (1987) adds that bureaucracies thwart basic human needs, such as drive for independence and self actualization and the gradual building of hostility among workers.

Snowden and Gorton (2002) are of a different view as regards the sources of conflict. They cite a study conducted by Hinselow and Scott in 1989, outlining the types of social conflict within the institutional setting and these are communication problems, organizational structure, and human factors such as personality and limited resources. They argue that communication problems increase with the absence of feedback. It is true that regular feedback about performance is very important since it boost morale hence the absence of it may initiate poor moral and negative attitudes resulting in an unwillingness to work.

Failure to share ideas and feeling allows the other person to read meanings into action. Meanings are read into what one thinks the other person will say or anticipate and how the other person will respond. Meanwhile, suspicion about

31

negative things provokes anxiety leading to lack of trust and subsequently taking a defensive stance.

When effective communication is lacking, the result may be manifested in the form of a misunderstanding of organizational objectives.

Hatch (1997) says the speaking of different languages most often lead to disagreement on issues of mutual concern. The differences in language can be due to ethnicity but there are differences in professional language as well. She cites an example of the doctor and administrator in the hospital setting. The conflict between these two categories of professionals can be traced in part to the different ways in which they communicate. Whilst a doctor is trained to focus on cure rates for medical techniques and practices the administrator emphasizes costs and return on investment 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) adds that semantic difficulties, insufficient exchange of information and noise in the communication channel are all barriers to communication, which is a potential antecedent condition to conflict. Sometimes, when individuals in a group speak different languages, there are barriers to communication, which is a potential antecedent condition to conflict. Sometimes when individuals in a group speak different languages, they are likely to agree on issues. Conflict is likely to occur when communication is not clear and when there is confusion about what is valued and rewarded.

32

Mensa – Bonsu and Effah (2003), in their discussion on the issue of spreading unkind gossip about each other as a source of conflict, asserted that, that is behavioural. They went further to add that it is only through the making of unreasonable demands that one can lie or spread unkind gossip about others, and that to enjoy some level of peace and co-existence, institutions should not harbour such character traits in any form whatsoever.

Personality incompatibility, which is a human factor, can also lead to conflict but Hatch (1997) is of a different view. 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 an organization are associated with conditions at the group or organizational level of analysis. Hatch asserts that individual differences rarely provide a complete explanation of conflict in organization. However, Brainson (1994), Brinkman and Kirschner (1994) contend that most of the conflict attributed to personality come as a result of personality incompatibilities.

Types of Conflict

Conflicts can be classified into so many types. Some authors prefer to use the "forms" or "levels" but they are all virtually talking about the same thing and for the purpose of this study the researcher will limit the discussion to the most common types. The first type is the type that falls under national conflict. National conflict is the type that engulfs the entire nation, particularly resulting from political activities. This type of conflict is normally derived from cultural,

33

economic, social and political sources. A good example of a national conflict is the Liberian conflict, which lasted well over a decade. In line with national conflict, Sawyer (1997) mentions political conflict and for him political conflict is the type of conflict, which requires the involvement of the mechanisms in the political system for their management.

Another aspect of a national conflict is the ethnic conflict that engulfs two particular ethnic groups and what is sometimes disturbing about this type of conflict is that it can engulf other groups if the appropriate measures are not applied in its handling. In Ghana, there have been several ethnic conflicts, example of which are the conflicts that existed between the people of Tsito and Peki; Mamprusi and Kusasi, Kokomba and Nanumba and the eighty- four year old conflict that existed between the people of Alavanyo and Nkonya.

Religious conflict is also the type that ensures between two religious bodies. The various religious bodies adhere to different doctrines and practices, which brings about conflict. For example, Nigeria for sometime now has been experiencing intermittent religious conflict occurring between the Christians and the Moslem because of the implementation of "sharia" law by the Moslem.

Vertical conflict is another type of conflict that occurs among supervisors 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 department of a functionally structured division or organization (Hatch, 1997).

Besides the types of conflicts already mentioned, there are other categories of conflicts, namely personality, group and organization. Personality conflict, which exists within and among persons, can be grouped under interpersonal and intrapersonal. The intrapersonal conflict occurs within oneself, the desire to make a judicious choice between two or more mutually exclusive activities. For example a manager, confronted with the choice of which of his two equally competent subordinates he should delegate an assignment to.

Interpersonal conflict can also be as a result of pressure from an external body to take an action against one's wish. An instance is when there is pressure from one parent to pursue a programme different from the programme one really desires to pursue. According to Kinard (1988), intrapersonal conflict often results from conflicting need or frustrating situations. By this he submits that a person entering an organization, such as a fresh student admitted into the Polytechnic might have ambitions of obtaining a first class degree at the end of his/her programme. Achieving this goal might mean sacrificing something equally important such as time in the television room watching one programme to the other.

Interpersonal conflict sometimes involves unresolved problem where the individuals finds it almost impossible to get a solution. The problem may persist for a long time especially when incompatible demands are place on an individual

35

by two different groups of people, this form of conflict is normally related to role. Kinard (1988) gives an example of a manager, whose boss expected a reduction of the budget and cutting down of expenditure, while the manager's subordinates, on the other hand, wanted their budget increased. This manager was engulfed with an intrapersonal conflict with the uncertainty as to whether to meet the demands of higher management or that of the subordinates since the two demands were incompatible.

Wright and Noe (1996), group intrapersonal conflict into three categories namely; Approach – approach, here the individual has to choose between two equally attractively pleasant and desirable alternatives. Even though there are approach tendencies towards two attractive goals, there is also a limitation and that is choosing only one of them. Among the three of intrapersonal 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. Wright and Noe (1996) explain that "employed parents routinely experience approach – approach conflicts between their dual roles of parent and employee" (p.687). The employed parents who normally experience this conflict are the mother, especially nursing mothers.

The second type of intrapersonal conflict is avoidance – avoidance, where the individual is also torn between choosing two equally distasteful, undesirable and unattractive alternatives that are expected to result in negative outcomes. Unlike approach-approach, one would want to avoid both the outcomes in

36

avoidance-avoidance but it is highly impossible, there must be a choice for one. An instance is where a manager of a company with serious financial problems has to choose between ignoring the problems thereby allowing the finance to become worse and laying off hundreds of employees. Either of these choices looks unpleasant.

Finally, the approach –avoidance intrapersonal conflict is also a choice among a set of options that have good and bad outcomes. It has to do with decision that must be made between alternative that are thought to involve both positive and negative outcomes. The approach-avoidance type of conflict seems to be in common place today, because many employees have to choose between the desire for career success which requires working for long hours and the desire for more personal time which can limit career success and even job security.

The researcher agrees with Wright and Noe (1996) with regard to the approach-avoidance type of conflict in the sense that one truly sometimes gets confronted with options that have its own advantages and disadvantages. The researcher, however, holds a different view when it comes to approach-approach and avoidance –avoidance because in most instances one alternative is bound to be more advantageous to the other. Conflict sometimes exists because one would want to have both alternatives at the same time. When the alternatives are redefined over and over again, one of them will over-ride the other.

Causes of Conflict

The causes of conflict between individuals and groups are numerous. Some of the more predominant causes of conflict identified by Schnake (1987), Kreitner (1998), Stoner (1978), Wright (1996), and other researchers include limited resources, role ambiguity, communication obstacles, status and power differences, and task interdependence.

March and Herbert (1958) and Walton and Dutton (1969), also traced the major causes of organizational conflict to include the need to share scarce resources, differences in goals between organisational units, the interdependence of activities in the organization, and differences in values or perceptions among organization units.

Limited Resources

According to Schnake (1987), one of the major reasons that make conflict develops between individuals and groups is competition for limited resources (p.260), Schnake points out that when resources such as office equipment or furnishings are limited, individuals and groups have no option but to compete for them. He adds that if employees know what the amount of money available for execution of duties is limited, the opportunity for conflict is greatly heightened as each group competes for a greater share.

Schnake points out further that, limited resources create win-lose situations. This, according to him is evidenced when employees perceive that the only way to get more of limited resources is to ensure that the other party gets

38

less. Such perceptions undoubtedly set the stage for conflict. Kreitner (1998) cites funds, personnel, authority, power and valuable information as resources for which groups and individual would compete for. This means that anything of value in an organizational setting can become a competitively sought – after scarce resource.

Stoner (1978) also points out that the potential for conflict exists because the vital resources are limited. He explains further that if every unit in an organization had access to unlimited amount of manpower, money, materials, equipments and space, the problem of how to share these resources would hardly arise. According to him, these resources must be shared and that, the likelihood of some groups getting less than they want or need is high. He points out further that lack of co-operation can result in the struggle between groups for the greatest possible share of available resources. This is confirmed by Owens (2001) in his observation that, when the organization's resources are insufficient to meet the requirement of the sub-units to do their work, there is competition for scarce resources. This means people would compete for resources like assigned teaching position, budget allocations, space for lectures, and other utilities.

Role Ambiguity

Schnake (1987) refers to this role ambiguity as the extent to which individuals and groups within an organization understand what is expected of them. They may not have a clear understanding of their responsibilities or the constraints upon them. According to him, role ambiguity can produce conflicts

39

between groups or individuals because both may want to assume responsibility for the same thing or because they may both want to avoid it.

Kreitner (1998), terms it ambiguous or overlapping jurisdiction. He explains it as unclear   job boundaries which often create competition for resources and control. Stoner (1978) also sees it as ambiguously defined work responsibilities and unclear goals. One unit head for example may try to expand the role of his or her subunit. Such an expansion will invariably cause a defensive resistance from the other units involved. He explains further that if members of different groups know little about each other's jobs, they may unwittingly make unreasonable demands on each other, thereby triggering conflict.

Pierre, and Peppers (1976) write that role sources are those that rise out of the varying perceptions of people about the expected behaviours of themselves and others. They point out that most of these stem from the status and position levels of people within an organization. According to Nnadi (1997), unclear job description and employee roles tend to become a problem because employees are unsure of what their job responsibilities are.

Communication Obstacles

Schnake (1987) sees the absence of frequent communication between groups or individuals representing different structural levels as a factor which produces conflict. He goes on to say that it is difficult to understand another person or group of people if two-way communication is hampered in some way.

Stoner (1978) sees communication breakdown as a common cause of intergroup conflict. He cites where the same phrase may have different meanings to different groups. Undefined use of that phrase, according to him, may lead to harmful misunderstandings. The absence of frequent communication between groups or individuals representing different structural levels of the organization or different informal groups is referred to as communication obstacles by Schnake (1987). He points out further that when individuals or groups lack information about other individuals or groups, they develop misperceptions and distrust. This means that actions and motives of other groups become suspicious and this may distort communication.

Pierre and Peppers (1976), on the other hand, refer to failure in communication as semantic. They explain further that semantic is the failure of two individuals to share fully the meaning of a communicative attempt which may be caused by technical problems in the communication process or actual differences in perception and understanding. The result, according to them, is an absence of agreement, which invariably is conflict. This is confirmed by Nnadi (1978), in his submission that poor communication, which results in misunderstanding, may cause conflict. He illustrates further with how a well-meaning suggestion from one employee to another on how to improve job performance may be misunderstood or resisted because the suggestion is seen as one employee telling the other what to do. Stoner also sees communication breakdowns as a common source of intergroup conflict. He observes further how

the same phrase may have different meanings to different groups thereby creating conflict.

According to him, undefined use of a particular phrase may lead to harmful misunderstanding. Kreitner (1998) confirms that because communication is a complex process beset by many barriers, these barriers often provoke conflict. This means that it is easy to misunderstand another person or group of people if two-way communication is hampered in some way. This makes the battle for clear communication never to end.

Status and Power Differences

These, according to Schnake (1987), often contribute to conflict. Kreitner (1998), states that as long as productive organizations continue to be arranged hierarchically, this trigger is unavoidable. This is because superiors can hardly show genuine concern for the ideas, feelings and values of subordinates.

Differences in goals

Wright and Noe (1996), observe that in some cases, conflict occurs because the organization fails to set goals and reward groups in ways that encourage cooperation. Where each unit's goal of improving its productivity eclipses the goal of cooperating to meet the organization's needs, the potential for conflict increases. Wright and Noe reiterate that goals differences also cause intergroup conflict when groups must compete for scarce resources. Ideally, management is to fund all projects in departments and units that make economic sense, but on a more practical note, must work with limited resources. This means

42

a department embarking on a particular project may have goals leading to securing resources for that project at the expense of other departments.

Schnake (1978), also points out that the differences in the goals that individuals want to accomplish sometimes create a source of conflict. He continues by stating that when individuals have incompatible personal goals, a conflict is likely to result. This is confirmed by Pondy's (1967) observation, that when two parties in the organization must work together but cannot agree on how to do so, the source of conflict is goal divergence. For example, a new employee who may perceive a need for change in the faculty may push so strongly to initiate it. The Dean, who might have been in the said department for a longer period of time may resist any attempt at any change and therefore work just as hard to keep things the way they are. It could also be in a situation where the Dean of a faculty and the head of a particular department within the faculty have differing views as to how mid-semester examinations are to be conducted.

Stoner (1978) also points out that, organization sub-units tend to become differentiated, or specialized, as they develop dissimilar goals, and problems. Such differentiation, according to Stoner, frequently leads to conflicts of interests, or priorities even when the overall goals of the organization are agreed upon.

<h3 align="center">Interdependence</h3>

According to Stoner, work inter-dependence exists when two or more units depend on each other in order to complete their respective tasks. In such cases, the likelihood for a high degree of conflicts or friendliness may rear its

43

head depending on how such situation is managed. He reiterates that tension among the various group members will increase and they may then accuse each other shirking their responsibilities. Conflicts may also flare up if the work is evenly distributed but with dissimilar rewards. This means when unit groups are not treated fairly, when they are interdependent, conflict is likely to rear its head.

Schnake (1987) also defines inter-dependence as a situation where one party cannot do its work unless the other party does its work too. According to him, task interdependence results in conflicts for two primary reasons. The first is when only one group is dependent; the independent group may not feel the need to comply with requests. The second is where task interdependence can result in conflict when the parties have different goals, priorities, or disagree upon the way the tasks should be performed. This is to say, when two or more individuals or groups are dependent upon one another for successful job performance, the opportunity for conflict increases.

Pierre and Peppers (1976) sum it up that conflict exists only within the context of interdependence. They contend that employees may become dependent on organizations to give their direction and meaning. Such dependency, according to them, allows employees to escape the burdens of personal responsibility. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) also see interdependence as one person not being able to complete his or her assignment until others have completed their work.

Wright (1996) gives a more elaborate explanation by coming out with three types of inter-dependence: pooled interdependence, sequential

44

interdependence, and reciprocal interdependence. Pooled interdependence, according to Wright, it occurs when each group operates independently, but the organization's overall success depends on the combination of the outcome of the group. Sequential interdependence is where one group's outputs serve as another group's inputs. He reiterates that a poor performance by the first group can easily make the second group perform poorly as well. This can make conflicts between the groups to be intense. Wright ends with reciprocal interdependence which he describes as each groups outputs serving as inputs to other groups. According to him, the close links among the groups provide fertile grounds for potential conflict.

Schnake (1987) defines inter-dependence as a situation where one party cannot do its work unless the other party does its work. According to him, tasks interdependence results in conflict for two primary reasons. The first is when only one group is dependent; the independent group may not feel the need to comply with requests. The second is where task interdependence can result in conflict when the parties have different goals, priorities, or disagree upon the way tasks should be performed. This is to say, when two or more individuals or groups are dependent upon one another for successful job performance, the opportunity for conflict increases.

This is confirmed by Pierre and Peppers (1976) who sum it up by stating that, conflict can arise when interdependency exists. They contend that employees may become dependent on organizations to give their direction and meaning.

45

Such dependency, according to them, allows employees to escape the burdens of personal responsibility. According to them, we must expect conflict to occur in our organizations. They reiterate further that we should be disappointed if it does not because conflict exists only within the context of interdependence. Owens (2001) supports this assertion with his contention that individuals and groups within the human social system are interdependent and constantly engaged in the dynamic processes of defining and redefining the nature and extent of their interdependence.

Time Pressure

According to Kreitner, unreasonable deadlines and other forms of time pressure can stimulate prompt performance or trigger destructive emotional reactions. When such deadlines or time pressure are on the extreme, individuals tend to fend off. He cautions managers to consider an individual's ability to cope when imposing deadlines.

Collective Decision Making

According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2001), this is where a greater number of people participate in taking decision. They explain further that, the greater the number of people participating in a decision making, the greater the potential for conflict. This is so because where a committee with a large membership wants to take a decision on an urgent issue, there is the likelihood of some members dragging. Members converge at such meetings with divergent views and each would want his views to be accepted.

46

Organizational Complexity:

Conflict tends to increase as the number of organizational chart and specialized tasks increase (Kreitner & Kinicki ,2001).

Unrealized Expectation

According to Kreitner, dissatisfaction grows when expectations are not met. Employers, who have unrealistic expectations about job assignment, pay, or promotions are prone to conflicts. He points further that destructive conflict can be avoided by management taking time to discover, through candid discussion, what employees expect from their employment. In this way, unrealistic expectations can be countered before they become a fertile ground for dysfunctional conflict.

Autonomy

Owens (2001) finds a peculiar cause of conflict which he called autonomy. This he explains, is when one party seeks to control the activities "belonging" to another unit and the second unit seeks to fend out such "interference" (p.312).

Unclear Lines of Authority

According to Nnadi (1997), these become a problem because the employee seems to have several superiors at the same time, and the employee is unclear as to whom to report to.

Territorial Encroachments

47

This as pointed out by Nnadi (1997), results in conflict because an employee perceives a particular work area as personal territory. Conflict result when another employee gets into that area and the 'rightful owner' sees it as encroachment.

Interaction Patterns

Nnadi (1997) observes that the way employees interact at work cause conflict. People may cling together against other employees who are not part of their group. The administrative staff in a tertiary institution, for example, may cling against the academic staff of the same institution.

Separation of knowledge and authority

This, according to Nnadi, is where employees' knowledge, skills, education and experience have no bearing on their level of authority. If a supervisor, for example is not knowledgeable about the work accomplished by subordinates, Nnadi admits that there is a high probability of conflict in the work place.

Incompatible styles

This Nnadi points out as when management style is contrary to employee needs. He cites where a supervisor's leadership style requiring employee initiative and some autonomy, may conflict with an employee's desire for constant guidance, direction and supervision.

48

Work flow

Nnadi again points out that this becomes a source of conflict where some employees are loaded with work while others have little or nothing to do, especially if the work load could easily be better allocated. This means where there is division of labor, conflict can hardly rear its head.

In conclusion, when Chief Executives of institutions of higher learning understand these conflict triggers, they are in a better position to mange conflict in a reasonable manner. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) claim certain situations produce more conflict than others and that, by knowing the antecedents of conflict, managers can anticipate conflict and take steps to manage it, if it becomes dysfunctional.

Conflict Management

Conflict naturally has a potential to become disruptive and violent. Unmanaged conflict is a threat to survival of the group and the least tends to make the group less effective. For these reasons, it is necessary to provide assistance when administrators need help in managing conflict.

Conflict management is an expanded view of dealing with unresolved differences in an organization. It includes understanding the nature and sources of conflict as well as the costs of conflict, searching for the benefits in conflict situations and using contingency approach to conflict resolution (Kathman & Kathman, 1990).

49

Contingency approaches to conflict management involve the diagnosis of the situation whereby the necessary action is taken to deal with each and every problem. In dealing with conflict, the contingency view holds that there is no one best way of managing conflict under all conditions, but there are optimal ways of managing conflict under certain conditions (Owens, 2004).

Snowden and Gorton (2002) define conflict management as the "efforts designed to prevent, ameliorate, or resolve disagreements between and among individuals and groups" (p.89). Conflict management is the ability to deal with everyday situations that involve interactions among different people with differences in opinion. It is different from conflict resolution in that the successful resolution of a conflict usually involves a third party intervention and this also means that the issue ones totally resolved is finished (Cassey & Cassey, 1977).

The issue of conflict management in institutions, including the Polytechnic, continues to be an important and relevant topic in organizational behaviour (Thomas & Schmidt 1976). Lorsch and Lawrence (2003) are of the view that much zeal has revolved around the operational benefits of effective conflict management for the organization and has frequently resulted in conflict management being valued primarily as a tool for managers to use in dealing with peers or subordinates.

But the argument should be advanced that if one seeks to use conflict management as a vehicle for the study and comprehension of organizations then biases and discrimination on the part of management is seen in the ability to

50

understand conflict situations and the use of appropriate conflict management techniques for each given situation. The conditions generating multiplicity of academic goals, within the context of a potential model of the tactical methods for dealing with conflict between students, department and administrators are considered when selecting an approach for conflict management. Various avenues to manage conflict are available to use and these are avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromising and collaboration.

Nebgen (1978) mentions that the avoidance approach to conflict management involves non-response or withdrawal. The withdrawal or non-response signifies that "silence is golden" and that the parties involved in a conflict may avoid contact with each other altogether. Where meeting each other is inevitable, exchange of pleasantries are done so carefully so as to avoid confronting the problem. Avoidance can be useful approach for cooling off the parties or preventing disputes that is trivial. Nonetheless, it is not a valid method for achieving long-term solutions to serious issues that divide contending parties.

The most straightforward strategy for suppressing organizational conflict is non-action. Miles (1980) says that unfortunately no response may eventually cause conflict to escalate to uncontrollable proportions. Robbins (1983) also contends that a party may recognize that a conflict exists, but react by withdrawing or suppressing the conflict. Lack of interest or the desire to dodge obvious expression of difference can result in withdrawal and that the parties acknowledge physical division with each side taking stance in a field that is

51

distinct from the others. He mentions further that withdrawal is possible or desirous for parties who may want to suppress an existing conflict thereby withholding their differences.

When group members are required to react because of the freedom of their tasks, restraint is a more probable outcome than withdrawal. Involvement of indifference to the concerns of both parties reflects a withdrawal from or neglect of any party's interest (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy, 1999). Common withdrawal behaviours include avoiding the source of conflict, quitting, talking behind the other person's back and forming alliances with others (Martin & Bergmann, 1996). Even though withdrawal can make one feel better, often it only postpones conflict than preventing it. It must be noted here that avoidance of conflict often leads to intensified hostility and may later cause greater problems for the group.

Avoidance tends to give the impression that one cannot change. It allows conflict to calm down and heat up unnecessarily rather than provide an avenue for improving it. In addition to this, it keeps one from working through a conflict and reinforces the notion that conflict is terrible hence the best way to handle it is to avoid it.

On the other hand, accommodation in a conflict situation is where one gives in to others, sometimes to the extent of comprising oneself. This approach must be used sparingly and infrequently since it can worsen the conflict over time and cause conflict within oneself. Hughes and others (1999) say accommodation reflects a mirror image of competition, entirely giving in to someone else's

52

concerns without making any effort to achieve one's own ends. Burke (1970) observed that smoothing is a more sensitive approach than the withdrawal approach. It must be emphasized here that in trying to maintain a harmonious relationship, one must not lose sight of the fact that the other party may take undue advantage of it. This approach most often than not, lay emphasis on the protection of personal or group right thereby neglecting the real problem to be dealt with.

Ukeje (1992) states that, in all organizations, some amount of role conflict is inevitable but a lot of unnecessary conflict can be reduced by careful structuring of task and objective communication among members so as to clarify roles and bring role perception as close as possible to role expectations. He is of the view that accurate perception is important because it affects group effectiveness.

Edem (1987) talks about effectiveness of training of employees as a way of managing conflicts in organizations: He state that training affords workers opportunities to reflect on the appropriateness of their action thereby helping to increase their role perception – "adequate pre – and in-service training is immensely useful" (p.21).

In the words of Evans (1998) "there is no doubt that man is a competitive animal" (p.22). Evans contends that man has always aimed at winning at all costs, making the other party a loser. There is the desire to win more than the opponent even when there is a possibility of a good outcome for both sides. Kreitner and

Kinicki (2004) refer to competition as "dominating" or "forcing" where there is the encouragement of high concern for self and low concern for others.

In competition, the desire is on achieving one's own ends at the expense of someone else. The focus is on working to get your way rather than clarifying and addressing the issues at stake. Competitors lose accomplice hence competition must be use when there is a strong conviction about ones position. Competition according to Nebgen (1978) involves the use of force. She notes that the use of force is the assumption that one party is in superordinate position to the other. She again observes that in competition there is coercion and this is where one party tries to make the other yield from fear or actual injury by the use of implied or explicit force.

Fisher (1983) observes that competition is necessary in emergencies; sometimes uncertain courses of actions need to be implemented, when the parties are in opposition relationship to each other. The use of force may be quickest and neatest method in conflict management since it results in clear victors and defeated, it may only serve to mark the end of one conflict and the beginning of another (Kriesburg, 1993).

Many people may discourage the use of force or power in favour of collaboration, however Robbins (1983) makes the case that value differences are a major source of conflict and very difficult to resolve by other approaches, authority, which lies in force, is an appropriate approach to use. Derr (1983) also argues that, when power approaches are used strategically, with control and

54

rational self-interest, they do not have all the negative consequences touted by opponents of this technique.

He points out that many people are highly competitive and feel more comfortable with power play than with problem solving. This is best referred to as "I win, you lose" approach where the process involves resolution through using power and winning by force or coercion. It may take the form of "pulling rank" or outmaneuvering the opposition.

Furthermore, competitors are not always willing to share information or commit the energy required in collaboration. People who seek autonomy are likely to use power play to gain and maintain self-control. Power play may then have to be sued when all other approaches fail.

According to Kemp (1989), compromise means trying to gain partial satisfaction for all. It has to do with finding an intermediate position tolerable to everyone. The motive behind compromise is that conflict distracts people from their work hence it should not be prolonged rather it should be dealt with quickly. Compromise is often seen as a means for making the solution more tolerable for each party. It is persuasive and often manipulative conflict management approach in which both ends frequently played against the middle in an attempt to serve the common good. Compromise is used when the goal is to get past the issue and move on. It has the mutual give and take nature. It is a negotiated resolution based on each person making some concessions to the other. This approach is sometimes the best possible response to conflict, depending on particular

55

circumstances. It has weaknesses however, in that compromise process, once initiated, precludes the search for better alternative solutions to the problem leaving the outcome often times less appealing to both merits (Fisher, 1983).

Osgood (2004) believes that one key to managing conflict is to reduce tension and increase trust between the two parties. This can be done by stating an intention to reduce tension, making intentions loud and publicly announcing the steps that will be taken to reduce the tension. The other party needs to be invited and must be ready to take action to reduce tension, not overlooking the fact that each initiative offered is unambiguous.

Compromise is examples of a typical lose-lose outcome. Neither side gets what it really wants. Although each side emerges a partial winner, the tendency is to dwell on how much was given up rather than how much was won. Even though it is not a total loss for either side, both sides often perceive themselves to be losers. Compromise has the potential to deal more directly with the conflict itself than avoiding or forcing (Allred, 1987). It is especially valuable as a means of distributing scarce resources or in power settings.

Compromise, which can also be referred to as bargaining, has similarities with both power play and collaboration. Like power play, it assumes self- interest and allows for an initial adversarial relationship. Like collaboration, it requires sharing of information and requires agreement. Therefore, it can serve as a bridge in disputes between one party that has a power play style and another with a

collaboration style (Derr, 1983). An acceptable compromise can be one that falls within the settlement range for both sides.

Finally, collaborating focuses on working together and it works better when the goal is to meet as many current needs as possible by using mutual resources. Fisher (1983) contends that in collaboration, the parties involved in a conflict work to reach a solution that satisfies the concerns of each. He says that first share all relevant facts and feelings, allowing differences to be clarified and admitted. He points out that two kinds of behaviour are the keys to collaboration and these are expressing one's own position as clearly as possible and listening fully to the other side's point of view. He notes that the full range of possible outcomes is considered in the search for a friendly outcome. He maintains that collaboration is effective when the conflict stems from communication where open confrontation around the problems often reveals faulty perception on both sides.

Fisher further observed that while collaboration has great potential, it is the most difficult process to use because some fear that in exploring the conflict situation someone may be hurt along the line. He goes further to say that collaboration requires a larger amount of time than the other conflict management approaches therefore in situations where time is seen as a vital aspect in the management of the conflict; other approaches may be more applicable. The collaboration approach is like forming a synergy; both parties attach major

importance to their goals and hence are involved in the welfare of the relationships.

Tolerance for differences and recognition of the legitimacy of feelings are central to this approach. Each individual must agree to abide by the rules of negotiation and agree to solve the conflict constructively. Any "hidden agendas" are brought out in the open so they may be effectively dealt with. Collaboration results in win-win outcome and encourages seeing the issues from each other's perspectives and is based on the concept of zero-sum. Both sides can achieve an acceptable outcome, which defeats the problem instead of defeating each other. Since the positive total effect is greater than what could be achieved by individual efforts (Filley, 1977).

Collaboration requires commitment to cooperation by the parties' involved and significant support from the organization. Parties involved in the dispute may lack the skills needed for taking problem – solving approach. This is why researcher agrees with Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) when they refer to collaboration as "integrating" or "problem solving". Collaborating with the other party undoubtedly promotes creative solving and it is way of fostering mutual respect and support.

Nonetheless, as earlier on indicated, collaboration takes time, and many conflict situations are either very critical or too insignificant to justify the time it takes to collaborate (Whetten & Cameron, 2002). Classrooms can serve as laboratories for experimenting with collaboration rather than win-lose conflict

styles. Productive conflict tactics and patterns of interaction can be used for all parties to learn effective conflict (Hocker, 1986).

Groups often collaborate closely in order to reach a consensus or agreement. Consensus requires that each participant must agree on the middle point, which will meet with everyone's complete approval. Unanimity is not the goal; rather the goal to have individuals accepts a point of view based on logic. When individuals can understand and accept the logic of a differing point of view, one must assume that a consensus has been reached.

Nebgen (1978) listed desirable approaches used by manager in many conflicts, according to them persuasion, compromise or bargaining and confrontation or problem solving are rational approaches to conflict management. Persuasion is where one or two parties try to convince each other to accede to the goals, it requires not out of panic or in return for compensation but because of its own interests and values.

She goes further to say that compromising is a process, which involves give and take, with the argument that in the compromise technique, there is a search for an intermediate position that will split a difference between the contending parties, there is nothing like win or lose in a compromise situation. The problem solving technique, however, is based on the principle that the two parties in conflict have the potential to resolve the problem and achieve a better solution through collaboration. There is an open exchange of information

regarding the problem as each side sees it as a working through of their differences to arrive at a solution that is mutually beneficial to both parties.

Four approaches to conflict management have been described by Barker, Tjosvold and Andrews (1988) as cooperative, confirming, competitive and avoiding. The cooperative approach emphasis mutual groups goals, understanding others views and compromising to create a mutually useful solution. The confirming approach stresses the importance of communicating mutual respect for group members' competence, whereas the competitive approach sees conflict as a battle in which others must be persuaded or coerced into submission.

The distinguishing feature of the power strategy is that the resolution of the problem is   unrelated to the relative merits of argument. For example, a lecturer insisting that his / her students do what he / she says because of his / her position without right to ask questions. In this domineering sense, conflict could be viewed as having two possible outcomes: win or lose the winners self esteem or competence is enhanced and the loser will be left in a weak status or state of incompetence. The result then is an aggressive, dogmatic, inflexible and unreasonable approach to conflict management; one whose ultimate motive is to overcome ones opponent.

Finally, avoidance occurs when people withdraw from discussing problems or ignore their differences quickly without really resolving them. The avoidance or withdrawal strategy is designed to protect one from being caught up in endless struggles that cannot be won. An expectation of "losing" characterizes

this approach and rather than undergo such frustration, one will psychologically, and perhaps physically, ignore the conflict.

Avoidance approach is a refuge for persons who have unsuccessfully tried other approaches and have decided not to punch. The assumption is that human relationships are so fragile that they cannot endure the trauma of working through genuine difference. So the tendency is to avoid conflict and appease others by ignoring and denying that conflict ever existed.

A common means of avoiding conflict is to be secretive. The notion is that if nobody knows what the other is doing, there can be little or no conflict. By being secretive, conflict and confrontation can be delayed, but when it does surface it will have more negative emotions attached to it than would have been the case if things were more open.

Blake and Mouton (1978) also suggests five ways of managing conflict. For them, leaders should suggest to members that certain issues do not seem very important hence not worth the time arguing over them hence the topic should be changed. With this suggestion, members would avoid the possibility of creating a conflict over issues that do not in its real sense matter much. By this the leader will be adopting the avoidance approach to manage conflict.

Accommodation on the other hand, is where people on one side of an issue give in to those on the other side especially when one party sees that the other party's stance is viable. Blake and Mouton (1978) further explain that competition can cause considerable harm to a group hence must be channeled to promote

61

group goals. Unlike accommodation, members in a competition concern more about winning than about the other members' feelings and it becomes more serious when each group takes an entrenched position. This can go a long way to affect group sessions thereby inhibit work productivity. The leader will therefore have a duty to point out to each member privately that the conflict is keeping the group from working together.

Bateman and Scott (1999) concentrating on the group argue that inter-group conflict can be managed by using conflict management approaches such as avoidance, accommodation, compromise, forcing and collaboration. They argue further that different approaches are used at different times, sometimes when people are under time pressure the most useful approach to use is compromise, but accommodation will be best for people who learn that they are wrong after all.

Compromise will work only when each side makes an offer of what it will sacrifice while in collaboration the conflicting parties understand opposing party's point of view and work hard to stay away from anything that might harm the relationship. Jones and others (2000) are of the view that the manager can use compromise and collaboration alone to resolve conflict in the organization. To them the parties involved in a conflict should be willing to cooperate and then a solution will be found through collaboration or compromise to deals with the conflict.

Studies on Conflict Management

Writing on conflict in tertiary institutions, Kathman and Kathman (1990) describe conflict as appearing in oganisation "whenever there are important unresolved differences among people, groups, departments" adding that "conflict may arise in response to interpersonal or interdepartmental differences, system of communication, or environmental stress". They perceive conflict resolution as of limited value in comparison to conflict management; conflict resolution presents the limited view that conflict is bad for an organization by implying that it is only concerned with unresolved differences. When the coin is tossed, conflict management presents an expanded view where costs, nature, sources and benefits are understood.

Barker and others (1988), in their study on conflict approaches of effective and ineffective managers in a matrix organization, described four approaches to solve conflict in an organisation. These approaches according to them are co-operative, confirming, competitive and avoiding. These researches noted that the co-operative approach laid emphasis on mutual group's goals, understanding each other's view while compromising brings about mutual useful solution. The confirming approach also stresses the need to communicate mutual respect for member's competence. They again argued that win-lose battle in which one must be persuaded into submission is seen in the competitive approach whilst avoidance occurs when one withdraws from a discussion over differences quickly.

63

Barker and others (1988) were able to show that manager who combined co-operative and confirming approaches are much more effective and successful in conflict management than those who use competitive and avoidance approaches.

Albritton and Shaughessy (1990) perceived conflict in academic institutions as an indication of healthy interpersonal or intergroup competition. It is mainly for this reason that conflict management in the Polytechnic should be recognized as important and that conflict avoidance is not the best.

Another study was carried by Hoover in 1990, which focused on the relationships among perceptions of principals' conflict management behaviours, levels of conflict and organizational climate in high schools. The study revealed that schools with lower conflict levels were associated with principals who were perceived as heads who very often used problem-solving, accommodation and compromise approach to manage conflict. On the other hand, principals who were perceived to apply force and avoidance behavior in conflict situations administered higher conflict level in schools.

A major empirical study on conflict in tertiary education is the one conducted by Olorunsola (1997). He notes that to achieve peace, harmony and stability in academic institutions, there is the need to deal with strife – both real and imagined. His study showed that bureaucratic structure, poor communication, organizational policies, and inadequate material resources are the major causes of conflicts in the academic institutions. The study further reveals that close

64

interdependency between units in the academic institution is a source of friction among staff. All in all, the study provides evidence for the effective management of conflict.

Bateman and Scott (1999) talk about a study conducted on human resource managers and the type of conflict they deal with. It was found out that human resource manager deal with every type of conflict imaginable.   The findings of the study among others recommended that for effective conflict management, dysfunctional conflict should not be allowed to build; rather it should be addressed before it escalates.

Wall and Nolam (1987) conducted a study on small group conflict. The study showed or revealed that, as conflict increased, group satisfaction decreased. Thus, an integrative style of handling conflict, as they found out, led to a higher satisfaction then avoidance style.

In another development field studies involving managers and real organizations uncovered some insights. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) found out that both intradepartmental and interdepartmental conflict decreased as goal difficulty and goal clarity increased. They therefore contend that challenging and clear goals can defuse conflict.

Summary of the Literature Review

In a nutshell, the literature review has suggested strongly that conflict exist when a situation arises in which two or more parties' views are incompatible. Conflict can be classified into different types such as interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflict. Furthermore, through the literature it was observed that limited resources, role ambiguity, communication obstacles, status power differences, differences in goals, interdependence, time pressure, collective decision making, organization complexity, unrealised expectation, autonomy, territorial encroachments unclear lines of authority and interaction Patterns are responsible for most conflict in the organizations.

The elimination of conflict is out of the question because conflict can be a positive force in an organization but also explicitly that conflict is absolutely necessary for an organization to perform effectively   instead its management which involves avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromising, collaboration, forcing and integrating should be encouraged. When it comes to prevention of conflict especially destructive ones, administrators can resolve concerns before they become problem.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the method that was used in conducting the study on conflict management mechanisms in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic in Ghana. The sections contained in this chapter are the research design, study population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, pre-testing of instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis plan.

Research Design

The study was a descriptive survey that sought to find out conflict management practices in the administration of the Cape Coast Polytechnic. The study was a descriptive one because the researcher described the situation as it is practised. According to Keller and Warrack (2000), descriptive surveys depend on direct contact with those persons or a sample of' those whose characteristics, behaviours or attitudes are relevant for a specific investigation.

Since the study did not call for the manipulation of subjects to answer the questions raised, the descriptive survey design was appropriate because it yielded the appropriate and relevant information to answer the research questions. Again, the descriptive survey was appropriate because it assisted the researcher to obtain responses from a large group of individuals who were difficult to locate and

whose co-operation was difficult to obtain. In other words, it had a high reachability rate.   Furthermore, the researcher has the opportunity to directly ask questions from respondents about the topic under study and from the data that were collected; inferences were drawn about the situation.

Moreover, the researcher was of the view that the descriptive design was suitable for the study because data that were collected from a number of individual units of analysis were used to describe those units and these descriptions were then summarized to represent the population of the units of analysis.   The use of the descriptive design created the opportunity for the researcher to administer the questionnaire personally to the prospective respondents and consequently in-depth and follow-up questions were asked, and items that were unclear were explained.

Although some of the limitations of descriptive design included difficulty in getting respondents to answer questions thoughtfully and honestly, biases which were caused by distortions in eliciting answers, and the introduction of biases in the measuring instruments, for example errors due to the use of questionnaires or interviews which sometimes distort research finding, the researcher confidently believes that the descriptive design elicited the responses needed to answer the research questions raised and further generalize the findings.

The descriptive design further helped the researcher to predict from the data that were collected the behaviour and attitude of the staff of Polytechnic.

Population

Population, according Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (1999) refers to the complete set of individuals, object or events having common observable characteristics in which the research intends to study. Koul (2002) also refers to population as any collection of specified group of human beings or non human entities. Sarantakos (1993) explains that population is the total of all items in the group of items in which the researcher wants to study.

For this study, the target population comprised all the academic staff, administrative staff and junior staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic. Again, since the study focuses on administration, it concentrated only on the student leaders as they represent the student body in day to day administration of the Polytechnic.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample, according to Koul (2002), is a portion or subset of a larger group. Since the population of the study was too large, the researcher was not able to reach every individual of the population due to financial and time constraint. Consequently, a representative sample was selected to take part in the study. A sampling frame was obtained from the personnel office of the Cape Coast Polytechnic in the order to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of representation. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) observed that in determining sample size for research activities, if the population is 180, then its

69

sample size should be 123. Basically a sample size of 120 respondents comprising of 80 males and 35 females were used for the study.

To ensure that the sample is a true reflection of the population, thirty-five males (35) and fifteen females (15) was selected to represent the academic staff. Thirty (30) males and fifteen (15) females for the administrative staff and fifteen (15) males and five (5) females representing junior staff constituted the sample for this study. This is to make sure that the findings of the sample could be generalized as the views of the population.

A single-stage sampling design was adopted. This means that the researcher had access to the names in the population and sampled the people directly (Creswell, 2003). A simple random sampling procedure was prepared in selecting the respondents and this afforded each individual in the population an equal chance of being selected. The population was divided into three categories namely; the Academic staff, Administrative staff and Junior staff. A purposive sampling was employed in selecting the Rector, Vice Rector, Registrar, and Assistant Registrars for interview.

The study involved stratification of the population before selecting the sample. Stratification means that specific characteristics of individuals are represented in the sample and the sample reflects the true proportion of individuals with certain characteristics of the population (Fowler, 1988). Characteristics used in stratifying the population were gender and status in the

70

Polytechnic. The names in each of the three categories were enumerated separately.

The simple random sampling technique was done in the fish bowl form to select from each of the categories. This involved writing the serial numbers of all the names on manila card cut into thin strips. They were then put in a fish bowl. The bowl was shaken thoroughly and any piece of card that was picked had number on it recorded. This was done for each category until a total number of the accessible population had been selected. This comprised academic staff, administrative staff and junior staff. Additionally, there were backup lists that took care of those sampled who were not willing to take part in the research.

Research Instruments

The instruments developed and used to elicit data for the study were questionnaire and interview. Kerlinger (1973) observed that the questionnaire was widely used for collecting data in education research because it is effective for obtaining factual information about practices, conditions and for enquiring into the opinions and attitude of subjects. Sarantakos (1998) also observed that the questionnaire is stable, constant and has uniform measure without variation. He argues that it offers less opportunity for bias caused by the presence or attitude of the researcher.

The interview method was also employed because of its numerous advantages. It has the advantage of flexibility. This is to say that it gave the

71

researcher much control over the order in which questions were ordered. Again, personal contact increased the likelihood that the respondents would participate fully and provide the needed information. This means that the interview was adjusted to meet many diverse situations. It had opportunity of observing non verbal behaviour – such opportunities are obviously not available when questionnaires are used. Additionally, it had the capacity for correcting misunderstanding by respondents. More complex questions were used because; the presence of the interviewer assisted in correcting any misunderstanding as well as answering the questions.

Sarantakos (1998) suggests that the interview guide offers such unique advantages such as providing an enabling environment for the participants not to know or alter the order of questions they answer. Besides, the completeness of the interview is guaranteed and the interviewer had control over time, place and date of interview. Again, it helps to ask all respondents the same questions.

Ary et al. (1990), however, point out some disadvantages in the use of the interview method. They indicate that interviews are more expensive and time-consuming than the questionnaire, notwithstanding its numerous advantages. They also point out that interviews may be affected by deliberate misinterpretation of facts, genuine mistakes and unwillingness to offer information.

The questionnaire that was developed to elicit information on conflict management practices in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic was in two

72

parts: The questionnaires for senior members, senior staff and that of junior staff have been captured as Appendix A and B of this thesis. The questionnaire for both senior members and senior staff comprised 33 items divided into six sections A-F, while that of the junior staff had 43 items divided into seven sections A-G. The description of each of the sections and number of items was as follows;

Part I of Section A comprises items for senior members, senior staff and junior staff. Here information was collected on personal or biographical data, e.g. sex, educational qualification, and status in the Polytechnic. Part II of Section B has four items focused on types of conflict among staff as identified in the literature review. Respondents were asked to show on a four point likert scale, the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements. The order was from 4 -Very Often, 3- Often, 2- Sometimes and 1- Never.

Section C sought respondents' views on the triggers of Conflict as mentioned in the literature. The section has eight (8) items. These are as follows:

Conflict caused by limited resources

Conflict caused by role ambiguity.

Conflict caused by communication breakdown

Conflict caused by collective decision making

Conflict caused by differences in goals

Conflict caused by organizational complexity

Conflict caused by time pressure and

Conflict caused by interdependence.

73

Section D of the questionnaire focused on sources of conflict in the administration of the Cape Coast Polytechnic as identified in the literature review. There were eleven items in this section. Respondents were requested to respond to each item on a four point likert scale rating format response as follows; 4 Very Often, 3 Often, 2 Sometimes and 1Never.

Section E of Senior members and Senior staff respectively, sought respondents views on how the Polytechnic administration employed some listed approaches to conflict management. Each of the section has 10 items. Respondents were to indicate on a four point scale 4 Very Often, 3 Often, 2 Sometimes and 1 Never, the appropriate scale they perceived the Polytechnic administration employs. Responses to the following views were sought.

Domination (Relying on formal authority to ensure compliance.)

Avoidance (People forgetting with time)

Procrastination (Adopting a let us wait and see attitude)

Coercion (Making the other yield from fear or by use of threats)

Integration (Identifying the source of conflict)

Smoothing (One party neglecting its own concern to satisfy the concern of the other.)

Conflict triangle (Involving a third person rather than dealing directly with conflicting parties)

Peer reviewing (Making use of a trust worthy co-worker/students leader)

Arbitration (Disputing parties agreeing to accept the decision of a neutral arbiter).

74

Mediation (Making use of a trained mediator)

Section F of the questionnaire for staff employed both the close-ended and open-ended types of questions. Views of respondent were sought on the effects of unmanaged conflicts as far as the achievements of Polytechnic goals are concerned. Here, respondents were given opportunity to express themselves since no options were given. This to some extend helped the researcher to obtain unanticipated but useful information. Some of the questions that were raised are: Do you experience conflict with regards to staff promotion procedure? If yes, how has the Polytechnic administration been handling them? What are the effects when such conflicts are not managed? If no, what accounts for the apparent stability?

Additionally, with the aid of an interview guide (Appendix C), the researcher had interview sessions as a follow-up to the questionnaire. The open-ended type of questions was also employed. Here respondents were free to express themselves in their own way and this really helped the researcher to obtain unanticipated but useful information.

Pre-testing

A pre- testing of the instrument was conducted at Koforidua Polytechnic, so as to ascertain the reliability and validity of the instrument and to revise and improve the questions to make them more specific and effective in eliciting the

needed responses. A total of twenty five (25) copies of the questionnaires were distributed among the heads of department, administrative staff and junior staff.

A discussion was held between the researcher and the respondents concerning the purpose of the study. Each respondent received a copy of the questionnaire; there was a general consensus that the filled questionnaires should be ready in two weeks from the day of the meeting. The pre-testing of the instrument yielded a reliability index of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .71.

The pre- testing was conducted in Koforidua Polytechnic since it had characteristics of the population under study. The researcher used the lottery method of the random sampling for the selection of Koforidua Polytechnic from the 10 Polytechnics in Ghana. A few items in the questionnaire had to be adjusted or rejected.

No changes were made on the corrected questionnaires which were sent out to the real participants. This was an indication that all the participants understood the items.

Administration of the Research Instruments

The duration for distribution and collection of the questionnaires as well as conducting the interviews spanned over a period of two weeks. By the end of this period, the researcher managed to get 115 questionnaires out of 120 questionnaires that were distributed. This represented 96.29 percent of the questionnaires that were collected and used for the data analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were personally delivered to the respondents in the Cape Coast Polytechnic. This was later followed up by personal contact because it was felt that some respondents might leave them at home after completion and the researcher would have to remind them occasionally. The researcher later asked questions verbally pertaining to the performance and challenges envisaged. In return, respondents were given the chance to ask questions in connection with the importance of the study.

In situations where the researcher was not able to obtain the completed questionnaire on the agreed date, he sought assistance from some of the colleague staff in the said Polytechnic to collect the completed questionnaire on his behalf.

With respect to the interview, the researcher booked an appointment with the officers of the study Polytechnic. The interviews were conducted on agreed dates and time which the officers of the Polytechnic and the researcher mutually agreed upon. The researcher took direct notes of the interview and this afforded both the interviewer and the interviewee the opportunity to verify the recorded information.

Data Analysis Procedure

The Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS) was the main statistical tool used in analyzing the data. This was used because it offers a full range of contemporary descriptive statistical methods. It also has good editing and labeling

facilities as well as the ability to produce output in both report and table formats, and handles missing data with ease.

Tables were used to support the analysis. This made the issues clearer in addition to good visual impression on values, without having to read long sentences. Concerning the organization of the data obtained, the answers to the closed-ended questions were coded and fed into the computer for detailed analysis of the data. Open-ended questions were also grouped based on the similarity of responses, coded and fed into the computer for analysis and descriptions of the results. Furthermore, the interview results were also grouped based on the similarity of responses for the detailed analysis of the data. To facilitate easy identification, the answered sets of questions that were returned by the respondents were given serial numbers. The researcher prepared scoring keys to the various questions. The responses to the items in the different sections of the questionnaire were assigned values and scored, accordingly.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data collected. The study sought to examine the conflict management mechanisms in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic. Respondents of the study were made up of the Academic staff, the administrative staff and junior staff.

First, the biographic data of respondents is presented. Second, responses from the various questionnaire and materials schedule are analysed. In addition, tables are provided to illustrate and support the research finding, and the results, made up of frequencies and percentage have been put in tabular forms.

Table 1

Sex of the Respondents

	Male		female	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Academic staff	35	44	15	43
Administration	30	37	15	43
Junior Staff	15	19	5	14

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 1 gives a visual picture of the sex distribution of respondents captured in the survey. Data collected established that out of the total number of the staff who participated, 80 (69%) were males whiles 35 (31%) were also

females. The analysis reveals that the composition of the Polytechnic staff is predominantly male and their situation is not peculiar to the Cape Coast Polytechnic alone.

Table 2

Status of Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Senior members	50	44
Senior staff	45	39
Junior members	20	17
Total	115	100

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 2 illustrates the status or category of respondents in the Polytechnic and the nomenclature of Polytechnic Staff. In the Polytechnic system, staff are generally classified into three distinct parts: Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff. At the apex of the pyramid are Senior Members. The Senior Staff and Junior Staff follow them. Clearly, all categories of staff are, therefore, well represented here since conflict situations cut across these artificial boundaries, especially between Senior Members and Senior Staff. Rogers and Weber (1971) think that the division of the institutional staff into professional and non professional is a fundamental problem and a source of conflict for institutions. This nomenclature can be a source of conflict in the Polytechnic because Senior

80

Members who enter the Polytechnic at a higher level may see themselves as superior than their non-professional counterparts. On the other hand, when some non-professionals resist this view of the professionals, probably because they are more knowledgeable, this may result in interpersonal conflict.

Category of Junior Staff

Junior staff respondent were asked to indicate the category in which they held various positions in the Polytechnic.

Table 3

Category of Junior Staff

Category	Frequency	percent
TEWU Secretary	1	5
Junior Library Assistant	6	30
Office Clerks	6	30
Account Clarks	4	20
Catering Assistant	2	15
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 3 shows the position held by the various respondents. Out of the total respondents of 20, six (30%) were working in the Polytechnic library premises while 11 (55%) were working in the Polytechnic administration with only 3 (15%) working in the Polytechnic restaurant.

81

Research Question 1

What types of conflict exist in Cape Coast Polytechnic?

This item was meant to explore the types of conflict that occur among the staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic in order to answer research question 1. Table 4 reports the various types of conflicts that the staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic experience among themselves.

Table 4

Types of Conflict

Types	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Interpersonal	45	41	40	36	20	18	5	5
Intrapersonal	14	13	19	17	37	34	40	36
Intergroup	48	44	31	28	24	22	79	6
Intragroup	21	19	28	25	41	37	20	18

Source: Field Survey 2009

As shown in table 4, the Polytechnic staff had varied views on the occurrences of types of conflict in their various departments. Out of the 115 repondents   85 (77%) either strongly agreed or agreed to the statement that interpersonal conflict occur in the Cape Coast Polytechnic, while 25 (23%) of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed. The researcher could conclude that the number of respondents who agreed to the statement far exceeded those

82

who disagreed. The findings indicate 25 (23%) of the respondents have never had conflict with their colleague staff. It could be inferred from this that there is a healthy relationship among these people. However this does not mean that there is a total absence of conflict among the staff. The fact is that the Polytechnic is made up of people from different walks of life; each will have a different way of looking at a problem.

Sometimes one may view a particular problem at as critical while another will only brush it over. Due to the differences in goals, conflict can result when these individuals interact; the differences in values or perception among members of various units in the organisation are frequently accompanied by differences in attitudes that could also lead conflict. From the above so far, staff experiences some sort of interpersonal conflict one way or other. This accentuates the assertion made by Wright and Noe (1996) that a total absence of conflict is undesirable as well as excessive conflict

This is confirmed by Schnake's (1987) assessment that interpersonal conflict may arise because of personality differences, difference in basic beliefs and values or incompatible goals. Interpersonal conflict involves confrontations or rivalries in the work environment between individuals and groups (Kinard, 1988).

The second most common type of conflict realized from the responses given was intergroup conflict. The results of the findings indicate that out of the totalof 115 respondents, 48 (44%) and 31 (28%) of the strongly agreed and agreed to the statement respectively while 24 (22%) and 7 (6%) either disagreed or

83

strongly disagreed. Wright and Noe (1996) point out that intergroup conflict occur because the groups are interdependent but have different goals and different perceptions. Unrelated areas provide no basis for conflict; meanwhile, the areas of interdependence remain a potential source of conflict. Individuals working together in groups can hardly eliminate conflict. This is because sometimes semantic problems are encountered in instances where a group has to communicate with the other groups in the institution. By the mere fact that staff of the Polytechnic are identified by their groups, teams, departments, schools, intergroup conflict may be expected.

As reported in table 4, the result of the analysis show that 33 (30%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, 77 (70%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that intrapersonal conflict occurs in Cape Coast Polytechnic. The researcher may conclude that because conflict within an individual can hardly manifest itself for people to see, the general consensus was that it hardly occurred. Schnake (1987), points out that intrapersonal conflict is conflict within an individual. This suggest that participants might have found it extremely difficult determining its occurrence.

In answer to the statement, " intragroup conflict as a type of conflict among staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic", 49 (44%) of staff respondents strongly agreed agreed whereas 61 (56%) respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The researcher could conclude that personality differences is one of the root causes of intra group conflict. This type of conflict conflict as it was realized

from the interview with management that "some of particular group are highly incompatible with one another. The researcher also found out this from the interactions with respondents throughout the field work period.

Research Question 2

What are the causes of conflict among the staff of the Cape Coast Polytechnic?

In this section respondents were required to indicate from the multiple choice options provided by the researcher, the various causes of conflict in the Cape Coast Polytechnic. It is important to state that some of them were their personal opinions, experiences or perceptions.

Table 5

Causes of Conflict

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Conflict caused by				
limited resources	48(42%)	39(34%)	27(23%)	1(0.8%)
Conflict caused by				
collective decision making	14(12%)	21(18%)	30(26%)	45(39%)
Conflict caused by				
time pressure	46(40%)	31(27%)	21(18%)	17(15%)
Conflict caused by				
unrealised expectation	26(23%)	41(36%)	34(30%)	14(12%)

85

Table 5 cont'd

Conflict caused by organisational structure	44(38%)	34(30%)	21(18%)	16(14%)
Conflict caused by differences in goal	25(22%)	33(29%)	48(42%)	9(8%)
Conflict caused by communication break down	46(40%)	39(34%)	26(23%)	4(3%)
Conflict caused by role ambiguity	34(30%)	39(40%)	16(14%)	25(22%)
Conflict caused by the desire to rely of factions	56(49%)	36(31%)	16(14%)	7(6%)
Conflict caused by Interdependence	12(10%)	23(20%)	30(26%)	40(35%)

Source: Field Survey, 2009

From table 5, the most common cause of conflict among the staff in the Cape Coast Polytechnic is the desire to rely on factions. The number of respondents who stated very often and often were 56(49%), 36(31%) respectively whilst 16(14%) stated sometimes and only 7(6%) never. From the data collected, there was a general consensus among majority of the participants that favouritism (factions) caused much conflict in the Polytechnic. Indeed, perceptions of unjust

86

treatment can lead to tension and conflict. This fuels feelings of inequity, which may or may not be justified.

Conflict caused by limited resources is the second source of conflict among staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic. Out of the total respondents of 115, 45(47%) indicated very often, 39(34%) often, 27(23%) sometimes whilst 1(0.8%) choose never. The researcher agreed with the statement because, with the ever-increasing population in the intake of staff and students, not all units would have equal access to vital resources. One unit's attempt to get more of the resources would mean another unit must get less and this can trigger conflict.

This is confirmed by Pondy (1967), who contended that when the organisation's resources are insufficient to meet the requirements of the subunits to do their work, there is competition for limited resources. This means, the groups would fight for the greatest possible share of available resources. In the words of Stoner (1978), if every unit in an organisation had access to unlimited amounts of manpower, money, materials, equipment and space, the problem of how to share these resources would hardly arise. This statement substantiates the views of Jones and other (2000) that when resources are scarce, management of it is always difficult and conflict is likely to occur.

Respondents were asked to indicate the occurrence of conflict caused by collective decision making. A significant number of the respondents 30(26%) indicated sometimes. About 35(30%) respondents also supported this view by agreeing with the statement while 45(39%) respondents disagreeing with the

87

statement. This may be true because the Polytechnic does not depend on a large number of people to participate in decisions because of the committee system it makes use of. Conflict caused by collective decision making would be minimal. This confirms Kreitner and Kinicki's (2001) observation that the greater the number of people participating in a decision, the greater the potential for conflict. This, again means that the smaller the number of people participating in a decision, the lesser the potential for conflict.

Another cause of conflict as indicated by the Cape Coast Polytechnic staff is the issue of organisational structure (hierarchical layers). Out of the total number of respondents of 115, 44(38%) indicated very often, 34(30%) often, 21(18%) sometimes, whilst 16(14%) disagreeing with the statement never. This actually gives an indication that Cape Coast Polytechnic may have a greater number of hierarchical layers to trigger conflict. As Kreitner and Kinicki pointed out, conflict tends to increase as the number of hierarchical layers and specialised tasks increased. The evidence in Table 5 reveals that there were 91(86%) responses, which was fairly significant for power struggle as a factor that gives rise to conflict in the Polytechnic. Organisational Structure may also arise from unequal distribution of power and status. This brings the issue of power struggle to the fore.

The study sought to find out the occurrence of conflict caused by communication obstacles, majority of the respondents indicated it did occur. A significant number that is 46(40%) said very often, 39(34%) often, 26(23%)

88

sometimes whilst 4(3%) indicated never. Also, it was gathered from the interview conducted that communication flow was generally fair and that the Polytechnic was trying to network all the campuses for internet services to make communication flow very effective. This actually goes to suggest that there was the absence of frequent communication as indicated by the majority of the respondents. Schnake (1987), points out that the absence of frequent communication between groups or individuals representing different structural level of the organisation or different informal groups can trigger conflict.

Considering conflict caused by role ambiguity, 34 (30%) respondents indicated very often, 39(40%) often, 16(14%) sometimes whilst 25(22%) indicated never. Responses from the participants gave an indication that among the staff, there was much conflict caused by role ambiguity. When management was interviewed, it was realised that every officer was issued with a job description clearly spelt out. It was again realised from the interview that all sectional heads were to ensure that their subordinates did not "cross" jobs. It could therefore be from the study that those from teaching field actually stick to their respective job description but those in the administration field for one or two reasons do sometimes cross carpet while performing their respective official duty.

Furthermore, role ambiguities have always created difficulties over responsibility or authority. Individuals or groups may be uncertain as to who is responsible for performing which tasks or duties and who has the authority to direct whom. Each party may claim or reject responsibility and the result can be

89

conflict. This can occur particularly when individual roles and responsibilities are not explicitly spelt out.

Considering conflict caused by time pressure, majority of the respondents 46(40%) indicated 'very often', 31(27%) ''often'', 21(18%) ''sometimes'' whilst 17(15%) ''never''. This actually gives an indication that members of the Polytechnic were unable to beat deadlines set for the execution of jobs assigned to them.

In addition, when participants were asked to indicate the occurrence of conflict caused by interdependence, 44 (38%) of the staff said it never occurred. About 27 (23%) said it occurred often, 14 (12%) indicated very often while 30 (26%) on the other hand said it sometimes occurred. This gives an indication that though conflict occurred, its occurrence was not frequent. It could be that the various departments in the Polytechnic operated independently thus creating little conflict. Wright (1996) termed this pool interdependence. He went further to say however that the organisations overall success depended on the combination of the groups outcomes.

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents 48(42%) indicated that there was occurrence of conflict caused by differences in goals. About 26(23%) said it sometimes occurred. 33 (29%) said often, 25 (22%) said very often while 4 (3%) said it never occurred. This is because the Polytechnics had failed to set goals and reward schools and departments in ways that would encourage co-operation (Wright, 1996). It could also be that schools or departments had to

90

compete for scarce resources. The School of Business, for example might have had goals related to obtaining resources at the expense of other departments in the Polytechnic. When that happens, it could cause inter group conflict.

Another common cause of conflict found out from respondents was the issue of unrealized expectations. 41(36%) indicated that its occurrence is often, 26(23%), very often 34(30%) sometimes, with 14(12%) indicating never. This is because the employees entered the Polytechnic with high expectations which had not been met. When such disappointment surface up, conflict may appear. According to Kreitner and Kinick (2001) employees who have unrealistic expectations about job assignments, pay, promotion and reassignment are more prone to conflict.

Research Question 3

What are the effects of unmanaged conflicts in Cape Coast Polytechnic?

The study also sought to find out whether respondents experienced conflict with regard to staff promotion, how management handles these conflict and the effects such conflict had on the Polytechnic when not managed.

91

Table 6

Conflict in staff promotion

Category of staff	Yes	No
Academic Staff	20 (17%)	21 (18%)
Administrative staff	29 (25%)	25 (22%)
Junior Staff	15 (13%)	5 (4%)

Source: Field Survey, 2009

From table 6, majority of the staff respondents 51 (44%) answered in the negative, while 30 (32%) answered in the affirmative. This gives an indication that among some of the staff promotions went on smoothly while some staff experienced much conflict. It was gathered from the interview that the Polytechnic had a laid down procedure where employees applied for promotions when due. It was realised from the interview with management that for one to be promoted, he had to be qualified, must have served for a number of years, and there should be some relevance of the promotion to his job. This is to say that any promotion should bring a change in job performance.

It was also gathered that, this type of conflict only existed among a section of the employees who acted out of ignorance. This may be true because some of the staff indicated that though one must serve a number of years to be promoted but in some instances, it took more than the stipulated time to be promoted. This answer was challenged through the interview that before one is promoted, first the appointment and promotions board had to meet and discuss

92

about the formalities. They admitted that sometimes management delayed but eventually give the concerned staff back pay.

Handling of Conflict

Respondents who answered in affirmation as regards to conflict in staff promotion procedure were asked to indicate how management handled such conflicts.

Table 7

Handling of Conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Management remains adamant to the situation	39	34
It takes a long time to address the situation	19	17
Chairman informed the HOD to educate staff on	28	24
Table 7 cont'd		
promotion procedure		
People don't complain	29	25

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The table above shows that 39 (34%) of the staff participants who responded in affirmative said management remains adamant to the situation. It

could be that management had not bothered themselves to know about mechanisms used in addressing such conflict.

Effects of such conflict when not managed

The researcher sought to find out the effects such conflict had on the Polytechnic when not managed. Table 8 shows the responses.

Table 8

Effect of non-management of Conflict

Effect	Frequency	Percentage
Ill feeling among staff	37	32
Lack of commitment to work	21	18
Less motivation tends staff away	38	33
Low productivity	19	17

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The data in table 8 above shows that 38 (33%) of the respondents said one of the effects of non-management of conflict in staff promotion procedure was less motivation which in effect tends staff away. This means members of staff would be less enthusiastic about whatever job they would be assigned to.

Conflict in Staff Development System

The study tried to find out whether respondents experienced conflicts with regard to staff development system. Responses are captured in Table 9.

94

Table 9

Conflict in Staff Development System

	Yes	No
Academic Staff	15(13%)	25(22%)
Administrative Staff	15(13%)	39(34%)
Junior Staff	13(11%)	7(6 %)

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Table 9 shows that majority of staff participants 71 (62%) had no problem with staff development. This may be that the status and level of education of most staff do not qualify them for staff development. Those who participated from the research indicated that there are lapses in the staff development and this maybe a fair reason for conflict.

A number of respondents 43 (38%), however, said they did experience conflict with regard to staff development system. This may be that there is a formal procedure in which one may qualify for promotion. It was again gathered from the interview conducted that for one to qualify for staff development, one must have served for a number of years and that there should be some relevance of that staff training.

Handling of conflict

The study again sought to find out how management handled conflicts in staff development system. This is captured in Table 10.

95

Table 10

Handling of conflict

Effect	Frequency	Percentage
Administration uses the statutory to solve the problem	15	13
Apathy	28	24
Locally sponsored education	30	26
Favouritism	42	37

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 10 shows that 42 (37%) of the respondents indicated that the system was in favour of some departments. Probably, their observation was that any time such conflict arose, solutions found to reduce the tension were in favour of some departments. Their contention was that some "staff were considered more for development like scholarship, study leaves, car loans, rent advance, research grants and allowances".

The table again depicts that 30(26%) of the participants said staff who did not get the chance to further their studies in the developed countries, for instance, were sponsored locally. This means that alternative measures were put in place to minimize the trigger of conflict.

Effect of Non-Management of Conflict

Responses to this question were pooled to answer the fourth research question. Table 11 shows the effects of non-management of conflict with regards to staff development.

Table 11

Effect of Non-Management of Conflicts

Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Apathy towards work	38	33
Employees leave for other institution where they can get such facilities	21	18
People resign or change their attitude toward work	30	26
Dissatisfaction	26	22

Source: Field Survey 2009

Out of the total number of participants who responded to the item, 38(33%) indicated that there was apathy. This means that staff members become less enthusiastic about anything when conflict in staff development was not managed. Information got from the interview confirmed that non-management of conflict led to dissatisfaction, which invariably lead to low productivity. Majority

97

of staff 30(26%) on the other hand said members who felt that their issues were not addressed, resigned from their job.

Conflict in staff housing

Staff participants were asked to indicate whether they experienced conflict with regard to staff housing. Table 12 shows the responses conflict in staff housing.

Table 12

	Yes	No
Academic Staff	32(28%)	15(13%)
Administrative Staff	41(35%)	7(6%)
Junior Staff	19(17%)	1(0.7%)

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Table 12 shows that majority of participants 92(80%) had problem with regard to staff housing. This was actually confirmed by the Polytechnic Rector that the major headache for the ever-growing population of the Polytechnic was with the accommodation for Academic staff, Administrative staff, Junior Staff as well as accommodation for students.

Handling of conflicts

The study further tried to find out how management handled conflicts in staff housing. Table 13 shows the responses.

98

Table 13

Handling of conflicts

Method	Frequency	Percentage
Rent subsidy	49	43
Renting houses for staff	24	21
Administration putting up new building	19	16
Not much has been done	23	20

Source: Field Survey 2009

As captured in Table 13, 49 (43%) of the staff who responded to that item said, the Polytechnic gives subsidy for the staff to rent a house. Information from the interview revealed that accommodation was offered to heads of department and also off -campus allowances were paid to staff of the Polytechnic irrespective of their rank. A close look at the above table revealed that 23(20%) of the respondents on the other hand, said that not much has been done as regard to the handling of conflicts in staff housing. This is probable because most of the solutions put in place to control the conflict were not enough to satisfy the staff of the Cape Coast Polytechnic.

99

Effects of such conflict when not managed

The study sought to find out the effects conflict had on the Polytechnic when not managed. Responses are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Effects of such conflict when not managed

Effect	Frequency	Percentage
High employee turnover	18	15
Lateness among staff	25	27
Discontent staffs resign	21	18
Apathy	22	19
Low productivity	25	21

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Table 14 shows that out of the total number of respondents 21(18%) staff said members resigned from the Polytechnic when such conflicts were not managed. This, to some extent, confirms the earlier finding that the Polytechnic was losing personnel it had given on the job training to the other sectors of the economy.

Conflict Prevention Strategies

The researcher found out measures put in place by management to reduce conflict at the Polytechnic. Table 15 shows the responses

100

Table 15

Conflict Prevention Strategies

	Responses			
Method	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
The Administration makes use of the committee system	51(44%)	42(37%)	20(17%)	2(2%)
The Administration implements decision taken by the committee	15(13%)	27(23%)	41(36%)	32(28%)
The Administration ensures free flow of information	25(22%)	18(16%)	40(35%)	32(28%)
The Administration ensures that roles are well defined	41(36%)	39(34%)	20(17%)	15(13%)
The Administration provides enough resources	16(14%)	24(21%)	35(30%)	40(34%)
The Administration is fair in its dealings with all departments	20(17%)	19(16%)	47(41%)	29(25%)

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 15 depicts that 51(44%) of staff respondents indicated that management very often use the committee system. This actually is an indication that the Polytechnic made used of the committee system. This, in fact, was confirmed when information gathered from interview indicated that the Polytechnic had about 9 committees and boards.

101

Considering management implementation of decisions taken by the committees, majority of the staff respondent 41(36%) said "sometimes". This shows that though management had put in place many committees, yet it failed to implement decisions taken by the committees. Though these committees and boards recommend issues to management, it is only up to management to implement them or not. In a situation where management fails to implement such decisions taken by the various committees and boards its triggers conflict.

Furthermore, the table shows that majority of the respondents 40(35%) indicated that management sometimes does not ensure flow of information. This means that not much had been done to allow people have access to information. This means that not much had been done to allow people to share ideas and feelings. When this happens, the battle for clear communication hardly ends. Darling and Walker (2001) observed that failure to share ideas and feelings leaves one person to "fill in the gap".

Again, the table shows that 41(36%) staff respondents indicated that as a preventive measure, management ensured that roles were well defined. On the contrary, it can however be said that majority of the staff admitted that management often attached importance to job descriptions. It is only when employees are not sure of what their job descriptions are that conflict over roles rear its head. This is confirmed by Nnadi (1997), in his observation that unclear job descriptions and employee roles create conflict because such a worker is unsure of what his/her job responsibilities are.

102

Furthermore, the table shows that 40(34%) of staff participants indicated that management did not often ensure provision of enough resource base. Therefore, there was competition for scarce resources. According to Kreitner (1998), sometimes, as in the case of money and people, competition for scarce resources can be avoided by enlarging the resource base.

Similarly, the table reveals that 29(25%) participants indicated that management did not ensure fairness in its dealings with all departments. This is actually an indication that favouritism was the order of the day. This situation to some extend causes conflict.

Research Question 4

What conflict management mechanisms does management of Cape Coast Polytechnic practice?

In table 17 the researcher tried to find out the conflict management mechanisms practiced at the Cape Coast Polytechnic. Table 17 shows the responses.

Table 17

Conflict Management Mechanisms

	Responses			
Mechanisms	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Relying on formal authority to ensure compliance	46(40%)	34(30%)	30(26%)	5(4%)
People forgetting with time	48(42%)	31(27%)	34(30%)	2(2%)
Adopting a "let us wait and see attitude	28(24%)	33(29%)	39(34%)	15(13%)
Making the other yield from fear or by use of threats	45(39%)	37(32%)	25(22%)	8(7%)
Identifying the source of conflict	10(9%)	29(25%)	46(40%)	30(26%)
Involving a third person rather than dealing directly with the conflicting parties	20(17%)	32(28%)	41(36%)	21(18%)
Disputing parities agreeing to accept the decision of a neutral arbiter	15 (13%)	25(22%)	43(37%)	32(28%)

104

Source: Field Survey 2009

Table 17 shows that 46 (40%) of the respondents indicated that management very often relied on the use of formal authority to ensure compliance. This means that majority of the participants said management used what the literature referred to as dominating. Probably, because heads of departments wanted to maintain their status and therefore saw formal authority as a defensive mechanism.

This confirms Nnadi's (1997) assertion that superiors see losing as reducing status, weakness and self image, and that winning gives a superior a sense of achievement and power. This means that management relies on formal authority to ensure compliance just to give them a sense of achievement and power. Formal authority may only suppress conflict. It may not give room for views to be thoroughly aired and this may hurt people's feelings.

According to Kreitner (1998), using formal authority to ensure compliance hardly resolves the personal conflict and may serve to compound it by hurting feelings, and mistrust. Furthermore, the table shows that 48 (42%) of the staff respondents indicated that very often, management at the Cape Coast Polytechnic failed to deal with conflict. This means people tend to forget about the conflict with time. This, the literature referred to as avoiding or withstanding from the problem. Nnadi (1997) observed that, withdrawal is like trying to sweep conflict under the rug and hoping it will go away. This means that withdrawing allows conflicts to remain unresolved.

Again, the table shows that 39 (34%) of the staff participants indicated that sometimes management procrastinated (adopting a "let us wait and see" attitude). This may be that management saw the outcome of some conflict management as unpleasant or boring. It may also be that management resort to procrastination because of time constraint. Procrastination to some extend does not resolve conflict; it resurfaces at another time and in different way.

Similarly, the table shows that 45 (39%) staff participants indicated that very often management used threats. This is an indication that majority of the participants said they yielded from fear or by use of threats. Maybe Polytechnic staff   resorted to that for the fear of losing their job or being denied promotion. Such a mechanism creates a win-lose situation. According to Stoner (1978), the loser who is usually compelled to give way to a higher authority ends up been disappointed or mischievous.

Again, the table reveals that 46 (40%) staff participants said that management did not identify the source of conflict. It could be that interested parties neither confronted the issue nor co-operatively identified the problem. It could also be that people did not generate and weigh alternative solutions.

Owens (2001) confirms this with his observation that if we fail to diagnose a conflict currently and deal with the causes, it will continue in another dimension, ready to manifest itself at a later period. As shown in table 17, respondents were asked to indicate whether management practiced the conciliation method or not. 41 (36%) of the participants indicated that

106

management sometimes involved a third party rather than dealing directly with the conflicting parties. Therefore, majority of the staff participants said management found it difficult to use this method. Table 17 further shows that 43 (37%) of the staff participants indicated that disputing parties sometimes agreed to accept the decision of neutral arbiter. This is clearly an indication that arbitration as a conflict management mechanism was hardly put in place at the Cape Coast Polytechnic.

Summary of the Data Analysis

Findings from the research indicated that 25 (23%) of respondents did not perceive interpersonal conflict in Cape Coast Polytechnic. The dominant view of the 85 (77%) was that interpersonal conflict was rife. The differences in the views of the respondents may be due to individual differences in beliefs, norms and attitude as Schnake (1987) postulates.

Again, respondents cited communication obstacle (40%), limited resource (42%), time pressure (40%) and favouritism (49%) among others as recipe for conflicting situations in the Cape Coast Polytechnic as reported in Table 5 on pages 84-85.

Finally, conflict management mechanisms found to be practiced in the study were dominance and suppression methods such as forcing, avoiding and coercing which create a win or lose situation. Such mechanisms, it was realised swept conflict under rugs, only to resurface in more destructive ways.

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 the conflict management mechanisms practiced among the staff in the Cape Coast Polytechnic.

It was a descriptive survey research and respondents were drawn from various departments at the Cape Coast Polytechnic. The data was analysed using statistical package for the social sciences version 12.0 Again the pilot study was conducted at Koforidua Polytechnic in the Eastern Region.

Summary

The major objective in this study centered on whether administrators were able to control conflict. That is whether administrators were able to keep dysfunctional conflict at an appreciable level and also stimulate functional productive conflict where the level is too low. The study has shown that conflict management mechanism employed by management at the Cape Coast Polytechnic did not help keep dysfunctional conflict at an appreciable level.

Furthermore, the study sought to find out what types of conflict were very common at the Cape Coast Polytechnic. It was realized from the study that inter personal conflict was the commonest one. Interpersonal conflict involves confrontations or rivalries in the work environment between individuals or

108

between individuals and groups. Evidence gathered from the study identified personality incompatibility or differences as one of the factors that endangered inter personal conflicts in the Cape Coast Polytechnic. Some people have difficulty in getting along with others at the workplace. Personality incompatibilities are probably the most pervasive form of conflicts in organizations including Polytechnic. A host of factors give rise to this and they include age, social status, educational background, length of service and salary disparities. There is no doubt that such differences cause and even exacerbate friction between Polytechnic staff.

Another dimension of personality difference has to do with personal style of the individual. The impact of this cause in the Polytechnic can be devastating when such people are in management positions. The study further sought to find out the causes of conflict at the Cape Coast Polytechnic. According to the participants, generally limited resources were one of the major causes of conflict. This is in confirmation of the literature that was reviewed that when the organisation's resources are not adequate to meet the requirements of the subunits to do their work, there is competition for limited resources.

Also, this study has shown that conflict caused by communication obstacles exists at the Cape Coast Polytechnic. The frequent absence of communication between groups or individual representing different structural levels of the organization can cause conflict.

To add to the above, the study has shown that staff participants experienced conflict caused by unrealized expectations. Staff entered the Polytechnic with high expectations, which have not been fulfilled. This confirms Kretner and Kincki's observations that workers who have unrealized expectation about their job assignments, pay, promotion are likely to encounter conflict. Again, the research has further shown there exist conflict in staff housing. This confirm the submission by the Rector of the Cape Coast Polytechnic that the major problem facing the institution is the ever growing population of the Polytechnic is accommodation for both staff and students as well as lecture rooms.

A major cause of conflict realized from this study is time pressure. This actually means that some members of staff of Cape Coast Polytechnic are unable to meet deadlines. Also, it was realized from the study that there was a desire for some sectional heads to rely on factions instead of treating everybody equally. Heads of departments who in the cause of their duties favoured one side made the losing side to be resentful. This means that the losing side feels bitter and even underrated a situation that made favoritism a cause for much conflict.

The study again has shown that Polytechnic staff experience conflicts in promotion procedure and development system. The level of education of most members of staff does not permit them to be promoted above a certain point. Added to the above, the status, the length of service, level of education did not qualify some of the staff for facilities such as car loans, study leave with pay and

110

sponsorship to study within and outside the country. These things promote a ground for conflict to happen.

The fourth question sought to find the effects of conflicts when it is not managed. The study shows that staff has ill feeling and less motivated when conflicts are not managed. Again, some members of staff become less enthusiastic about whatever work they are assigned leading to low productivity. Furthermore, it is observed that, non-management of conflict leads to apathy on the part of staff, dissatisfaction and aggrieved members resign their job. In this modern generation where organizations place more emphasis on experience Polytechnic members after acquiring experience which will make them more marketable only leave the institution under the pretence of conflict.

The final question bothered on conflict management mechanisms employed by the Polytechnic management. This study shows that as a measure to reduce conflict if not to eliminate conflict, the Polytechnic management has put in place numerous committees, yet fails to implement some decision taken by them. Again, it was noted from the study that the Polytechnic administration to some extend does not ensure free flow of information thereby making people guess to conclude their observation. This is a confirmation of the literature review that it is not easy to misunderstand one person or group of people if two way communications hampered in some way. It was again realized from the study that failure on the part of management to share ideas and feelings leaves the Polytechnic staff "fill in the gap".

111

The study again shows that certain preventive measures have not been put in place in the Polytechnic. The study has revealed that management does not provide enough resources. This indicates that there has not been much effort with regards to increasing the Polytechnic resources base. As observed by Kreitner (1998) that sometimes as in the case of money and people, destructive competition for scarce resource can be avoided by expanding the institutional resources.

Furthermore, the study has shown that management does not ensure fairness in dealing with some department especially the smaller units. According to Stoner, a supervisor who favours one side makes the losing side to be resentful. It must be noted here that as a preventive measures Polytechnic staff indicated that management ensures that roles are well defined. It was realised from the study that unclear job descriptions and employee roles create conflict, because the employee is unsure of what is expected of him or her.

Again, the study has shown that management relies on formal authority to ensure compliance. Polytechnic authorities always want to maintain their status and therefore see threaten as a defensible mechanism. This is in agreement of Nnadi's (1997) observation that supervisors see threat as a sense of achievement and power. Polytechnic staff yielded from fear or the use of threat, this they do for fear of losing their job or their promotion. According to Stoner the disappointed employee who give way to higher authority ends up being hostile.

112

It was again realized from the study that management for that matter do not confront the problem or identity the source of problem. Therefore, the problem is not resolve thereby leaving the institution weakened with hostility. It can be stressed here that if educational institutions fail to diagnose a conflict immediately and deal with the source it will manifest in another direction.

It was further observed from the study that management often talk to one party to give in instead of forcing acceptance of a solution. However relying on factional favouritism does not make it possible for amicable solution to be reached. This is in confirmation of Stoner's observation that a supervisor who rely on one side makes the losing side to be resentful. Additional, other conflict management mechanisms employed at the Cape Coast Polytechnic are conciliation, mediation and arbitration.

Conclusions

The study has established that 77% of respondents believed that interpersonal conflict exists in Cape Coast Polytechnic while 23% disagreed. Various factors responsible for their occurrence include: differences in opinion, beliefs, values, attitude and goals. It has also demonstrated that the factors that endangered conflict in the Cape Coast Polytechnic are not different from those that have been postulated by earlier researchers in the literature on organizational behaviour.

The conflict situation in the various departments can be associated with the day-to-day interaction of academic work in the Polytechnic. Furthermore, it was discovered from the research that the types of conflict at the Cape Coast Polytechnic were intergroup conflict, intragroup conflict and interpersonal conflict, but the most common type of conflict is the interpersonal conflict.

The study also showed that the most commonly used conflict management mechanisms used by the Polytechnic management are avoidance/preventive, compromise, accommodation and problem solving. The findings from the study revealed that as an effect of non-management of conflict, there was dissatisfaction which led to demotivation and then low productivity. Also it was realized from the study that staff who become demotivated eventually quit the Polytechnic job.

There are, however, peculiar causes of conflict in the Polytechnic such as bootlicking, nepotism and ethnicity which had been identified by some Polytechnic staff. The survey thus confirms that institutions are indeed subject to conflict which in some cases is severe enough to demoralize employees, reduce their efficiency and impoverish service. Such conflict also militates against the implementation of certain major policy decisions in the Cape Coast Polytechnic.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made.

114

1. The Cape Coast Polytechnic training and development section should constantly educate staff that because of differences in cultural orientations, educational background, sex and other such considerations, there are bound to be differences and disagreements at the work place from time to time. Such differences and disagreements should be taken in good faith for the growth of the Polytechnic.

2. The use of dialogue in managing conflicts should be embraced by the management of Cape Coast Polytechnic. Furthermore there is the need for authorities of Cape Coast Polytechnic to carefully study the causes of conflicts in their respective departments and adopt appropriate conflict management strategies to enhance effective and maximum results.

3. There is need for management of Cape Coast Polytechnic to be willing to shift ground on some demands, instead of the practice of fighting to the end. This calls for a little bit of compromise and dialogue from both sides in conflict, in the spirit of give and take.

4. Authorities of Cape Coast Polytechnic should reduce their "thought-control" disposition. This will enhance greater freedom of self- expression by staff and students.

5. It is necessary for management of Cape Coast Polytechnic to address themselves to how they can curtail the emergence of conflicts rather than concentrating on how to manage conflict in their various departments.

6. It is also important for the Polytechnic staff to be on good terms with co-workers in order to create good working relationships with supervisors and other members of management. It is proper to foster positive collegial relationships not only with counterparts in other departments, but also with staff members within and outside the departments as well as with support staff as clerks, messengers and cleaners.

7. Management should stick to the facts basing their argument on events or documents that can be closely and verifiably scrutinised, rather than opinion.

8. Management should assist heads of departments or concerned parties to re-examine each situation. Ideally, management should be willing to look at the situation from the other's point of view.

9. As much as possible, Polytechnic staff should not antagonise their heads. Staff should avoid verbalising their frustration with terms like "unrealistic, "unfair" and "flawed." Words such as these tend to antagonise.

10. Polytechnic staff should know when to back off. They should keep in mind that they are talking to their heads and can only go far trying to persuade them to accept their views.

11. Heads should also be fair-minded, articulate, and be committed to high quality service in order to set the tone for the creation of a healthy organisational climate.

12. Management should ensure that individual roles and responsibilities are clearly spelt out, on the basis that seniority should play a leading part.

116

Heads of department and the Polytechnic staff should be encouraged to work as a team.

13. Management should ensure that information flows freely. In other words, Polytechnic staff should be allowed to communicate with every staff member. In this way, inaccurate information that normally characterises the gravevine will be drastically reduced to the barest minimum.

14. Cape Coast Polytechnic management should demonstrate evenhandedness. This to some extent will prevent the appearance or the reality of a pattern of favouritism.

15. Management should try as much as possible to discourage victimisation in the Polytechnic. They should rather encourage Polytechnic staff to give of their best. A complaints desk could be established in Polytechnic to look into issues of victimisation before they explode into serious conflict. Such an avenue will serve as an early warning system.

16. Heads should urgently discourage bootlicking in the Polytechnic environment by insisting that whatever information that is relayed to them will be discussed in the presence of the concerned party and the party that spread the information.

17. Management should make good use of the various committees system. Decisions taken by them should be implemented, if on rare occasions management feel contrary, that in it sense is accepted.

117

18.   Management should enlarge the resource base of the Cape Coast Polytechnic.

Suggestions for further research

A number of issues that invite further research have emerged from the study. A minority of the Polytechnic staff identified preferential treatment, bootlicking, victimisation, communication breakdown among others as some other causes of conflict in the Cape Coast Polytechnic. At best they can be described as perceived causes. These causes should be subjected to further testing in order to ascertain how wide spread they are or the extend to which they qualify as major sources of conflict in Cape Coast Polytechnic. This is because the Polytechnic staff who stated other reasons were actually proffering alternative options that the designer of the instrument did not think of.

REFERENCES

Aamodt, M. G. (1999). *Applied industrial and organizational psychology*.

Belmont: Wadsworth   Publishing Company.

Agyedu, G.O., Donkor, F. &   Obeng , S. (1999). *Research   methods*. Kumasi:

University of   Education.

Albritton, R. L., & Shaughessy, T. W. (1990). *Developing Leadership Skills*: A

source book for librarians. Englewood cliffs, N. J, Colorado Libraries

Unlimited, pp.

10-13.

Alfred, C.B. (1987). *The anatomy of conflict: some thoughts of managing staff

conflicts*. Law Library Journal. 79(1) 7-32

Anderson, G. (1990). *Fundamentals of education*. London: The Parmer Press.

Ary, D. Jacobs, L.C, & Razavieh, A (1990). *Introduction to research in education*

Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Wineston Inc.

Baiden-Koomson, G. (2005). *Conflict Management in the Administration of

Higher Educational institutions*. A case study of university of education,

Winneba Unpublished thesis.

Baldridge, J. V. (2000*). Power and conflict in the institution: research in the

sociology of complex organizations*. New York: John Wily and Sons.

Barker, J., Tjosvold, D., & Andrews, R.I. (1988).*Conflict approaches of effective

project managers*: a field study in a matrix organization. Journal of

Management Studies 2, 167-176

Baker, L. L., Kathy, J. W., Whalers, Kittie , W., & Robert, J. K. (2001). *Groups in*

 Process: an introduction to small group communication. New York:

 Prentice   Hall.

Bateman, S.T. & Scott, S.A. (1999) *Management building competitive advantage*.

 New York: Irwin McGraw -Hill.

Berne, E. (2004) *Games people play: the psychology of human relationships*, New

 York: Ballantine Books

Blake, R. R. and Mouton, J. S. (1978). *The managerial grid*. Houston: Gulf

 Publications.

Bramson, R.M. (1994). *Coping with difficult bosses*. New York: Simon and

 Schuster.

Brinkman, R. & Kirschner, R. (1994). *Dealing with people you can't stand*. New

 York: McGraw -Hill.

Bryson, J. (1990) *Effective Management*. Aldershot: Gower, p 294.

Bundy, M.L.& Wasserman, P. (1970). *The academic library administrator and*

 his   situation. Final Report US Department of Health Education and

 Welfare. Office of Education, Bureau of Research.

Burke, R. J. (1970). *Methods of resolving superior-subordinate conflict*:

 constructive   use of subordinate differences and disagreements. Journal

 of   Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance 15.393-411.

Bowman R. F. (2001) *Harmony versus productive conflict*. The Educational

 Forum, 65 (3). Retreived February 8, 2009, from Eric database

Cassey, M. &Cassey. P. (1977). *Self esteem training as an aid of acquiring*

    conflict management skills. Australian Journal of Adult and Community

    Training. 37 (3) 160- 66.

Coser, L. (1965) *Conflict*: Social Aspects, International Encyclopedia of the

    Social Sciences. (3), 232

Crawley, J. (1992). *Constructive Conflict Management*. London: Prentice- Hall,

    p10

Creswell, J W. (2003) *Research design*: Quantitive and mixed methods

    approaches. (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications Inc.

Derr, C. B. (1983). *Managing organizational conflict: collaboration bargaining*

    and   power approaches. American Library Association 10. 253-283.

Deutsch, M. (2001). *The resolution of conflict; constructive and processes*. New

    Haven: Yale Universty Press.

Edem, D. A. (1987). *Introduction to educational administration in Nigeria*.

    Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd

Evans, E. (1998). *Mastering negotiations*. London: Thorogood Ltd.p.22

Filley, A. C. (1977). *Conflict resolution:* the ethic of the good loser Boston:

    Holbrook   Press.

Fisher, D. (1983) *Communication in organizations*. (2nd ed.).Minnesota: West

    Publishing Company.

Fisher S, Ludin J., Williams S., Abdi D., & Smith R. (2000). *Working with*

    conflict skills *and strategies for action*. London Zed Books Ltd.

121

Fowler,E.J. (1998). *Survey research methods.* Thousand Oaks. Ca: Sage.

Gardner, J. W. (1990). *Leadership*. New York , NY: The Free Press

Garvin, D. A. (2002). *General management* :process and action, text and cases.

      Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Gunn, B. (2002). Storming. *Strategic Finance* 1 (84), 6-9.

Hatch, M.J. (1997). *Organization theory* New York: Oxford University press .

Hellriegel, D. Slocum, W. Jr. & Woodman, R. W. (1995). *Organisational*

      behaviour. (7th ed.). New York: West Publishing

Hughes, R. L., Gunnett, R.C., & Curphy, G. J., (1999*). Leadership enhancing the*

      lessons of experience. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Hoover, D. R.(1990). *Relationships among perceptions of Principals' Conflict*

      Management Behaviour. The Pennsylvania State Uniersity. Dissertation

      Abstracts international (51), 29-42.

Hybels, S., Richard, L. & Weaver (2001). *Communicating effectively*, Boston;

      McGraw –Hill.

Janis, I. (1984). *Victims of groupthink: a psychological study of foreign policy*

      divisions and fiascos. (2nd ed). Boston: Houghon.

Johnson D.W. & Johnson R.T. (1995).*Teaching students to be peacemakers*.(3rd

      ed) Edina, MN:Interaction Book Company.

Jones, G.R., George , J.M., & Hill, C. WW. L. (2000). *Contemporary*

      management. New York: McGraw –Hills.

Kathman, J. M. & Kathman, M. D. (1990) *Conflict Management in Academic*

Library. Journal of Academic Librarianship (16) (3) 145-9.

Keller, G & Warrack, B, (2000). *Statistical for management of economics* (5th ed)
New   York Duxbury Thompson Learning

Kemp, J.C. (1989). *A primer on conflict management* Library management 12 (4)
20- 25

Kerlinger, F.N. (1973). *Foundation of behavioural research* New York: Rinchart
&   Winston

Kinard, J. (1988).*Management*, Massachussetts: D.C. Health and company.294

Kolb, D. & Putnam, L. (1992) *The Multiple Faces of Conflict in Organisations*.
Journal of Organisational Behaviour (13),311-324

Koul, L. (2002). *Methodology of educational research* New Delhi: Vikas
Publishing   House PVT Limited.

Kreisburg, L. (1993). *The sociology of social conflicts*. Englewood Cliffs:
Prentice Hall.

Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. M.(1970). *Determining sample size for research
activities. Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610.

Kreitner, R. (1998). *Management*. U.S.A.: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Kreitner, R, & Kinicki, A. (2001). *Organizational behaviour*. New York, NY.:
Irwin/McGraw- Hill.

Lorsch, J.W. & Lawrence, P.R. (2003). *Managing group and intergroup
relations*. Homewood III Irwin and Dorsey.

Mack, R.W. (2000). *The components of social conflict readings in community,*

123

Organization   practice New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

March, G., & Herbert, A (1958). *Organisations*. New York: Willey.

Martin, G.E., & Bergman, T.J., (1996). *The dynamics of response to conflict in*

   the work place. Journal of occupational and organizational Psychology.

   69 (41) 377-387.

McShane, S.L. & Von Glinow, M.A. (2004). *Organizational bahaviour*. Boston:

   McGraw-Hill.

Mensa-Bonsu B. & Effah P. (2003). *Conflict management and resolution skills*

   for   managers of tertiary education institutions. Accra: National Council

   for   Tertiary Education.

Miles, R. H. (1980). *Micro organizational behaviour*. Califonia: Good Year

   Publishing   Company Inc.

Mullins, J. L. (2005). *Management and organizational behaviour*. New York:

   Prentice Hall.

Nebgen, M.K. (1978). *Conflict management in schools administrator's notebook*.

   Chicago University of Chicago.

Nelson, K. (1992). *Power, communication and collegiality*. Minnesota: University

   of   St. Thomas.

Nnadi, E. E. (1997). *Handbook on human resource management for health care*

   professionals. Washington D.C: Howard University Press

Olorunsola, R. (1997) *The Anatomy and Management of Staff Conflicts in a*

   Nigerian University Library. Library Management. (18) (7) 328- 334.

Osgood, C. (2004). *Perspective in foreign policy*. Palo Alto, C.A. Pacific Books.

Otto, A.L. (1998). *Resolving workplace disputes: the role of organizational culture in organizational conflict*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota.

Oppong- Mensa, K. (1999). *Conflict management behaviours of headmasters in the senior secondary schools in the kwahu South District in Ghana*. Unpublished M. Phil Thesis: University of Cape Coast.

Owens, R.G. (2001). *Organizaztional Behaviour in Education*. Needham Height. U.S.A.: Allyn and Bacon.

Pierre, R., Peppers, J.G. (1976). *Conflict in organizations good or bad*.:A University Review. Retrieved October 18, 2008, from ProQuest database.

Pondy, L. (1967). *Organisational conflict: concepts and models,* Administrative Science Quaterly 12: 296-230

Rao,M.G., Rao, V. S. P. and Narayana, P. S. (1987).*Organizational behaviour:text and cases*. New Delhi: Konaark Publishers.

Robbins, S. P. (1983). *Organizational behaviour: concepts, controversies and applications.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc.

Robbins, S. P. (1997). *Conflict and conflict resolutions are not synonymous terms*. California Management Review 21 (2), 43-67.

Robinson, J.W. (1972). *The management of conflict*. Journal of the Development Society 3 (2) 80-105.

Robinson, J.W. & Clifford, R.A. (1974). *Conflict Management in community*

groups.   North-Central Regional Extension Publication 36 (5) 107- 9

Sarantakos, S. (1993). *Social research*: Macmillan Press Australian: Pry Ltd

Sawyer, A. (1997) *Dynamics of conflict management in Liberia* Accra: An

institute of Economics Affairs Publication.

Schnake M. E. (1987). *Principles of supervision*. Dubugne, IOWA: Win C.

Brown Publishers

Stern, N. (2003) *Conflict and Civil wars in Africa*. World Bank Report Vol. XXI

No. 442 (pp. 5-8).

Snowden, E. P. & Gorten, R. A. (2002). *School leadership and administration*

Boston: McGraw Hill.

Stoner, J. A. F. (1978). *Management.* Englewood Cliff, N. J: Prentice-Hill.

Thomas, K. (1976). *Conflict and conflict management* Chicago: Rand McNally

and company.

Thomas, K.W. & Schmidt, W.H. (1976). A survey of managerial interest with

respect   to conflict. *Academy of management Journal* 19 (6) 315-318.

Ukeje, B. O. (1992). *Educational administration.* Enugu: Fourth Dimension

Publishing Co. Ltd

Veaner, A. B. (1990*) Academic institution in a Transformational Age: Program,

Politics and Personnel*. Boston, M.A: GK Hall, pp.6-7

Vredenburgh, D. & Brender, Y. (1998). *The hierarchical abuse of power in work*.

Journal of   Business Ethics in organizations. 17 (9) 1337-47.

Warren, R. L. (2005). *Truth, love and social change and other essays on*

126

community change. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company.

Weiten, W. (1986). *Psychology of applied modern life adjustment in the 80s*

California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Whetten, D.A. and Cameron, K. S. (2002).*Developing management skills*.

(5[th]d.).New Jersey:Prentice-Hall.

Whyte, W. F. (1949). *The social structure of the restaurant*. American Journal of

Sociology 54 302-10.

Wright, P. M., & Noe, R. A. (1996). *Management of organizations* U.S.A: Irwin/

McGraw Hill Publishers.

Yukl, G.A. (1989). *Leadership in organizations* (2nd ed.). New York: Prentice

Hall.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION

OF CAPE COAST POLYTECHNIC.

This questionnaire seeks to elicit information on Conflict Management

Mechanisms in the Administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic. It is solely for

academic purpose.

Under no circumstance will your identity be disclosed to any other person. Your

answers will be completely confidential. Kindly remain anonymous and feel free

to provide your responses in the best way you can.

Please respond to each item only once.

Thank you.

SECTION A: BASIC INFORMATION

Please indicate your response by placing a tick [√] in the appropriate box.

1.   Sex

1a.Male   [   ]

1b.Female   [   ]

2.   Category of staff

        2a.Senior member   [   ]

        2b.Senior staff   [   ]

128

SECTION B

Types of Conflict

On a scale of descending order, 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest, kindly show how regularly the type of conflict mentioned in this section occurs in your institution.

Please tick [√] one of the following:

Very often

Often

Sometimes

Never

		Very often 4	Often 3	Sometimes 2	Never 1
3.	Interpersonal conflict (occurs between individuals)				
4.	Intrapersonal conflict (Occurs within the individual)				
5.	Intergroup conflict (conflict among workgroups, teams and departments)				
6.	Intragroup conflict (takes place among members of a single work group).				

`

129

SECTION C

Causes of Conflict

On a scale of descending order 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest, kindly show how often the conflicts mentioned in this section occurs in your institution. Please tick [√] one of the following:

Very Often, Often, Sometimes,

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
7.Conflict caused by limited resources				
8. Conflict caused by role ambiguity				
9. Conflict caused by communication breakdown				
10. Conflict caused by collective decision-making				
11. Conflict caused by differences in goals				
12 Conflict caused by organizational structure (hierarchical layers)				
13. Conflict caused by unrealized expectations				
14. Conflict caused by time pressure				

130

15. Conflict caused by interdependence

16. Conflict caused by the desire to rely

on factions[eg. Favouritism

131

SECTION D

Conflict Prevention Strategies

On a scale of descending order, 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest, kindly indicate the importance the Polytechnic administration attaches to the following conflict prevention strategies. Please tick [√] one of the following responses:

Very Often

Often

Sometimes

Never

	Very often 4	Often 3	Sometimes 2	Never 1
17. The Administration makes use of the committee system				
18. The Administration implements decisions taken by the committees				
19. The Administration ensures free flow of information				
20. The Administration ensures that roles are well defined				
21. The Administration provides adequate resources				
22. The Administration is fair in its dealings with all departments				

Others. (Please list other preventive strategies employed by the Administration).

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

132

SECTION E

Conflict Management Mechanisms

On a scale of descending order 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest, kindly indicate how the Polytechnic Administration employs the under listed approaches in conflict management. Please show your response by ticking (√) one of the following:

Very Often, Often, Sometimes, Never	Very often, 4	Often 3	Someties 2	Never 1
23. Relying on formal authority to ensure compliance.				
24. People forgetting with time.				
25. Adopting a 'Let us wait and see' attitude.				
26. Making the other yield from fear or by use of threats.				
27. Identifying the source of the conflict				
28. One party neglecting its own concern to satisfy the concern of the other party				
29. Involving a third person rather than dealing directly with the				

133

conflicting parties.

30.   Disputing parties agreeing to accept the

decision of a neutral arbiter.

SECTION F

31. (i) Do you experience conflicts with regards to staff promotion procedure?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

(ii) If yes, how has the Polytechnic administration been handling them?

………..

....

……………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) What are the effects when such conflicts are not managed?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

(iv) If no, what accounts for the apparent stability?..

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

32 (i) Do you experience conflicts with regards to staff development system?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

(ii) If yes, how has the Polytechnic administration been handling them?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

135

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) What are the effects when such conflicts are not managed?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

(iv) If no what is the reason for the absence of conflict with regards to staff

development?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

33 (i) Do you experience conflicts with regards to staff housing?   Yes [   ]

No [ ]

(ii) If yes, how has the Polytechnic administration been handling them?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) What are the effects when such conflicts are not managed?

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

(iv)If no what explains the absence of conflict?....................

....

…………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION

OF CAPE COAST POLYTECHNIC

This interview guide serves as a follow up to the questionnaire on conflict management practices in the administration of Cape Coast Polytechnic. It is purely for academic purpose and you are assured of confidentiality.

Biographic Data

Sex   1(a) Male [   ]   2(b) Female [   ]

3. Position in the Polytechnic

3a. Rector   [   ]

3b. Vice Rector   [   ]

3d. Deputy Registrar   [   ]

3e. Assistant Registrar   [   ]

3f. Dean   [   ]

3g. Vice Dean   [   ]

3h. Head of Department   [   ]

4. In an institution like Cape Coast Polytechnic conflict is bound to happen, what do you think are some of causes of conflict?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

138

5. What are the positive effects of conflict in the administration of the   Cape Coast Polytechnic?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

6. What are the negative effects of conflict in the administration of the Cape Coast Polytechnic?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

7. In what situation(s) does the Polytechnic administration experience interpersonal conflict?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

8. In what circumstances does the Polytechnic administration experience intergroup conflict?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

9. (1) Do you experience conflict with regards to staff promotion procedure?

Yes [   ]   No [ ]

(ii) If yes, how was the recent one handled?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

(iv) If no what are the reasons for the stable environment. What have been done

right?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) If not resolved, what has been the effect?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………..

10 (1) Do you experience conflict with regards to staff development system?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]

(ii) If yes, how was the recent one handled?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) If no what are the reasons for the stable environment. What have been done right?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(iv) If not resolved, what has been the effect?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

11. (1) Do you experience conflict with regards to staff Housing?

 Yes [ ]   No [ ]

(ii) If yes, how was the recent one handled?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(iv) If not resolved, what has been the effect?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) If no what explains the absence of conflict with regard to staff housing?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

141

12. Please comment on how the Polytechnic goes about the following:

(i) Sharing of courses and periods

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(ii) Allocation of funds to the various departments/units

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

13. What are your views about the following in the administration of the

Polytechnic? In each case, kindly give reason(s) and example(s):

(i) The use of the committee system

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

(ii)Delegation of authority

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

142

(iii)Communication flow

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

(iv) Job descriptions

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Kindly comment on the following:

(i)Members of staff are treated fairly

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

(ii)Members of staff have trust for each other

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………...

....

15. a} Within the last six months, has there been any conflict among the senior members/ senior staff of the Polytechnic Administration? Yes ( )   No ( )

(b) If yes what caused the conflict?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

(c) If no what account for the absence of conflict between them?

143

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

16) i. Has there been any conflict between the Polytechnic Administration and the students, between Academic staff and students, between the Administrative staff and Academic staff? Yes ( )   No ( )

ii) If yes, what caused the conflict?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) How was the conflict managed?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

(iv) if no, what is the reason for the absence of conflict?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

17. (i) Do you consider the conflict management mechanism employed as appropriate?

     Yes ( )   No ( )

(ii)If yes, please give reasons for your response?

144

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

(iii) If no, what could have been done differently?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your assistance.

145