UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

OF HEADS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE KWAHU NORTH

DISTRICT OF GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature:..Date..10./.06./2009

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Supervisor's Declaration

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

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ABSTRACT

Competitions, misunderstandings and mistrust are likely to occur when people meet as a group which could ultimately result in conflict. Since in the school which is a miniature society, people meet as a group, conflict is likely to occur. In this regard, the researcher sought to examine the extent to which headmasters' management behaviours in conflict management contribute to or reduce conflict in Junior High Schools in Kwahu North District.

The population for the study comprises teachers in the 42 Junior High Schools in the district, numbering 151. The sample size is 100, comprising 86 males and 14 females. The instruments used were questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire was pre-tested at St. Michael Junior High School. The revised questionnaire was used for the target population and the responses were analysed using frequencies and percentages.

The study identified the following as some of the possible causes of conflict in the schools: (i) lack of flow of communication, (ii) competition among teachers (iii) dependence on one party by the heads. Lateral conflict was identified to be more common than subordinate conflict. There was low level of conflict occurrence in the schools. Some preventive techniques used by heads were staff meeting and team work. Compromise and arbitration were adopted by heads in conflict resolution.

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are made: that heads should increase the rate at which they organise staff meetings in order to uproot conflicts before they occur. The use of compromise and arbitration should be maintained in order to lower the level of conflict occurrence in the schools in the district.

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To crown it all, I am extremely grateful to my dear wife, Mary and my son Kirpal for their financial and moral support.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother, Elizabeth Asantewaa.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Conflict is as old as mankind. The school, which is a miniature society, comprises people. Agyemang (1986) observes that the school is a unit of interacting personalities who are bound together in an organised relationship to one another for the purpose of giving and receiving instructions based on specific curricula. In short, we talk of a school wherever and whenever educators and educands - teachers and learners - meet for the purpose of giving and receiving education based on formally laid-down rules and regulations. Competitions, misunderstandings and mistrust are likely to occur when people meet as a group, which could ultimately result in conflict. Conflict, has been defined in various ways by some scholars.

Deutsch (1973) postulates that conflict comes about whenever an action by one person or group prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures, or in some way makes less likely the desired action of another person or group. Kriesburg (1973) also defines conflict as a relationship between two or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals. Deducing from the above definitions it can be ascertained that conflict can be seen as behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of some other people's goals. Conflict is based on the

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incompatibility of goals and it arises from opposing behaviours. It can be viewed at the individual, group or organisation levels. This is so because, when people from different background are brought together it provides fertile breeding grounds for conflict of different kinds. Differences between peoples' ideas, job specialities, personalities, and group affiliation are likely to bring about conflict of one kind or another.

In the school situation, conflict may show up between pupil and pupil, pupil and teacher, pupil and headmaster, teacher and teacher, and teacher and headmaster. Conflict among pupils may be centred on bullying, pilfering, insulting, to mention but a few. Teacher and pupil conflict may arise when a pupil feels he or she is unduly punished by a teacher. Teacher and teacher conflict may be caused through gossiping, lukewarm attitude towards work and many more. Conflict between teacher and headmaster may arise due to poor administration on the part of the headmaster. For example, teachers who are very objective, vocal and critical of the way the headmaster administers the school are in most cases black listed by the headmaster. The head may critically but positively examine the views of any such a vocal, objective and critical subordinate, as observed by Deutsch (1973), this may lead to undue confrontations among opposing groups which may develop into conflict among the staff. These unfortunate situations are bound to surface in the school which is a miniature society. The reason is that no two individuals are the same, even Siamese twins are identical but not the same. Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) observe that individuals behave differently from one another because of

the individuals' socio–cultural background, likes and dislikes, attitudes, aspirations, emotions, dispositions and intellectual dimensions.

For instance, the Kwahu North District (Afram Plains) where this study was conducted is a typical example of heterogeneous society. The people are settler-farmers who have migrated from all parts of the country to farm and do fishing in the Afram, Obosom and the Volta lakes. (Refer to Appendix E for the sketch map of Kwahu North-Afram Plains). The societies are composed of Ewes, Frafras, Krobos, Kraches, Ashantis, Bonos, Fantes, Gas and the Kwahus, who own different parts of the land.

Most of the teachers teaching in schools in the district were recruited from the district. Since the district comprises people from tribes such as Ewes, Kwahus, Frafras, the teachers recruited have different socio-cultural backgrounds. Occasionally, the district directorate is faced with the challenge of solving conflict-related problems. In some instances, some heads were accused by their teachers of being autocratic and not respecting their views. In such situations teachers would be dispirited and may not put in their best. They would feel the heads do not involve them in the decision making process. This, in turn, would negatively affect their output of work. The child who is the pivot of education suffers. When conflicts disrupt school activities they can be harmful. Some examples are that some people may feel they are defeated and demeaned, the distance between people increases, and a climate of mistrust and suspicion develop. At this stage the administration of the school becomes difficult.

According to Robbins (1983) conflict, however, could have some good aspects or positive outcomes. Some of these are that during conflict situations better ideas are sometimes produced. People are forced to search for new approaches. Long- standing problems are brought to the surface and resolved. The question then is, why is it that some schools in the district have better ethos while others are battling with conflicting situations? How do heads manage these situations when they arise?

Statement of the Problem

Theory has it that the way conflict is managed determines whether its outcome will be functional or dysfunctional. This study, therefore, seeks to find out of how headmasters handle these unavoidable conflicts in order to bring about success rather than dysfunction in their schools. In other words, do headmasters have the acumen to handle conflicts effectively in their schools so as to minimise tensions associated with them and bring about efficiency and high productivity? The research is focused on examining these issues in the Kwahu North District (Afram Plains).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine how headmasters of Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District effectively manage conflicts, which are inevitable, in their schools in order to reduce tensions associated with them and bring about efficiency and high productivity. Specifically the study tries to find out:

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(a)The major causes of conflicts in Junior High Schools in the District.

(b)The commonest type of conflict that occurs in the Junior High Schools the District.

(c)Conflict prevention techniques used by heads in the schools.

(d)The conflict resolution approaches adopted by the headmasters and

(e)The management behaviours employed by the heads and their effects on conflict occurrences in the Junior High Schools in the district.

Research Questions

To delve into conflict management behaviours of a group of people is a broad assignment. This will take a long period and more resources are to be employed if one wants to look at all aspects involved. The following research questions are formulated to guide the direction of the study.

1. What are the major causes of conflict in Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District.

2. What is the commonest type of conflict that occurs in Junior High Schools in the district?

3. What conflict prevention techniques are applied by heads of Junior High Schools in the district to curb conflicting situations?

4. How do the headmasters in the Junior High Schools in Kwahu North District resolves conflict in their schools when they occur?

5. How do conflict management behaviours portrayed by headmasters of

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Junior High Schools in the district check conflict occurrence in the schools?

Significance of the Study

The educational significance of the study cannot be over-emphasized. It is targeted at identifying, analysing and assessing types, causes, prevention techniques and resolution techniques of conflicts in Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District (Afram Plains). In view of the above, it is expected that this study could aid headmasters in the district to be aware of conflicting situations in the schools. As a result, the needed precautions could be taken by them to minimise conflicts in their schools. The positive and negative effects of conflicts in the schools would be exposed to the headmasters, thus making the heads well equipped with the management of such situations.

Headmasters would be in touch with effective conflict management techniques. As administrations, they would be armed with the various techniques, this in turn would prepare the grounds for them, with confidence and they would be able to face any conflict situation at the work place. A copy of the study will be available at the District Education Office for heads to have easy access to it. Consequently, it may trigger others to research into other areas not covered by the study.

Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the behaviours portrayed by headmasters of Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District (Afram Plains) in the management of conflicts in their schools and the aspects of conflict

management studied.   The research is centred on how headmasters manage destructive conflicts in their various schools. Consequently, the findings are applicable to the Kwahu North District (Afram Plains). However, other districts which have similar characteristics as do the Kwahu North (Afram Plains) may adapt the findings of the study to solve any related educational problems in the district.

Limitation of the Study

The aim of the study is to gauge teachers' perception of how their headmasters manage conflicts in their schools when they occur. It would have been helpful if many teachers, at least four in each school, could have been sampled. However, out of the 42 schools, 24 schools had only two teachers in the schools to asses their heads. Four schools had only one teacher each to do the same assignment. As the teachers were two in some of the schools most of them had divided views on the same question asked. For example, a teacher in a school would agree that the headmaster organises regular staff meeting. In the same school, the other teacher would respond that the head does not organise regular staff meeting. This situation brought about a problem of fishing out whose response was to be accepted. This phenomenon occurred so many times that the true situation on the ground was difficult to be identified. In the schools with one teacher, the personal hatred or affiliation for the headmaster had a halo effect on the response to the questionnaire, thus affecting the reliability of the outcome.

Owing to the Ghana Education Service on-going exercise of fishing out non-performing heads and teachers, some of the respondents refused to provide

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useful information for the fear that the district directorate would sanction non-performing heads if the right information was provided. No matter how the researcher tried to explain himself, there were still a few teachers who thought the exercise was a device by the authorities to weed out non-performing headmasters. The inability on the part of some of the respondents to provide accurate information makes the study limited in its reliability.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in the study as follows:

(i)   Subordinates: This refers to the teaching staff or teachers apart from the headmaster.

(ii)   Staff: This means teachers excluding the headmaster.

(iii) Super-ordinates: This refers to the headmasters.

(iv)   Manager: This implies the headmasters.

(v)   Administrator: As used in the study, it refers to the headmasters.

Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction to the study. It states the various ways in which the study is organised. It includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, delimitation, limitation, operational definitions of terms and organisation of the study. Chapter two deals with literature review. The review covers such aspects as definition of conflict, types of conflict, causes of conflict, conflict management, studies on conflict management and summary. Chapter three treats research methodology, describing

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the research design, the population, the sample and sampling techniques, instruments, pre-testing of instruments, administration of instruments, and data analysis plan. Chapter four deals with findings, summary of findings and follow-up interview. Chapter five provides a summary of the study and its findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations made by the researcher to headmasters of Junior High Schools in Kwahu North District. It concludes with suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conflict is a natural, vital part of life. When conflict is understood, it can become an opportunity to learn and create congenial atmosphere for co-existence. However, when conflict is not properly handled, it may lead to people distancing themselves from one another, and ultimately disintegrating the group or the institution. Many scholars have studied this important aspect of man's life. As a result, there is a good amount of literature dealing with the subject. In this chapter, some of the important and related literature is reviewed to support the theoretical framework of the study. Under the following sub-headings, the review of literature is captured:

(1)   Definition of conflict.

(2)   Types of conflict.

(3)   Causes of conflict.

(4)   Conflict management.

(5)   Studies on conflict management.

(6)   Summary

Definition of Conflict

Coser (1956) defines conflict as 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 value but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their

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rivals. Gomda (Daily Guide, October 9, 2003) states that conflict may be defined as when there is an air of immutability about certain positions. According to Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf, (1994) conflict may occur, for example, when two individuals in a relationship have different ideas about how to belong to or because one is more concerned with building the relationship and the other with maintaining a sense of freedom. Bodine *et al* (1994) define conflict as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive themselves as having incompatible goals, view resources as being scare and regard each other as interfering with the achievement of their own goals; a controversy or disagreement; coming into opposition with another individual or group.

As stated by Nebgen (1978), conflict is any condition in which two or more parties are incompatible. Kriesburg (1973) is of the view that conflict is a relationship between two or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals. As Robbins (1983) notes, certain commonalities among most conflict definitions are the concepts of opposition, scarcity and blockage. He further explains that there is also a belief that there are two or more parties whose interests or goals appear to be incompatible. Deutsch (1973) states further that conflict occurs whenever an action by one person or group of people prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures or in some way, minimizes the wishes of another person or group.

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Types of Conflicts

Many scholars of conflict management have classified conflicts into different types. Deutsch observes that another notable distinction among conflicts is that between destructive and constructive conflicts. He argues that at the extremes, these terms are not easy to define. He affirms that a conflict has destructive consequences if those involved are dissatisfied with the outcomes and feel they have lost as a result of conflict. He maintains further that a conflict has productive consequences if the participants are all satisfied with their outcomes and feel they have succeeded as a result of the conflict.

Bailey (1971) projects three types of conflict situation. These according to him are as follows: super-ordinate, subordinate and lateral conflict. In his opinion, super-ordinate conflict is between the administrator and a person or group which has authority over him (the administrator). Subordinate conflict is between the administrator and a person or group over which he has authority or responsibility. On the other hand, Bailey saw Lateral conflict as between persons or group who have equal authority.

Robbins (1983) portrays that some conflicts facilitate goals of the group and improve its performance. He believes that these are functional and constrictive form of conflict. In addition, he observed that some conflicts hinder or militate against group performance, these according to him, are dysfunctional or destructive forms. Newhouse and Neely (1993) agree that traditionalist view takes the position that conflict is bad and that it destroys morale, and polarizes groups and individuals. Their view is that this type of opinion maintains that

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conflict produces irresponsible behaviour, creates suspicion, distrust and decreases productivity. Interactionist advocates that conflict can be creative and healthy if kept at optimal level. To expatiate on the topic, they note that this viewpoint credits conflicts with the following: It develops clarification of an issue, increases involvement, allows for growth, strengthens relationship when creatively resolved and can increase productivity.

Causes of Conflict

Scholars have maintained that for any administrator or head of an institution to manage conflict successfully, that administrator should be able to get an inkling of the origin of the conflict. Consequently, the views of some scholars on the causes of conflict are captured in this section.

As noted by Deutsch (1973), conflict arises around one or more of several issues. He moves on to project five basic issues. These are control over resources, values, preferences and nuisances, beliefs and the nature of the relationship between the parties. Firstly, in the opinion of Deutsch, the resources can be listed as money, power, space, food, property, prestige and what have you. He sees these as non-sharable. When two or more parties have monopoly of the use of these resources or a given part of it conflict is likely to erupt between them. Secondly, he is of the view that one person may share the opinion that a government of individual liberty or capitalist system of governance is preferable to a government of social justices. Another person's view may be the direct opposite. Conflict, according to Deutsch, may not arise as a result of the differences in values, but rather the claim that one should dominate or be applied

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generally, by those who hold different values. Thirdly, as suggested by Deutsch most conflicts arise because the tastes or activities of one person or group act negatively on another's sensitivities, preference or sensibilities. Fourthly, he projects that many conflicts are over fact "what is", information, knowledge or belief about reality. When one party or both parties insist that his or her belief should supersede and be accepted by all means by the other, conflict shows its head. It is not therefore, the difference in belief but the insistence or dominance by the other group or person. Fifthly, in the view of Deutsch, two people may be in conflict as a result of opposing views and desires in their relationship. He stipulates that both may desire to be dominated or may want to be dominant; one may wish more "togetherness" than the other and what have you.

According to Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) conflict in almost every situation involves an attempt by the disputants to meet basic needs that if not fulfilled, cause the conflict to persist, even when an agreement is reached about the subject of the dispute. All individuals are motivated by needs. Glasser (1984) identifies four basic psychological needs that motivate behaviour:

(i)   Belonging: Fulfilled by loving, sharing and co-operating with others.

(ii)   Power: Fulfilled by achieving, accomplishing and being recognised and respected.

(iii)   Freedom: Fulfilled by making choices.

(iv)   Fun: Fulfilled by laughing and playing.

The problem-solving strategies of conflict resolution address needs and create opportunities for those needs to be satisfied. When individuals choose to

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continue the conflict no one's basic needs are fulfilled. Basic psychological needs are at the root of almost all conflict.

Newhouse and Neely (1993) in their study, noted that how questions about goals, interests, and the school are responded to determine to some extent the nature of the conflict which shall emerge. They observed that the root of the initial dispute may be antecedent conditions. They further suggested that these conditions may not cause the full-blown conflict but they may be powerful enough to start the process on its way. They listed a few of them as follows: conflicting interests, ambiguous roles, dependence on one party, communication barriers and unresolved prior conflicts. According to the writers, the absence of certain conditions can also cause conflict. They projected them as lack of trust, benefit, clarity, integrity and information.

Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) believes that conflict situation should not be perceived as a single event at the onset. It argues further that conflict does not simply erupt, but develop through stages. At each stage, certain factors contribute to the conflict. Potential conflicts come about by how individuals "see" one another. These perceptions determine whether conflict will occur. It notes that people's eventual behaviour is affected by the particular cause of the conflict, people's feelings and attitudes towards each other. As projected above, it concludes that based on the two stages, confrontation will occur, being either conflictive or problem – solving.

Fisher (1981) stipulates that every conflict that emerges has its own special character. He argues that conflict cannot be separated from the organisation, individuals and the unique circumstances in which the problem occurs. He establishes that there are major characteristics of organisation that facilitate conflict. Fisher suggests that having knowledge of these enhance our ability to identify conflict and note conditions that have potential for conflict. He emphasizes status and authority and win-lose situations as good example of causing conflict. Fisher is of the opinion that issues of status and authority take many forms. He states some of the very common ones are individual desire for autonomy and inconsistency between authority and prestige difference. He contends that individual desires for autonomy result to conflict in many directions. Fisher suggests that conflict may result around people's desire to have greater control over their assigned duties and take part in the decision making process. He argues further that if frustrated, the desire for autonomy can lead to active resistance. Fisher ends that conflict is most likely to occur when demands are made on a group by another whose status is seen as inferior. Fisher argues that sometimes people or groups have goals that cannot be achieved simultaneously. Where resources are scarce and limited, he projects that win-lose conflicts frequently occur.

Lindelow and Scott (1989) identify four main sources of conflict in the school set up: organisational structure, communication problems or gaps, human factors such as personality and limited resources. Lindelow and Scott argue that schools where the administrator encourages empowerment will experience more

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conflicts, even though not of higher proportion. They submit that as empowerment increases, disruptive conflict lessens. The fourth source of conflict according to Lindelow and Scott (1989) is competition over limited resources. For example, they point out that conflict results when teachers fail to access certain incentives packages they think they deserve or when, for example, a department fails to receive its allocation or equipment.

Nebgen (1978) is of the view that structural causes of conflict occur out of the variables in complex organisation, which are controllable by the executive within the organisation. Size of the organisation according to her has been found to correlate with amounts of conflict; the larger the school, the greater the number of conflicts and the higher the intensity. Projecting further, she states that lack of participation in decision-making process leads to an increase in conflict. Nebgen observes that conflict–promoting interactions involve provocation, competition and domination. She points out that in a competitive interaction each side is trying to obtain some thing that the other wants. She goes on to say that when interaction involves dominance, one group is attempting to control the behaviour of the other party.

Nebgen (1978) states that in provocation, intentional or unintentional harm is done to one person or group by another. She adds that conflict promoting interactions are experienced at all levels of interpersonal and inter-group relations and can create and maintain conflicts among individuals and groups within the school organisation. Poor communication is the most frequently identified cause of conflict in schools says Nebgen. Semantic differences or insufficient

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information can bring about communication gap according to her. She portrays that semantic obstacles occur when words mean different things to people; varying connotations can distort and obstruct communication. She contends that insufficient exchange of information also leads to communication problems. This comes about when each party in the conflict is not clear about the other's point of view which will be necessary for the clarification of the situation.

Robbins (1983) observes that semantic difficulties, insufficient exchange of information and noise in the communication channel are barriers to communication and likely antecedent condition of conflict. He projects that certain personality types for instance, individuals who are dogmatic, authoritarian and who demonstrate low esteem – lead to potential conflict. He observes that the most neglected variable in the study of social conflicts is differing value systems. Robbins notes that value differences, for example, are the best explanation of such different issues as prejudice, the award one is entitle to and disagreement over one's contribution to the group. Robbins in his view maintains that the larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the likelihood of conflict. When one member's gain is at the expense of another, according to Robbins, conflict may arise.

Hampton et al (1978) stipulate that people who are ambiguity in status, authority or beliefs seem more likely to find supremacy by vanquishing their real or imaginary foes. They hold the opinion that conflict sometimes occurs when an individual likes to satisfy security, affiliate or esteem needs in a group situation but the group wishes very high conformity or stressful behaviour. Hampton et al

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say such conflict my show up from an individual's attempt to project his or her own interests for instance, accumulating money by going contrary to the group norms on permissible production. They note that such deviation from the emergent rules will often result in collective retaliation on the unfortunate offender.

Nye (1973) is of the opinion that personality, role status, role satisfaction and differing goals can contribute to conflict. Thinking in the same line as Robbins, Nye notes that persons who are authoritarian and have low self-esteem are more likely to distort reality than others. He observes that such people tend to misinterpret the behaviour of others and set in motion conflict situation. He further observes that when people are not satisfied with, or can not achieve their status aspirations they can bring about increased conflict within schools. He ends by noting that conflicting goals of special interest groups are further causes of conflict.

Walton and Dutton (1969) postulate that if rewards stress the separate performance of each department, rather than their combined performance conflict increases. They argue that if different reward systems are established for two or more groups, and that one's gain is at the other's expense, conflict increases.

Conflict Management

Various approaches to conflict management have come to light in the past two decades. Just being aware of such techniques may not assist heads of schools but knowing their likely consequences in order to pick out the appropriate strategy for a given situation would be of immense help to the administrator.

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Conflict management involves the stimulation and control of constructive conflict as well as the prevention and resolution of destructive conflict as suggested by Wofford (1982). He points out that since constructive conflict is a positive force for innovation and change, the super-ordinate should stimulate it. He further more adds that if the intensity of a constructive conflict becomes too great, it becomes a negative force. Destructive conflict to Wofford, should be prevented if possible, but once it exists the manager should be responsible for its resolution. The management of destructive conflict involves two activities according to Wofford (1982). They are: prevention and resolution. He observes that the prevention of destructive conflict is the most desirable approach. He postulates that prevention checks both the conflict and the long-term effects that destructive conflict can have, even if it is resolved. Wofford postulates the following techniques: collaboration, bargaining, and third party as a way of resolving conflict. He concludes by suggesting that the manager, within the school context should resolved destructive conflict when it emerges.

Some techniques for the prevention of destructive conflicts have been projected by Wofford (1982). He identifies direct and indirect approaches in preventing conflict. With the direct approach he talks of integrating goals and expanding resources, while the indirect approach is the use of interpersonal styles. Wofford stipulates that establishing super-ordinate goals (i.e. goals for the overall organisation) can lessen incidence frequency of conflict over goals. He is of the opinion that there should be a true understanding and agreement as to how each unit's goal contributes to these broader ones. He argues that once the individuals

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become primarily concerned with the super-ordinate goals and secondly concerned with their unit's goals, the likelihood of destructive conflict drastically minimizes. Wofford goes on to suggest that the likely answer or solution to scarce resources is to expand the resources available. He stipulates that if the conflict is over salary increases, money for the supplies or uses of physical resources the budget or amount of resource, allocated can be increased. He agrees however that more often than not, such resources are not readily available. Conflict, according to Wofford can be prevented through effective communication. He says some of the most important approaches include communication styles that stress trust, openness, self-disclosure, feed back, listening and avoidance of defensiveness and threats. He postulates that collaboration involves a search for a mutually satisfying solution. He notes that the parties should do away with their win-lose approach and give way to problem-solving for a win-win situation. Bargaining according to him involves the search for compromise solutions that balance the gains and losses of each person.

Wofford (1982) contends that a neutral third person or party may be requested to assist in conflict resolution. He projects that to bring about openness, trust and mutual understanding a neutral third party may be employed to bring about a fair playing ground. A third party according to him may serve a consultation, mediation or arbitration role. He argues out that the consultation role involves helping the conflicting parties to resolve the conflict. Wofford agrees that the consultative third party has the following advantages:

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a. May help to break dead lock and to keep the discussion on course.

b. May bring about a reaction from one of the parties if true feelings or thoughts are being held back.

c. May help to cool tensions from becoming too high by temporarily turning away from areas of high threat until the parties are ready to handle them.

He adds that the mediator is different as compared to the arbitrator. The mediator does not impose a settlement while the arbitrator does. He points out further that the mediator offers alternatives and encourages the parties to adopt a given solution. On the other hand, the arbitrator serves the role of a judge, gathers important information, evaluates alternatives and comes out with a solution.

The techniques suggested by Robbins in resolving conflict are captured as: collaboration, accommodation, competition and avoidance. Robbins (1983) contends that when a party wishes to achieve its goals or further its interests regardless of the result on the party to the conflict, it competes and dominates. He argues that the formal authority of a mutual superior as the dominant force frequently utilize in the win-lose struggles. Each of the conflicting parties will use their own power bases in order to resolve a victory in their favour. Giving his opinion on the avoidance technique, Robbins (1983) postulates that a party may know that a conflict exists but react by withdrawing or suppressing the conflict. He contends that indifference or the desire to avoid overt demonstration of disagreement can result in withdrawal. He goes on to say that each party acknowledges physical separation and a distinct territory. He adds that if

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withdrawal is not possible or the best option, the parties may suppress, that is, withhold their differences. Furthermore, he mentions that when group members are asked to react because of the independence of their tasks, suppression is a more probable outcome than withdrawal.

Gorton and Snowden (1993) project similar views when they argue that an administrator can prevent much conflict by meeting regularly with personnel for the purpose of clarifying expectations and offering suggestions on how job performance might be improved. When the administrator attempts to prevent conflict and it fails, the best alternative is to resolve it. As a result, it is not out of way to review some of the possible techniques that the super-ordinate may consider for resolving conflicts.

Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) note that conflict arises from a discord of needs, drives, wishes, and or demands. Conflict in and of itself is not positive or negative. Rather, it is the response to conflict that transforms it into either a competitive, destructive experience or a constructive challenge offering the opportunity for growth. Since conflict is an inevitable part of life, learning how to respond to it constructively is essential. Constructive conflict resolution begins with developing and understanding of conflict and the principles of conflict resolution.

Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) are of the opinion that soft responses such as avoidance, accommodation and compromise usually occur between individuals who are friends or who want to be pleasant to each other because they will continue to have contact in the future. Individuals may attempt

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to avoid conflict altogether by withdrawing from the situation, ignoring it, or denying that the conflict even matters. Accommodation involves one disputant giving in to the position of the other without seeking to serve his or her interests. Disputants who compromise agree to something that does not really address the interests of either one in order to end the dispute, soft responses typically result in feelings of disillusionment, self-doubt, fear and anxiety about the future.

Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf on their part, contend that such techniques can be categorised into three basic groups

 a. Soft (avoidance, accommodation and compromise).

 b. Hard (force, threats, aggression and anger).

 c. Principled (Problem solvers – third party)

Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) identify hard responses to conflict as characterized by confrontations that involve force, threats, aggre sion and anger. Hard negotiators demand concessions as a condition of the relationship and insist on their position. They often search for a single answer to the problem namely, the one the other side will give in to. Hard negotiators frequently apply pressure, trying to win a contest of wills. They use bribery and punishments such as withholding money, favours and affection. Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf further argue that hard responses are detrimental to cooperation and relationships and often result in hostility, physical damage and violence.

Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) note that principled responses occur between individuals who view themselves as problem solvers and whose goal is a wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably. They contend that

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principled negotiators understand that communication is fundamental to cooperative interaction and they understand what it means to participate in developing a common understanding. They are skilled, active empathic listeners. Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf identify three approaches: negotiation, mediation and consensus. To them negotiation is a problem – solving process in which either the two parties in the dispute or their representatives meet face to face to work together unassisted to resolve dispute between the parties. Mediation according to them, is a problem – solving process in which the two parties in the dispute or their representatives meet face to face to work together to resolve the dispute assisted by a neutral third party called the "mediator." Furthermore, they explained consensus decision making as a group problem – solving process in which all of the parties in the dispute or representatives of each party collaborate to resolve the dispute by crafting a plan of action that all parties can and will support. This process may or may not be facilitated by a neutral party or a third party.

Approaches such as avoidance, use of force, rational and third party techniques are projected by Nebgen (1978) as means of resolving conflicts. Non-response or withdrawal, smoothing and bringing about a deadlock situation, says Nebgen, are some of the avoidance techniques for conflict resolution. According to her, the belief that "silence is golden" is behind the techniques of withdrawal or non-response. In order to avoid confronting the problem, she observes that the parties may avoid contact with each other altogether, or if meetings cannot be avoided, engage in polite and amusing remarks or evasions. Isolation, according

to her, prevents opposition, since there cannot be conflict between two groups who have nothing to do with each other. She observes that procrastination is a variation of the "silence is golden" principle; conflict adopt a "let's wait and see" stance. In smoothing, she says the conflict manager attempts to play down the differences and stresses the common interests of the groups. The emphasis here is limited only to those matters upon which the parties can agree. Her view is that all conversations should be positive but not negative things. Applying avoidance technique, in the view of Nebgen, can be a useful method for cooling off the parties or preventing disputes about important things. To her, it is not the best approach for achieving long-term solutions to serious basic issues that divide contending parties. Conflict resolution techniques which involve the use of force as observed by Nebgen (1978) include coercion, domination and imposition. Implied in the use of force is the assumption that one party is in super-ordinate position to the other, she postulates. In coercion, observes Nebgen, one party tries to make the other yield from feared or actual injury by the use of implied or explicit force. She goes on to project that domination is the action by one party to settle conflict without consultation with the other. She notes that with imposition, a win-lose situation occurs. Here the participants are antagonists, arguing from absolutely fixed positions. The stronger party settles the matter by forcing a solution.

The rational approaches to conflict management are compromise, or bargaining, persuasion and problem solving or confrontation, contends Nebgen (1978). She views compromise as a process of give and take. In the compromise

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technique according to her, is a search for an intermediate position – a splitting of differences between the two groups. She argues that no one loses or wins in a compromise situation. She projects that in persuasion one or both parties try to convince the other side to accept the goals it desires not out of fear or in return for reward but because of its own interests and values. Nebgen notes further that the technique of problem – solving on the assumption that the two parties involved in the conflict have the capacity to resolve the problem or obstacle and arrive at a better solution through collaboration. She contends there is open flow of information concerning the problem at stake from each side. A workable plan is adopted to arrive at mutually beneficial solution, which is acceptable by all. Nebgen (1978) on her part contends that arbitration and mediation are common uses of the third party intervention in conflict resolution. She argues that the technique is centred on the facilitative and diagnostic actions of an impartial third party in assisting antagonists comprehend and constructively deal with the negative aspects of their conflict. Nebgen says that conflict is generally between the super-ordinate and the subordinate, often over rewards given out by the super-ordinate. In arbitration, disputants explain and support their claims before an impartial third party. These parties may agree in advance that the outcome of the arbitration will be binding, postulates Nebgen. She contends that when conflict is caused by structural factors such as rewards and power, which are within the organization's ability to change, the third party is generally effective. She adds further that, as the mediator can help project each group's position, conflicts

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caused by communication problems are often acceptable to management when third party approach is adopted.

Kriesburg (1973) suggests that the use of force may only serve to mark the end of one conflict and the beginning of another. However, it is the quickest and neatest method of conflict management since it results in clear victors and vanquished. He argues that the chances of reaching an agreement and acceptance will be enhanced if the parties feel that the third is legitimate and they have selected him.

Fisher (1981) postulates that forcing is needed during emergencies at times, when unpopular courses of action need to be taken. In a situation where the parties are in adversary relationship to each other and totally opposed that no other approach is possible. He observes that one major drawback is a situation where the person who is the most powerful and is to take the decision may not be the most competent. Fisher further observes that bitterness in the loosing party should not be overruled.

Research conducted by French (1964) indicates that coercion decreases cooperation and increases resistance. He projects that reactions to coercion were weaker when the power held by the imposing party was viewed as legitimate.

Studies on Conflict Management

Findings of research conducted by a group of writers are presented to close the literature review. Griffin (1987) conducted a research on the levels of conflict resolution behaviour and commitment to the organisation: a study of Principal and Teacher perceptions within the high schools of Pennsylvania. The

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research depicts that clear relationships existed between attributed conflict handling behaviour, level of conflict and organizational commitment. The study establishes that if principals wish to sustain a positive climate and increase productivity within the organisation, they should understand differences among teachers in their views of conflicts, rewards and the use of co-operative conflict resolution strategies as opposed to unco-operative strategies. The study concludes that problem solving, compromising and smoothing can be identified as one co-operative group of conflict handling technique. The other group is uncooperative conflict-handling technique made up of the use of force and withdrawal.

Mosser's (1987) study was on principal – teacher perception of conflict and commitment in the elementary schools in Pennsylvania. As portrayed by Mosser's study, there exists a significant negative relationship between the perception of conflict and the attribution of problem-solving behaviour.

A study carried out by Hoover (1990) on the relationships among perception of principals' conflict management behaviours, levels of conflict and organizational climate in High School needs to be considered. The study projects that principals who frequently use problem-solving, accommodation and compromise techniques in their administration had lower level of conflicts. On the other hand, principals who rely on the use of force and avoidance strategies have higher levels of conflict in their schools.

Summary

The literature reviewed is summarised below:

Conflict occurs when two interdependent parties see themselves as having incompatible goals and each other interfering with the achievement of the goals. Such a view is shared by Kriesburg (1973), Nebgen (1978) and Bodine et al (1994). Some classifications of conflict have been identified in the literature review by such writers as Bailey (1971) and Robbins (1983). They are: constructive or destructive conflict, functional or dysfunctional conflict and subordinate, super-ordinate or lateral conflict. Conflict as observed in the review can be caused by human factors, communication barriers, and conflict–promoting interactions or structural factors. Writers like Lindelow and Scott (1989) and Nebgen (1978) raise this issue.

Wofford (1982), Robbins (1983) and Nebgen (1978) agree that the super-ordinate can manage conflict through the use of stimulation and control of constructive conflict and the prevention and resolution of destructive conflict. The use of prevention technique, according to Wofford, Robbins and Nebgen in destructive conflict can assist the manager to resolve concerns before they generate into obstacles. The prevention technique includes the expansion of resources, integration of goals, and the use of interpersonal styles which stress openness, listening, trust and the avoidance of threats. Conflicts need to be resolved when they emerge. The views of Wofford, Robbins and Nebgen indicate that the manager can use one of the following techniques: the use of force, a third party intervention, avoidance and rational approaches. Employing the use of force, the super-ordinate may adopt domination, imposition or coercion. A third party may be engaged by the manger to resolve a problem. With the third party a

neutral impartial person is engaged to intervene in resolving the conflict. He may play a consultation, mediation or arbitration role.   In avoidance technique, the super-ordinate may withdraw or wait for the dust to settle on its own, or smooth over differences.

Furthermore, Wofford, Robbins and Nebgen contend that the manager can use rational approaches such as persuasion, collaboration and compromise to resolve conflicts when they arise. To conclude, all the researchers of the studies on conflict management as captured in the literature review including Griffin (1987), Mosser (1987) and Hoover (1990) are of the opinion that heads or managers who employ co-operative conflict resolution strategies are likely to have lower level of conflict in their schools or institutions or other organisations than those who use the uncooperative techniques

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology used in conducting the research. It describes the research design, population, the sample, sampling technique, instruments used to collect the data, pre-testing of the instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis plan.

Research Design

The study was a descriptive survey. The aim was to be able to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences could be obtained about some attitudes, characteristics, or behaviours of the population. A cross-sectional survey was adopted. Thus, the survey information was collected at one point in time. It relied on personal contact with those persons whose characteristic behaviours or attitudes were relevant to the specific investigation. The survey technique was used because the needed information could be obtained easily and without much cost. By the use of descriptive survey, the information required could be obtained within the same period of time through the use of questionnaire and interview guide.

The descriptive survey was used because its use entails a number of strengths in research work. These include the following:

(i)   It involves the use of questionnaire which promises a wider coverage since researchers can approach respondents more easily.

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(ii)   Questionnaire is less expensive than other methods. It can be sent

through the mail with less cost.

(iii)   Questions are stable, consistent and of uniform measure without

variation.

They can be completed at the respondent's convenience and offer greater

assurance of anonymity. Osuala (1982) states that the descriptive research reveals

a picture of a situation or population and generally begins with the full

understanding of the phenomenon.

In adopting the descriptive survey method as a research design, we should

ward against some of the weaknesses which this method entails, such as the

following:

(i).   Questionnaire as a tool for data collection cannot be administered to

illiterates and people who are too young to be able to read and write.

In this study, the respondents were all trained teachers who had no

problem with reading to understand the content and importance of the

research work. This background of the respondents in no small way

helped in checking the problems identified.

(ii).   The use of questionnaire does not offer opportunities for motivating the

respondent to participate in the survey or to answer the questions. To

be able to retrieve the questionnaire, series of meetings were held with

the respondents and the reason for the research work was explained to

them. This approach immensely helped to contribute to the low level

of non-response on the part of respondents.

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(iii). The characteristics of non-response associated with questionnaire, especially mail-questionnaire, is likely to affect the representativeness of the sample. This may result in biased final sample. To try and reduce this problem, ample time was given to respondents to fill the questionnaire. Reminders were also given to the respondents about a week to the submission date.

(iv). Osuala (1982) projects that questionnaires do not provide an opportunity to collect additional information through observation, probing, prompting and clarification of questions while they are being completed. In solving the above problem, interview guide was used to fish out more information from the respondents.

Population

The Kwahu North (Afram Plains) District which is one of the 17 districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana was selected for the study owing to the fact that the researcher works in the district and is conversant with the terrain of the area (Refer to Appendix E for a topographic map of Afram Plains). According to the provisional figures from the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the Afram Plains had a population of 143,950—the male population being 76,398 (53%) and the female 67,552 (47%). Currently, there are 138 primary schools, 42 Junior High Schools, one Senior High School, one Technical School and one Private Vocational School in the district. The population constituted all the teachers in the 42 Junior High Schools, numbering 151. The researcher concentrated on the teachers excluding the headmasters because, the teachers' perception of how the

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heads manage conflicts was being studied. Thus, the main respondents were the classroom teachers.

The Sample

The sample had respondents from all the 42 Junior High Schools in the district. The schools were given coded numbers and in the write–up, these codes were used to refer to the schools (refer to Appendix A for the schools and their code numbers). Since the schools did not have the same number of teachers, selection of the teachers was not even. In some cases only one teacher was selected from a school since there were only two teachers in the school. In other schools the number of teachers selected could be 2, 3, 4, or even 5, depending on the teacher population of the school. Table 1 shows the number of teachers selected from each school and the total sample size. In all, 100 teachers, made up of 86 males and 14 females were selected from among 151 teachers in the schools to form the sample.

Table 1

Teacher Population of the Schools and Sample Size

| S/N | School | Population | | | Sample | | |
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	JA	3	-	3	2	-	2
2	JB	3	3	6	2	3	5
3	JC	4	-	4	3	-	3
4	JD	4	-	4	3	-	3
5	JE	4	1	5	2	1	3

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Table 1 continued

S/N	School	Population			Sample		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
6	JF	4	-	4	2	-	2
7	JG	3	-	3	2	-	2
8	JH	5	-	5	3	-	3
9	JI	3	1	4	2	1	3
10	JJ	3	1	4	2	1	3
11	JK	4	-	4	2	-	2
12	JL	3	-	3	2	-	2
13	JM	3	1	4	2	1	3
14	JN	5	-	5	3	-	3
15	JO	3	-	3	2	-	2
16	JP	2	-	2	1	-	1
17	JQ	4	-	4	2	-	2
18	JR	4	-	4	2	-	2
19	JS	6	-	6	4	-	4
20	JT	1	2	3	1	2	3
21	JU	3	-	3	2	-	2
22	JV	3	1	4	2	1	3
23	JW	2	-	2	1	-	1
24	JX	4	-	4	3	-	3

Table 1 continued

SN	School	Population			Sample		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
25	JY	2	1	3	1	1	2
26	IZ	3	-	3	2	-	2
27	JAA	6	2	8	3	2	5
28	BB	3	-	3	2	-	2
29	CC	3	-	3	2	-	2
30	DD	3	-	3	2	-	2
31	EE	3	-	3	2	-	2
32	FF	3	-	3	2	-	2
33	GG	3	-	3	2	-	2
34	HH	3	-	3	2	-	2
35	II	3	-	3	2	-	2
36	JJ	3	-	3	2	-	2
37	KK	3	-	3	2	-	2
38	LL	3	-	3	2	-	2
39	MM	2	-	2	2	-	2
40	NN	2	-	2	1	-	2
41	OO	3	-	3	2	-	2
42	PP	3	2	4	2	-	2
	Total	137	14	151	86	14	101

Sampling Technique

One hundred teachers were selected to form the sample. Out of this were 14 female teachers teaching in the Junior High Schools in the district. In view of their small number, which represents 14% of the sample size of 100, they were all selected for the study. Thus, the female teachers were purposively selected. The remaining 86 members of the sample were chosen from the male teachers. The simple random sampling method was used to select the male teachers for the study. In the simple random method, the lottery technique was used. Here, the required number needed to form the sample size for each school with male teachers was labelled on pieces of papers. The pieces of paper were put into a box and reshuffled. A teacher was asked to select the pieces of paper without looking into the container or box, one after another, until the required sample size was obtained. Individuals in the sample had equal probability of being selected.

Instruments for the Study

Questionnaire and interview guide were used to retrieve information for the study. Data were collected by means of questionnaire containing 18 items. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were administered to the teachers. The closed-ended questions required the respondents to give restrictive answers, which fell within the scope of the project for which the researcher was investigating. The open-ended questions, however, sought to give more room for self-expression. Thus it captured respondents' views on a phenomenon. The instrument was developed after a thorough review of the literature reviewed

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which ascribed the likely perception of teachers to the heads' behaviour towards conflict management.

It was a self-designed instrument made up of four parts, namely sections A, B, C and D. Section A dealt with the basic background information of the respondents. Section B sought to find out the existence of conflict in the schools. Section C was purported to find out conflict prevention techniques employed by the heads and Section D projected conflict resolution techniques used by the headmasters when conflict occurred.

There was the need to use an interview guide after examining the questionnaire. This was to fish out some relevant information that would be possibly left out by respondents who might refuse to put them into writing. The interview guide was therefore used to confirm or otherwise the information from the respondents. Cannel and Kahn (1966) note that interview schedule and questionnaire appear as powerful instruments for social research, perceptions, attitudes and opinions which cannot be inferred by observation and are accessible through interviews and questionnaire.

Pre-Testing of Instrument

The questionnaire was pre-tested at St. Michael Junior High School at Donkorkrom. Its purpose was to establish the face validity of the questionnaire and improve the questions format and scales. St. Michael Junior High School was selected because of proximity and the similar characteristics that exist between St. Michael Junior High School and the schools selected for the study. Ten teachers volunteered and responded to the questionnaire for the pre-test. Analyses of the

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pre-test revealed some weaknesses in the items in the draft questionnaire and were modified. Examples of such weaknesses were questions which were found misleading and not clearly understandable. Some of the questions were:

(i) "How is conflict resolved?" was changed to "How do Headmasters resolve conflicts in their schools when they occur?"

(ii) "Conflict caused by the flow of barriers to communication" was also re-stated as "conflict caused by lack of communication".

The draft questionnaire was revised. The revised questionnaire is given as Appendix B.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher collected an introductory letter (see Appendix D) from the District Director of Education, Kwahu North (Afram Plains) to enable him obtain permission to conduct the study. The researcher, with the assistance of a teacher, administered the questionnaire. The researcher initially paid visits to the schools to acquaint himself with the heads and the teachers in the various schools. During the period, he obtained permission from the heads of the schools selected for his research to call a meeting of the staff. At each meeting, he explained the purpose of the study to the staff and sought their co-operation. All the heads and teachers present embraced the idea and gave their unflinching support to the research work. Specific time was fixed for the meeting of respondents of each school. Copies of the questionnaire were given out to the respondents and an agreed date of three weeks was fixed for the final collection of the questionnaire by the volunteered teacher on behalf of the researcher. The researcher had to travel

several times in some cases to schools since some of the volunteers had travelled

to attend to other pressing issues. Out of the 100 copies of the questionnaire that

were collected by the researcher, two were rejected owing to errors and omission

in the responses. The total number of teachers for the study became 98, which

represented 98% return rate.

Data Analysis Plan

The study was a descriptive one. Qualitative and quantitative analysis

involving frequencies, percentages, means and modes were the tools used in the

analysis of the data. The scores of the various items in each section were tallied

and frequency distribution tables were drawn for the responses. Closely related

items such as "very often" and "often" under the five-point Likert scale presented

in the questionnaire were combined and labelled "often" as suggested by Best and

Khan (1995).

Questionnaire items 6-8 (Section B) were used in the analysis of Research

Question 1. While in the analysis of Research Question 2, questionnaire items 9-

10 (Section B) were employed. In answering Research Question 3, questionnaire

items 11-13 (Section C) were also applied. Furthermore, questionnaire items 14-

17 (Section D) were used to answer Research Question 4. Finally, Research

Question 5 was analysed through the use of questionnaire item 18 (Section D).

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents data collected from the field, analysis and discussion of the data. In this connection, data presentation and analysis are made on data supplied by teachers of Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District (Afram Plains). Relevant aspects analysed here include the personal data of respondents and the analysis of existence of inter-personal conflict, conflict prevention techniques and conflict resolution techniques.

Personal Data of Respondents

The personal data of respondents include the gender, age, professional qualifications, rank and position held in the schools. The bio-data of respondents were tracked through the use of questionnaire items 1 – 5 (Section A)

Gender of Respondents

There were 98 respondents made up of 84 males and 14 females. In Table 1 (see pages 35-37) the number of males selected was 86 but two of them had their questionnaires rejected owing to errors and omissions in their responses but all questionnaires from the 14 females were answered correctly with no errors or omissions.

Age of Respondents

It was necessary for the researcher to determine age distribution of the respondents. The investigation would enable the researcher know how youthful

or mature the respondents are in terms of age and the effect the age difference, if any, is likely to have on the respondents when they are faced with assisting their heads in managing conflicting situations in their schools. Table 2 shows the age distributions of respondents.

Table 2

Breakdown of Respondents in Terms of Age

Age	No.	%
Below forty	68	69.4
40 and above	30	30.6
Total	98	100

As shown in Table 2, 69.4% of the respondents fell bellow the age 40. They number 68, while 30. 6 % are above 40 years who number 30. This is an indication that most of the teachers are young. Personal interview with the respondents revealed that teachers do not spend longer years in the district because of the underserved or deprived nature of the area. They demand transfers within a period between two to five years. Most teachers posted there are the young ones, that is, the newly trained teachers from Teacher Training Colleges. Close to a third of the teachers, however, decide to continue to stay in the district. With such youthful age, if efforts are made to convince them to accept challenging situations, they are likely to manage conflict when it erupts. Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf (1994) observe that teaching the youth at an earlier age

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to know how to manage conflict is ideal thing to do. Those exposed to conflict management at an early age find it very easy to mange conflict when it occurs.

Professional Qualification of Respondents

Determination of the professional qualifications of the respondents was to assist the researcher find out the number of professional and non-professional teachers in the selected schools and how their background may affect conflict in the schools. The responses are portrayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Breakdown of Professional Qualification of Respondents

Status of Teachers	No	%
Professional Teachers	89	90.8
Non -Professional Teachers	9	9.2
Total	98	100

Table 3 shows that 90.8% of the respondents numbering 89 are professionals, while 9.2% are non-professionals. Their professionalism which entails exposure to the study of psychology, including social psychology, is likely to equip them with some amount of tolerable behaviour to withstand conflict situations. Such behaviour is likely to assist them manage the affairs of the schools with relative ease. The other non-professionals who have also acquired some experience on the job are also likely to withstand conflict situations when they occur. With this background, these two categories of teachers may be in the position to handle conflicting problems with less difficulty when they arise. The

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findings here support the view of Krisburg (1973) who says conflict occurs when two or more parties believe they have incompatible goals. Since the teachers are professionals and the non professionals have also acquired skills on the job, it is hoped that they all have a common goal, that is, the holistic development of the child in the classroom. Conflict should be of low occurrence with such professional objective.

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Rank of Respondents

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The researcher tried to find out the ranks of the respondents. This attempt would assist him to have inkling into how teachers in the Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North (Afram Plains) District employ their experience to assist management, that is, heads of their schools, in resolving conflict when they occur. The responses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Breakdown of Rank of Respondents

Ranks in the GES.	No	%
Teachers(no rank – minimum level)	38	38.8
Superintendent II	25	25.5
Superintendent I	13	13.3
Senior Superintendent II	2	2.0
Senior Superintendent I	14	14.3
Principal Superintendent	4	4.1
Assistant Directors	2	2.0
Total	98	100

As shown in Table 4, it could be stressed that majority of the respondents are below the rank of superintendent I. This comprises 63 teachers or 64.3% of the 98 teachers who responded to the questionnaire. The rest are captured between the ranks Superintendent I and Assistant Director. This explains that most of the teachers are young and it confirms the findings at Table 3 which shows that majority of the respondents (69.4%) are young, that is below 40 years. According to Deutseh (1973) conflicts are over facts, that is, information, knowledge, or belief about reality. If teachers are well informed and knowledgeable (60 teachers out of the 98 respondents are those with ranks) they may not misconstrue events. Such a situation may pave the way for low conflict occurrence in the schools in the district.

Position Held by Respondents in the Schools

The need to find out the positions held by respondents in the schools would assist the researcher to know whether the administration of the school lies in the hands of only one person. Such a situation, if it exists, may lead to closed administration with its concomitant "one man show". A situation of such nature may give room to conflict. The position held by respondents in the various schools is shown in Table 5.

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Table 5

Respondents' Positions in the Schools

Position	No.	%
Form master	46	47
Assistant Headmaster	22	22.4
Staff Secretary	10	10.2
Guidance & Counselling	2	2.0
No Post	18	18.4
Total	98	100

As indicated in Table 5, majority of the respondents, 81.6% of them, are holding positions in their schools. Only a few of them, 18.4% do not hold positions. Interview with the staff revealed that the heads use seniority, experience and interest in assigning positions to the staff. This is necessary since in every Junior High School, some teachers hold such positions to bring about smooth administration. The interview further revealed that conflict sometimes arises as a result of the heads interfering with the assigned duties of the teachers. Fisher (1981) projects that conflict may result when peoples' desire to have greater control over their assigned duties and take part in the decision-making process but they are denied the opportunity.

Causes of Conflict in the Schools

At this juncture, the researcher delved into the main issues of the study. That is, issues which attempt answering the Research Questions. In attempting to determine causes of conflicts in the schools, the researcher is making efforts to

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answer Research Question 1 which states "What are the major causes of conflict in Junior High Schools in the district?" Questionnaire items 6 – 8 (Section B) were used to solicit the required information. The investigation came out with a number of causes of conflict that is (i) Competition (ii) Dependence on one party whilst the other party is sidelined and (iii) Lack of flow of communication which are analysed and discussed below.

Existence of Conflict Caused by Competition

Investigating into the existence of conflict caused by competition formed a major aspect of the study. The researcher explored this aspect in order to determine the occurrence of such type of conflict and its effect on the administration of Junior High Schools in the district. This, as stated earlier, is an attempt to answer Research Question 1. Questionnaire item 6, Section B, was used to fish out the existence of that type of conflict in the schools. Table 6 presents the responses.

Table 6

Conflict Caused by Competition

Responses	No.	%
Rarely	12	12.2
Sometimes	23	23.5
Often	63	64.3
Total	98	100

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Table 6 shows that 63 respondents representing 64.3% of the 98 teachers who responded to the questionnaire agree that conflict caused by competition is common in their schools. Only 12.2% of the respondents agree that that type of conflict occurs rarely in their schools. This is a clear indication that teachers in the Junior High Schools in the district often compete among themselves which might breed uncalled-for conflicts. This situation does not augur well for good co-existence and higher academic output.

The researcher interviewed 60 selected teachers on the causes of conflict in their schools. Forty-five out of the 60 selected teachers for the follow–up interview were of the opinion that conflict caused by competition was common among teachers in their schools. The observation here confirms the views of Nebgen (1978) who stipulates that conflict-promoting interactions involve provocation, competition and domination. She points out that in a competitive interaction each side is trying to obtain something that the other wants. In the schools in the district such competition among teachers is observed to be common.

Conflict Caused by the Headmaster's Dependence on

One Party While the Other Party is Sidelined

To enable the researcher determine the extent to which the heads depend on one part while the other is sidelined, which could be a cause of conflict, a probe was undertaken by the researcher on the issue. Questionnaire item 7 (Section B) was used to obtain the needed information. Table 7 portrays the outcome.

Table 7

**Conflict Caused by the Headmaster's Dependence on
One Party while the Other Party is Sidelined**

Response	No.	%
Rarely	84	85.7
Sometimes	13	13.1
Often	1	1.0
Total	98	100

Table 7 portrays that conflict caused by the dependence on one party against another is not common in the schools in the district. It is only one respondent representing 1% out the 98 respondents agrees that conflict caused by the headmaster depending on one party against another is common in his school. On the whole, majority are of the view that, that type of conflict is rare in their schools. It can therefore be suggested that most of the conflicts that occur in the schools do not arise as a result of the head depending upon one party while the other is sidelined. Such observation shows unity of purpose. Thus, heads may use team work to curb conflicting situations. The 60 selected teachers for the follow-up interview also agreed that their heads do not normally sideline them. However, 10 teachers expressed that they are often sidelined by their heads. As observed by Newhouse and Neely (1993) in their study, conflict may erupt when there is dependency on one party. However, this is not the case in most of the schools in the district as indicated in Table 7.

Conflict Caused by Lack of Flow of Communication

Conflict caused by lack of flow of communication was investigated into to enable the researcher probe the extent to which break in communication would result in conflict in the schools in the district. Questionnaire item 8 (Section B) was used to access the needed outcome. The responses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Lack of Flow of Communication

Responses	No.	%
Rarely	65	66.3
Sometimes	20	20.4
Often	13	13.3
Total	98	100

Table 8 depicts conflict caused by lack of flow of communication. As shown in the table, information from heads to the staff is regular in most of the schools in the district. For example, only 13 respondents who represent 13.3% of the 98 teachers who responded to the questionnaire say that communication does not flow often in their schools. 66.3% say communication flow regularly in their schools. On the whole, information flow is good in the schools in the district. This is a healthy sign of good administration which, in turn, could reduce the prevalence of conflicts. This situation would lead to co-operation and weeism in the schools since information is made available at all times to the staff. For more information on the issue, a follow-up interview was undertaken. The outcome

agreed with the finding from Table 8. Majority of the teachers selected for the interview, 40 of them, agreed that information flow was regular in their schools. Only 20 complained about lack of information flow in their schools. Wofford (1982) says conflict can be prevented through effective communication. He says some of the most important approaches include communication styles that stress trust, openness, self-disclosure, feedback, listening and avoidance of defensiveness and threats.

The result of the analysis above shows that:

(i) Conflict caused by competition occurs often in the schools (64.3%).

(ii) Conflict caused by headmaster's dependence on one party while the other party is sidelined is rare (85.7%).

(iii) Conflict caused by lack of flow of communication is also rare (66.3%)

These provide an answer for Research Question 1.

Commonest Types of Conflict

To attempt answering Research Question 2 which states "what is the commonest type of conflict that occurs in Junior High Schools in the district?", the researcher tried to find out from respondents the nature and types of conflict which occur frequently in the schools.

Questionnaire items 9–10 (Section B) were used to obtain the needed information. Issues to be analysed here include:

(i)   Conflict among teachers or group of teachers (Lateral type of conflict), and

(ii)   Conflict between the headmasters and a teacher or group of teachers (Subordinate type of conflict). These are analysed below.

Existence of Conflict Among Teachers or Group of Teachers

This is the type of conflict which occurs between one teacher and another or among some group of teachers. The result of the investigation would assist the researcher to assess the intensity of conflict among teacher interaction in the schools and how it would, if any, affect administration in the various schools in the district. Questionnaire item 9 (Section B) was used to obtain the required information. The results of the investigation are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Conflict Among Teachers or Group of Teachers (Lateral Type)

Responses	No.	%
Rarely	5	5.1
Sometimes	24	24.5
Often	69	70.4
Total	98	100

Table 9 depicts that lateral conflict exists in most of the schools. The table shows that 70.4% of the respondents agree that lateral conflict exists in their schools while 5.1% are of the opinion that lateral conflict is rare. It can be suggested that teachers do not relate well with their counterparts. If such unfortunate situation exists, it may not lead to cordial relationship among the staff. This may result to conflict. A follow-up interview revealed that teachers do not relate well with one another. Fifty-five out of the 60 teachers interviewed

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agreed that there was "bad blood" among them. Only 5 teachers out of the 60

said there was cordial relationship among staff. Some of the conflicting issues

were gossiping, false accusation and frequent interference during contact hours by

other staff members. As stipulated by Nebgen (1978) if no party tries to make the

other yield from feared or actual injury by the use of implied or explicit force,

conflict may be minimized and there will be cordial relationship among all.

Existence of Conflict between the Headmaster and a Teacher or a

Group of Teachers (Subordinate Conflict)

Subordinate conflict, that is, conflict between the headmaster and a teacher or

group of teachers needed to be investigated. The outcome of this investigation

would, in no small way, enable the researcher form opinion on the extent to which

subordinate conflict occurs in the Junior High Schools in the district and how

such conflict, if any, would affect the teaching and learning process.

Questionnaire item 10 (Section B) was employed to source the information. The

responses are portrayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Conflict between the Headmaster and a Teacher or a Group of Teachers

Responses	No.	%
Rarely	60	61.2
Sometimes	18	18.4
Often	20	20.4
Total	98	100

Table 10 indicates that conflict between the headmasters and the subordinates is low. Sixty of the 98 respondents, representing 61.2%, are of the view that subordinate conflict is rare whiles 20 respondents representing 20.4% say subordinate conflict occurs often in their schools. This observation proves that respondents rarely get problems with their heads in the schools. As a result, this would lead to smooth administration thus, minimising conflict among staff and the administration. The outcome would lead to good tone of the school. In a follow-up interview conducted by the researcher, it revealed that there were a great deal of trust and respect between the teachers and the heads. Such a situation would lead to good tone of the schools. Nye (1973) stipulates that personality, role status, role satisfaction and differing goals can contributes to conflict. A situation where the head does not employ personality, role status, role satisfaction and differing goals as tactics in his administration would create good relationship. This would lower the prevalence of subordinate conflict in the schools. In the end, it could be stated that the commonest type of conflict is the lateral type, that is, conflict among teachers or group of teachers. This answers research question 2.

Conflict Prevention Techniques

Probing into conflict prevention techniques used by the headmasters of Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District is an attempt by the researcher to answer Research Question 3 which tries to find out the conflict prevention techniques applied by heads of Junior High Schools in the district to curb

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conflicting situations. Questionnaire items 11 – 13 (Section C) were used to source the needed outcomes. The issues to be analysed here include:

(i)   Whether the heads encourage team work;

(ii) Whether the heads ensure free flow of information;

(iii) Whether the heads are accessible to the staff (staff meeting)

The Importance the Headmaster Attaches to Encouraging the Staff to Work as a Team

Researching into the importance the headmasters attach to encouraging the staff in each school to work as a term would enable the researcher to ascertain the extent to which team work which is a conflict prevention technique, aids heads in their effort to curb conflict when it occurs in the school. Questionnaire item 11 (Section C) was solicited to track the information. Table 11 shows the outcome.

Table 11

Team Work among Staff

Responses	No.	%
Little Importance	8	8.2
Some Importance	6	6.1
Great Importance	84	85.7
Total	98	100

Table 11 shows that almost all the heads in the schools in the district show great importance to team work among staff. Eighty-four respondents say the heads show great importance to team work. This represents 85.7% of the respondents to the questionnaire who are 98 in number. A few of them,

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numbering eight, are of the view that their heads do not lay great emphasis on team work. However, on the whole, team work is encouraged in the Junior High Schools in the district. With such co-operation from almost all the heads, conflict should be uprooted at the onset before they take root in the schools. Team work gives confidence to all and recognition to each staff member. This would finally lead to group ownership of resources, thus reducing conflict and monopoly of resources. The follow-up interview conducted by the researcher showed that certain behavioural aspects of the head strengthen his ability to encourage team work among the teachers. These aspects include: (i) Open administration and (ii) Good interpersonal relationship. This observation goes to support the views of Deutsch (1973) when he says conflict may erupt when two or more parties have monopoly of the use of resources or a given part of it. In other words, in this analysis, conflict does not arise because there is no monopoly of the use of resources and there is team work among the staff and the head.

The Importance the Headmaster Attaches to Ensuring Free

Flow of Information to Members of Staff

In the bid to find out how information flow freely in Junior High Schools in the district, the researcher investigated into how heads freely give information to the staff in order to bring about good administration and checking the occurrence of conflict. Questionnaire item 12 (Section C) was employed to bring out the information. The outcome is shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Free Flow of Information to Members of Staff

Responses	No.	%
Little Importance	10	10.2
Some Importance	20	20.4
Great Importance	68	69.4
Total	98	100

As indicated in Table 12, free flow of information as a technique in administration is used by the heads to check conflict in their schools. Majority of the teachers in the Junior High Schools in the district (68 or 69.4%) state that their heads use this preventive technique to check conflict in their schools. Only 10.2% of the respondents equalling 10 teachers object to this view. Information flow is a great check on conflict. If workers have easy access to information, rumours and suspicion are minimized. Goodwill and cooperation are experienced at all levels of administration. Majority of the teachers interviewed agreed that there was free flow of information in their schools. Lindelow and Scott (1989) stipulate that if communication problems or gaps exist in the school set-up conflict is likely to erupt. From Table 12, it can be concluded that most of the heads in the schools ascribe greater importance to information flow thus reducing the rate of conflict occurrence in the district.

The Importance the Headmaster Attaches to Being

Accessible to the Staff for Discussion (Staff Meeting)

The researcher was poised to investigate into the importance the heads of Junior High Schools in the district attach to discussion with members of staff. This investigation would aid the researcher to know how effective this technique is used in the schools to curb conflicts in the bud to enhance effective administration. Questionnaire item 13 (Section C) was used to get the needed results. The responses are portrayed in Table 13.

Table 13

Heads Being Accessible to the Staff for Discussion (Staff Meeting)

Responses	No.	%
Little Importance	8	8.2
Some Importance	21	21.4
Great Importance	69	70.4
Total	98	100

As shown in Table 17, 70.4% of the respondents agree that their heads give them the opportunity to discuss issues when they occur. It is only 8.2% of the respondents who say their heads give little importance to the organisation of staff meetings. Giving staff the opportunity to discuss issues when they arise is a good sign of preventing conflict occurrence. In a situation where greater emphasis is placed on general discussion of issues the possibility of conflict occurring is very

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low. Staff can express themselves freely without fear or favour provided what they say is in line with the organisational goals or objectives. This is the observation in majority of the schools in the district. From the follow-up interview, it was observed that greater majority of the teachers agreed that their heads organised regular staff meetings which in no small way served as a platform for addressing many conflicting issues. As indicated by Gorton and Snowden (1993) administration can prevent conflict if the authorities meet regularly with staff for the purpose of clarifying expectations and offering suggestions.

The analysis above shows that conflict prevention techniques employed by the heads of the Junior High Schools in the district include: (i) Team work among staff (ii) Free flow of information and (iii) Discussion (staff meeting). This observation answers Research Question 3

Conflict Resolution Techniques Adopted by Headmasters

An attempt was made by the researcher to investigate into some of the techniques used by heads of Junior High Schools in the district in resolving conflicts when they occur. This investigation would aid the researcher to determine how effective the use of the techniques helped the headmasters resolve conflict when they occur in their schools. It would help the researcher answer Researcher Question 4 which reads " How do the headmasters in the Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District resolve conflict in their schools when they occur.?" Questionnaire items 14-17 (Section D) were used to fish out the information. The resolution techniques analysed and discussed include:

(i) Compromise, (ii) Procrastination, (iii) Non-Response or Withdrawal and (iv) Arbitration.

The Extent to which Headmasters Use Compromise to Resolve

Conflict in the Schools

The researcher delved into the extent to which heads use compromise to solve conflict in their schools. This would enable him to determine how often the technique is used in checking conflict situations in the schools in the district. Questionnaire item 14 was used to source the information. The responses to the issue in this respect are captured in Table 14.

Table 14

Headmasters' Use of Compromise

Responses	No.	%
Seldom	8	8.2
Occasionally	20	20.4
Often	70	71.4
Total	98	100

Table 14 shows that 8.2% of the respondents accept that heads in their schools seldomly employ compromise in resolving conflicts when they occur. Twenty respondents or 20.4% are of the contention that their headmasters occasionally use compromise as a conflict resolution technique whilst 71.4% of the respondents are of the opinion that heads adopt compromise in their schools to resolve conflict. It can be observed from Table 14 that majority of the respondents

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regard their heads as employing compromise often to address conflicting situations in their schools. The technique brings all opposing groups together for the attainment of a common goal. At this juncture, views of others are carefully studied and given hearing. This gives rise to group work and the needed attention for all. The approach ultimately enhances the attainment of the objectives of the schools. The follow-up interview conducted showed that 52 out of 60 respondents selected for the interview responded that their heads often employ compromise as a tool of resolving conflict when they occur. Bodine, Crawford and Schrumph (1994) are of the opinion that soft responses such as avoidance, accommodation and compromise usually occur between individuals who are friends or who want to be pleasant to one another because they will continue to have contact in the future.

The Use of Procrastination by the Headmasters

Some headmasters adopt procrastination as conflict resolution techniques in the district. It became necessary for the researcher to probe into the issue. This would enhance his knowledge about how often the heads employ the technique in their schools when faced with conflicting situation. It is also a way of trying to address Research Question 4. Questionnaire item 15 was used to solicit the information. The outcome is displayed in table 15.

Table 15

Headmasters' Use of Procrastination

Responses	No.	%
Seldom	78	79.6
Occasionally	11	11.2
Often	9	9.2
Total	98	100

As indicated in Table 15, the heads are noted for not using procrastination as a tool of resolving conflicts. The table shows that only nine or 9.2% of the respondents say their heads often employ this technique. Seventy-eight of the respondents (that is 79.6%) are of the opinion that heads seldom adopt procrastination as a management tool for conflict resolution. An interview with the heads revealed that most heads in the Junior High Schools in the district respond quickly to resolve conflicts when they emerge. Thus a good sign of curbing conflict in the bud before it takes root. Furthermore, majority of the respondents interviewed, 45 of them out of the 60 respondents responded that heads seldom adopted procrastination as a weapon of conflict resolution in their schools. As Nebgen (1978) projects, procrastination is a variation of the "silence is golden" principle. To adopt a "let's wait and see" stance is not the best in most cases. For this reason, curbing conflict at an early point in time when it occurs is the best.

The Headmasters' Use of Non- Response or Withdrawal

Investigating into the use of non-response or withdrawal by the heads as a management tool for conflict resolution would enhance the researcher's knowledge in how often the heads use non-response or withdrawal to minimise conflict in the schools when they show up. This aspect also would also assist the researcher to attempt to solve research Question 4. Questionnaire item 16 was employed to access the outcome. The outcome is portrayed in Table 16.

Table 16

Use of Non- Response or Withdrawal by the Headmasters

Responses	No.	%
Seldom	80	81.6
Occasionally	8	8.2
Often	10	10.2
Total	98	100

Table 16 depicts that a large majority of the 98 respondents (81.6 %) are of the opinion that their heads seldom employ the withdrawal technique. Only a few, that is, 10.2% and 8.2% state respectively that their heads often and occasionally employ the technique. This observation goes down to indicate that most of the heads do attend to problems or conflict in the school when they occur at an early stage. They do not wait till such conflicts take roots before they attend to them. A follow-up interview also confirmed the observation above. Majority

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of the respondents interviewed were of the opinion that their head rarely use non-response or withdrawal in their schools when resolving conflicts. Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) observe that in trying to solve conflict, individuals may attempt to avoid conflict all together by withdrawing from the situation, ignoring it, or denying that the conflict even matters. The finding in the above analysis runs contrary to the views of Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf.

The Headmasters' Use of Arbitration

The researcher probed into the extent to which headmasters adopt arbitration to resolve conflict in their schools. The investigation would assist him know how often such approach is used and its effect on conflicts resolution in the schools. This would also aid him solve Research Question 4. Questionnaire item 17 was used to retrieve the information. Table 17 shows the responses.

Table 17

Use of Arbitration by the Headmasters

Responses	No.	%
Seldom	4	4.1
Occasionally	9	9.2
Often	85	86.7
Total	98	100

According to Table 17, 4 or 4.1% of the respondents agree that their heads seldom use arbitration to resolve conflicts when they arise. Nine respondents or 9.2% are also of the view that their heads occasionally employ arbitration to address conflicting situations. However, majority of the respondents, 85, representing 86.7%, accept that their heads often adopt arbitration to solve conflict when it emerges. If over 80% of the respondents agree that their heads often employ arbitration, which is one of the best tools in conflict resolution, then this is a clear sign that disputants are given fair hearing when it comes to conflict resolution. This would result in trust and mutual understanding in the schools. Administration would be smooth and teaching and learning would be uninterrupted. In the follow up interview conducted by the researcher, 58 out of the 60 respondents believed that their heads often use arbitration as a key conflict resolution technique in their schools. Arbitration technique is recommended by Wofford (1982) who contends that a neutral third person or party may be requested to assist in conflict resolution.

In the end, it could be stated that most headmasters in the Junior High Schools in the district often adopt compromise and arbitration as main conflict resolution tools to settle disputes or conflicts when they occur in their schools. They do not find the use of procrastination and withdrawal as effective means of resolving conflicts in their schools. This observation answers Research Question 4.

The Use Of Flexibility By The Headmasters

Investigating into the importance the heads in Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District place on being flexible in their administration would aid the

researcher to find out how the use of flexibility as a tool would check conflict eruption in the schools. This is an attempt to answer Research Question 5 which states, "How do conflict management behaviours portrayed by headmasters of Junior High Schools in the district check conflict occurrence in the schools?" Questionnaire item 18 (Section D) was used to access the information. The findings are shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Headmasters' use of Flexibility

Responses	No.	%
Seldom	15	15.3
Occasionally	21	21.4
Often	62	63.3
Total	98	100

As captured in Table 18, just 15 respondents, forming 15.3% of the 98 teachers who responded to the questionnaire, say their heads are seldom flexible when solving problems or conflict when they occur in their schools. However, a greater majority of the respondents numbering 62 out of the 98 respondents (ie 63.3%) say their heads pay much attention to their problems and are flexible when conflicts occur in their school. From the responses, it is clear that a large number of the heads place greater emphasis on being flexible when dealing with the staff. Such a situation would lead to staff putting in their best and compromising with the administration. In the follow-up interview it was observed that because

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majority of the heads were flexible in dealing with the staff when problem arise in their schools, there was low occurrence of conflict in most of the schools in the district. Conflict under such condition would be low. Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf (1994) say to curb conflict in the bud, the administrator should be what they call "soft" (that is to use avoidance, accommodation and compromise).

Summary of Findings

The major issues that came out of the research are summarised below:

1.   Majority of the respondents fall within the ranks of Superintendent II to Principal Superintendent.

2.   Appointments to positions in the schools such as sports master, form master, subject master to mention but a few are done by the heads based on seniority and experience.

3.   Basically, some of the causes of conflict in the schools are competition, headmaster's dependence on one party while the other is sidelined and lack of flow of information to the staff. These findings answer research question one.

4.   In respect of the commonest type of conflict which provides an answer to research question two, the observation is that generally lateral conflict (that is conflict between teachers or group of teachers) is identified to be more common in the schools in the district than subordinate conflict (that is, conflict between the headmaster and a teacher or group of teachers).

5.   In respect to research question three, the study depicts that regular use of conflict prevention techniques such as team work among staff, free flow of

information and staff meetings by the headmaster result in reduced levels of conflict intensity. On the whole, there is low level of conflict occurrence in the schools in the district.

6. The heads frequently (often) use compromise and arbitration as conflict resolution techniques. They seldom use procrastination and non-response or withdrawal to resolve conflict when they occur in their schools. This finding takes case of research question four.

7. The major conflict management behaviour adopted by the heads for checking conflicting situations when they occur is being flexible in their administration. Research question five is answered by this finding.

Follow-up Interview

A follow-up interview was employed by the researcher to confirm or observe otherwise the information from the respondents. For the purpose of the interview, 60 out of the 98 respondents selected for the sample were interviewed. Cannel and Kahn (1966) postulate that the attitude, perception and opinions which cannot be known through observation can be obtained through interviews. The researcher, therefore, found it prudent to follow up the administration of the questionnaire with a follow-up interview under the following sub-headings:

Causes of Conflict in the Schools

Respondents were interviewed to identify some of the causes of conflict in their schools. The following responses were made by the 60 respondents:

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(i)   Competition. Forty-five (75%) respondents agreed that competition was common in their schools.

ii)   Sidelining others. Ten (16.7%) respondents were of the view that they were often sidelined by their heads, whiles 50 (83.3%) spoke of good relationship with their heads

iii)   Lack of flow of communication. Forty (66.7%) respondents accepted the fact that there was free flow of information in their school. Only 20 respondents (33.3%) objected to this fact.

iv)   Mistrust and gossip. Mistrust and gossip were found to be common among teachers in most of the schools.

Commonest Conflict

The commonest conflict which came to light was the lateral type as compared to subordinate conflict. Fifty-five out of the 60 respondents (91.7%) agreed that lateral conflict was common in their schools.

Conflict Prevention Techniques

Some of the preventive methods used by the heads were,

(i)   team work

(ii)   free flow of information,

(iii) staff meeting and

(iv)   application of suggestion box where individuals put in their suggestions or views for redress by the administration.

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Conflict Resolution Techniques

The following resolution techniques were identified as being adopted by the heads in the district.

(i)   Compromise

(ii)   arbitration

(iii)   non-response or withdrawal and

(iv)   procrastination

On compromise, 52 (86.7%) of the respondents said their heads applied the technique in their schools. Fifty-eight (96.7%) were of the opinion that their heads adopted arbitration as a tool when faced with conflict. Non-response and procrastination were rarely used in the school.

Relationship with Heads

Majority of the respondents, 55 (91.7%) agreed that they enjoy good relationship with their heads. For the past 12 months, conflict occurrences in most of the schools in the district were very low. Few teachers complained about some heads being uncooperative. From the responses, majority of the heads were open, fair, accountable, flexible, co-operative and considerate. On the whole, most of the conflicts that occurred in the district were among the teachers themselves, that is lateral conflict.

The results from the follow-up interview generally confirm the information gathered for the use of the questionnaire.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The summary of the study, summary of findings and recommendations based on the findings are provided in this chapter.

Overview of the Study

When people meet as a group, there is the possibility of misunderstanding arising whenever there is a problem. The school which is a miniature society is likely to harbour conflicts during the normal course of running the school. Heads who are the super-ordinates are likely to face opposition from the staff or teachers when performing their administrative functions. Such situations may be destructive if not carefully handled. It may lead to a break-down in the administrative set-up and may not augur well for effective teaching and learning. The pupils in the classroom then suffer. Since situations like this are likely to happen in the schools, the researcher found it necessary to determine the extent to which the behaviours of heads of Junior High Schools in the Kwahu North District (Afram Plains) give rise to conflicts in their schools during their normal administrative functions.

The population covered all the teachers in the Junior High Schools in the district. The sample size excluded the headmasters, since the people whose administrative activities were to be assessed by the respondents were the

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headmasters. In this connection, data were collected from 98 teachers drawn from the 42 Junior High Schools in the district representing the sample size. Data were collected through the use of questionnaire which consisted of closed and open-ended items.

An interview guide was provided for respondents to express their views as a means of obtaining information which might not have been easily accessed. In analysing the data collected, frequencies, percentages and means were employed.

Summary of Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1.   In all the schools studied, generally, conflict occurrence is rare. However, it occurs often in some schools. The conflicts perceived by the respondents are caused by the following:

    (a)   Competition among the staff. Some of the problems arise as a result of some teachers undermining fellow teachers to gain recognition from the administration or the head. This came to light through the researcher's interactions (interview) with the staff. Forty-five (75%) out of the 60 respondents were of the opinion that there was competition among fellow teachers in the schools.

    (b)   Dependence on one party while the other is sidelined by the headmaster. This type of conflict is rare but others see it as a problem in their schools. Heads in some of the schools rely so much on favourites and neglect other staff members that they see themselves as if they are not part of the administration. Eighty-four respondents or 85.7% agree that this type of

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conflict-dependence on one party is not common in their schools, whiles 1% say it is often practiced in their schools.

(c)   Lack of trust for one another. Teachers sometimes do not trust one another. This is so because information is sometimes distorted before it reaches the recipient. This breeds mistrust among the staff.

2.   Lateral conflict (that is, conflict between teachers or groups of teachers). This type of conflict is identified to be more common in the district than subordinate conflict (that is, conflict between the headmaster and a teacher or group of teachers). This can be observed from Table 9 which portrays that 70.4% of the respondents agree that lateral conflict is common in their schools. On the other hand, only 20.4% of the respondents perceive subordinate conflict to occur in their school. This observation is in Table 10 and is also confirmed by the respondents during the interview.

3.   Respondents are generally of the view that headmasters in the Junior Secondary Schools in the district attach great importance to conflict prevention techniques. This, according to them, is so because the heads:

(a) encourage the staff to work as a team (that is 84 respondents or 85.7% agree to this assertion)

(b) are accessible to the staff for discussion, among others (that is 69 respondents or 70.4% are of the opinion that heads organise regular staff meetings).

(c) are flexible in their dealings with the staff when problems or conflict occur (that is 62 respondents or 63.3% agree that their heads are flexible in their dealings with the staff)

(d) allow free flow of information to the staff. These interventions in no small way contribute to the prevention of conflicts in the schools. It is only in some few schools that such approaches are not adopted by the heads. The number of heads who do not apply this method are so insignificant that their inability to adopt the preventive techniques could not bring about a change in the overall observation.

4.   The headmasters adopt rational approaches when they are faced with conflicts. Some of the approaches or techniques used are compromise (Often 71.4%) and arbitration (Often 86.7%). On the other hand, in the schools that conflict occurs, the heads occasionally employ "non-response" or "withdrawal" techniques to manage conflicts in their schools. Even the heads who employ this technique are few. They seldomly use it (that is 10.2%).

5.   The study shows that regular use of the application of conflict prevention techniques by the headmaster or administrator enhances the reduction of conflict intensity. On the contrary, the non- application of conflict prevention techniques accelerates the levels of conflict. However, the use of conflict resolution techniques such as "compromise" and "arbitration" lower the level of conflict, while the use of force and avoidance approaches by the heads increase conflict intensity in the schools.

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6.   The outcome of the follow-up interview portrayed that heads who are open, free and fair, co-operative and considerate with subordinates have co-operation from the staff. This behaviour of the heads results in high productivity, low turn over rate on the part of the staff and reduced level of conflict. On the contrary, heads who are autocratic and employed the machinist type of administration (do not care much about the welfare and well being of the staff), face low staff morale, apathy, and its concomitant low productivity. In such a situation, high level conflicts are common in their schools. Robbins (1983) observes that conflict can reduce the bond of effectiveness of group members, increased absence and high turn over rates of staff and, eventually, lower productivity. The study confirms Robbins' observations.

Conclusions

The study has revealed that some common conflicts that could occur in the district are, competition among staff, sidelining other staff members, lack of flow of information among others. Such situation is likely to disturb the smooth running of the schools in the district. However, it is observed through the study that conflict is of low prevalence in the district. This is due to the application of conflict prevention and effective conflict resolution techniques adopted by the heads in the district. The commonest conflict in the district is the lateral type. It appears that there is some sort of misunderstanding and lack of co-operation among some of the teachers in the district. This situation, though not of high occurrence, may not augur well for peaceful co-existence.

The study further brings to light that a head who takes the welfare of his teachers at heart receives the cooperation of the teachers. Definitely, teachers will not feel happy and give the head the cooperation he requires if the head frowns over them, ignores their needs and does not heed to the general welfare of his teachers. Teachers like other employees, are likely to work in an atmosphere of openness, transparency, good accountability, trust and respect.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn on the findings:

It has been observed from the study that conflict is rare in the schools in the district. This is attributed to the observation that most of the headmasters employ conflict prevention techniques such as encouraging team work among staff, allowing free flow of information, being accessible to staff for discussion (staff meeting) and being flexible most of the time. These approaches assist in no small way to minimise conflict occurrences in the schools. However, a few of the heads do not apply these good practices. It is therefore recommended that such good practices be adopted by the heads of the few schools who do not employ the good practices. If this is adopted by the heads it will go a long way to bringing about "conflict-free" administration. Heads who do not practice these preventive techniques are advised to adopt them so as to reduce conflicts to the barest minimum in their schools.

The schools that experience some sort of conflicts as a result of competition among staff, dependence on one party whiles the others are sidelined

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and lack of trust among one another, are few in the district. Heads of such schools are advised to adopt preventive measures such as free flow of information among staff and frequent staff meetings so that teachers can iron out their differences before conflict may push its ugly face in the schools. Heads who involve the staff in the decision-making process have low levels of conflict in their schools. Those who do not involve the staff should employ techniques such as staff meetings to get involved the staff in the decision-making process.

Lateral conflict (that is conflict between a teacher and another teacher or a group of teachers) is observed to be the commonest type of conflict in the schools in the district. In addressing this problem, heads are advised to be close to teachers and identify their problems in order to be able to assist them find possible solutions to such problems before they excavate into conflicts. Wofford (1982) postulates that prevention checks both destructive conflict and the long term effects it may bring. Heads can put in place activities like picnic, excursions to places of interest, and the organisation of regular staff meetings for the staff to meet and discuss common problems. End of term or year get-together can be instituted in those schools to bring heads, staff and pupils together to share experiences and exchange ideas. When problems identified are above the staff, it can be referred to the School Management Committee (SMC) or the Circuit Supervisors of the circuit, or the District Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinator for attention.

Another way of solving lateral conflict is the use of communication facilitator as Nebgen (1978) suggests. As individuals behave differently as a result

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of their socio-cultural backgrounds, likes and dislikes, attitudes, aspirations, emotions, dispositions and intellectual levels, headmasters should cultivate understanding of the dynamics of good human relations. They should be in the position to bring together all the staff to work as a team in situations of difference in view, opinions and positions. If a head does not have the requisite interpersonal skills to effectively handle such situations, the head could use a subordinate who is skilful and has good human relations to act as a communication facilitator to work out an acceptable solution for all parties involved in a conflict when it arises.

In the study, it has been observed that heads adopt rational approaches or techniques when they are faced with conflicts. Some of the approaches are compromise and arbitration. These assist the heads to solve some of the conflicts that occur in their schools with relative ease. It is therefore recommended that heads should adopt such laudable technique in their schools when they are confronted with similar conflict situations.

The follow-up interview portrayed that heads who are open, free and fair, co-operative and considerate with subordinates have co-operation from the staff. Productivity is high in such schools. Headmasters are therefore requested to be transparent, accountable, fair and hit when the iron is hot, that is, take decisions or actions at the right time. It is recommended that heads should employ that type of administrative style which addresses the needs of the staff without hesitation, encourage information flow at the correct time to the staff, and make room for delegation of authority. It is hoped that when headmasters uproot conflict when

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they show up, using acceptable techniques such as discussions, compromise and arbitration, conflict occurrence in schools in the district, although not too acute, would be minimised, thus enhancing teaching and learning in the schools.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The research was confined to Kwahu North District (Afram Plains) which is only one of the 17 districts in the Eastern Region. It also did not include students; therefore researchers who are interested in the study of conflict management may consider researching further into the following:

1. Further research may be conducted in other districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana and other regions of the nation in order to find out whether the current findings could be generalised for other districts and the nation.

2. The management of conflict between schools' super-ordinates or authorities and students could also be researched into, since such conflict interferes with the schools' programmes or activities.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF SCHOOLS AND THEIR CODE NUMBERS

S/N	Name of School	Code No.
1	Abomasarefo L/A J.H.S	JA
2	Adeemmra R/C J.H.S	JB
3	Amankwakrom R/C J.H.S	JC
4	New-Kyeiase L/A J.H.S	JD
5	Donkorkrom Nana Baadu L/A J.H.S	JE
6	Abotanso R/C J.H.S	JF
7	Agortime R/C J.H.S	JG
8	Adukrom L/A J.S.S	JH
9	Kwaekese L/A J.H.S	JI
10	Donkorkrom St. Michael R/C 'A' J.H.S	JJ
11	Donkorkrom St. Michael R/C 'B' J.H.S	JK
12	Kodidi Kpedzi L/A J.H.S	JL
13	Donkorkrom Presby J.H.S	JM
14	Ekye-Amanfrom L/A J.H.S	JN
15	Samankwae L/A J.H.S	JO
16	Ekye Amanfrom Anglican J.H.S	JP
17	Kwasi Fante L/A J.H.S	JQ
18	Nso-Nyameye L/A JHS	JR
19	Soda – Domeabra L/A JHS	JS

20	Takoratwene L/A JHS	JT
21	Nana Atuobi Yiadom L/A JHS	JU
22	Dedeso L/A JHS	JV
23	Foso L/A JHS	JW
24	Kwame – Dwamena L/A JHS	JX
25	Tease Presby 'A' JHS	JY
26	Tease Presby 'B' JHS	JZ
27	Tease R/ C JHS	JAA
28	Forifori L/A JHS	JBB
29	Bebuso R/C JHS	JCC
30	Samanhyia Presby JHS	JDD
31	Koranteng L/A JHS	JEE
32	Kyemfre L/A JHS	JFF
33	Somsei L/A JHS	JGG
34	Maka United L/A JHS	JHH
35	Mem-Chemfre L/A JHS	JII
36	Faaso Battor L/A JHS	JJJ
37	Bruben L/A JHS	JKK
38	Ntonaboma L/A JHS	JLL
39	Nyakuikope L/A JHS	JMM
40	Pesika L/A JHS	JNN
41	Kamalo L/A JHS	JOO
42	Donkorkrom Nana Baadu 'B' JHS	JPP

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

This students is researching into the topic "TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS OF HEADS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE KWAHU NORTH DISTRICT OF GHANA" The researcher would be very grateful if you could spend some few minutes to assist him answer the following questions. Your identity would not be disclosed to any other person with regard to your responses to the items. Thank you.

Section A: Basic Characteristics of Respondents

Provide the name of your school and respond to the questions by ticking [√] the appropriate box provided.

Name of School ....

1.   Gender

        Female [   ]   Male [   ]

2.   Age (young or old)

        Below forty   [   ]   Forty and above [   ]

3.   Status of Respondents

        Professional Teachers   [   ]

        Non – Professional Teachers   [   ]

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4.   Rank (Grade)

      Teacher (No Rank or Minimum Level)   [   ]

      Superintendent II   [   ]

      Superintendent I   [   ]

      Senior Superintendent II   [   ]

      Senior Superintendent I   [   ]

      Principal Superintendent   [   ]

      Assistant Director   [   ]

      Any other, please specify ....

5.   Post / Position in School

      Assistant Headmaster   [   ]

      Form Master   [   ]

      Staff Secretary   [   ]

      Guidance & Counselling   [   ]

      No. Post   [   ]

Section B. Existence of Conflict in the School

With regard to question numbers 6-13, indicate the extent of conflict by inserting in the appropriate column 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.

      1 - Means Very Often.

      2 - Means Often.

      3 - Means Sometimes.

      4 - Means Rarely.

      5 - Means Never.

Extent of Conflict

		1	2	3	4	5
6	Conflict Caused by Competition					
7	Conflict Caused by Headmaster's Dependence on One Party while the other Party is Sidelined					
8	Conflict Caused by Lack of Flow of Communication					
9	Conflict Among Teachers or Group of Teachers (Lateral Type)					
10	Conflict between the Headmaster and a Teacher or Group of Teachers (Subordinate Type)					

Section C: Conflict Prevention Techniques

Please, show the importance your headmaster attaches to the under listed conflict prevention techniques.

Tick one of the following:

1 - Means Very Great Importance

2 - Means Great Importance

3 - Means Some Importance

4 - Means Little Importance

5 - Means No Importance

		1	2	3	4	5
11	Encourage the Staff to Work as a Team					
12	Ensures Free Flow of Information to Members of Staff					
13	Is Accessible to the Staff for Discussion (Staff Meeting)					
14	Compromise					

Section D: Conflict Resolution Techniques

Indicate your responses by ticking one of:

1 - Means Very Often

2 - Means Often

3 - Means Occasionally

4 - Means Seldom

5 - Means Never

To show the extent the headmaster employs the under listed conflict resolution

techniques in finding solution to conflicts that occur in the school.

		1	2	3	4	5
15	Procrastination					
16	Non-Response or Withdrawal					
17	Arbitration					
18	Is Flexible					

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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

A follow-up interview for Junior High School Teachers in the Kwahu North District. Questionnaire on Conflict Management in Junior High schools in the Kwahu North (Afram Plains)

School ....

Date ....

In each of the following questions, give reasons for and examples on your views about the following in your school.

1. Mention some of the causes of conflict in your school?

....

2. From what you have mentioned which of them to you is the commonest?

....

3. How does the headmaster welcome suggestions from teachers.........................

....

4. How is the relationship between the headmaster and the teaching staff in your

school? ....

5.   How does the headmaster treat teachers who have personal problems? eg.

   i.   Bereavement ....

   ii.   Sickness of spouse/children ....

   iii.   Seeking permission to attend to personal/family needs etc

           ....

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6. What disciplinary action does the headmaster adopt if teachers are involved in

offences like:

    a.   Lateness ....

            ....

    b.   Non-performance ....

            ....

    c.   Absenteeism...

            ....

    d.   Laziness

            ....

            ....

    e.   Drunkenness

            ....

            ....

7.   a)   Has there been any conflict within the last twelve months between:

    i.   The headmaster and any teacher? ....

    ii.   You and the headmaster? ....

    iii.   Among teachers or group of teachers? ....

    b)   If yes

    i . What caused the conflict? ....

            ....

    ii. How was it treated? ....

            ....

            ....

8 i. Do you think the resolution technique (s) used by the headmaster is/are

appropriate?...

....

....

ii. Give reasons ....

....

9.   If you were the headmaster what would you have done if the answer to

question No 8i is No? ....

....

....

10. a) What in your view does the headmaster do to create good working

relationship in the school?

....

....

b) What conflict prevention techniques do the heads use in your school to prevent

conflict occurrence? ....

....

11. What does the headmaster do which normally creates frustration for the

subordinates?

....

....

12. Briefly comment on the effect of the headmaster relationship with the staff on the following:

    i.   Academic work in the school

             ……………………………………………………………………………

    ii.   Level of conflict intensity in the school

             ……………………………………………………………………………

    iii.   Discipline among the staff

             ……………………………………………………………………………

    iv.   Attitude to work among the staff

             ……………………………………………………………………………

    v.   Co-operation between the headmaster and the staff

             ……………………………………………………………………………

    vi.   Morale of the teaching staff

             ……………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KWAHU NORTH

DISTRICT (AFRAM PLAINS)

Ghana Education Service

P. O. Box 42

Donkorkrom.

6th January, 2004.

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Permission is hereby granted the above-named students of Cape Coast University

to conduct research on the topic "TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT

MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS OF HEADS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

IN THE KWAHU NORTH DISTRICT OF GHANA"

We would be very pleased if he is given the needed assistance to enable him

conduct the research.

Counting on your usual co-operation.
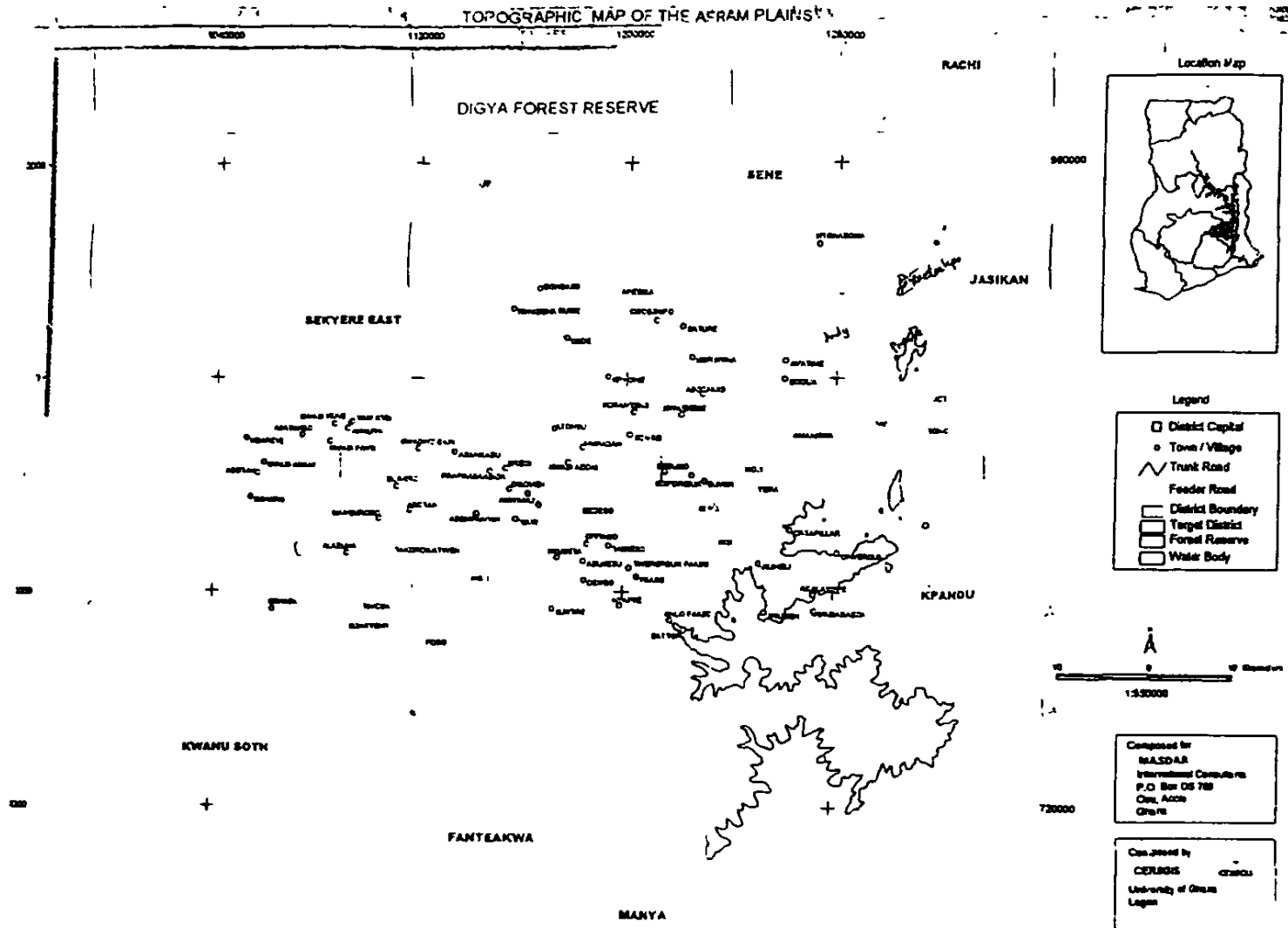
Thank you.

(N. K. GAIKPA)

DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

DISTRIBUTION

ALL HEADS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.

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TOPOGRAPHIC MAP OF THE ASRAM PLAINS

DIGYA FOREST RESERVE