



**EXPLORING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN
TEACHERS AND HEAD TEACHERS: A CASE OF
SELECTED SCHOOLS IN KITWE DISTRICT**

**BY
AGNESS KAZEMBE**

**A dissertation submitted to the university of Zambia and Zimbabwe
Open University as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award
of the degree of master of education in education management.**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN ASSOCIATION WITH
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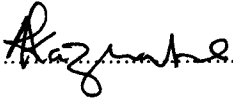
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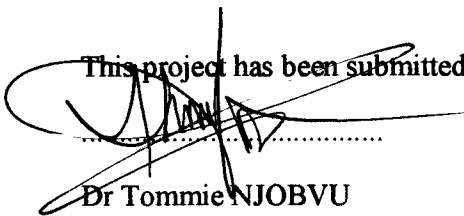
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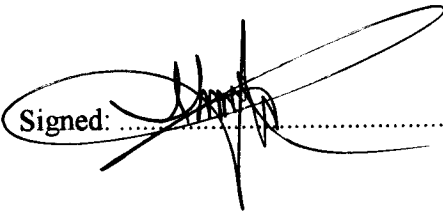
Dr Tommie NJOBVU

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.....

Date:

APPROVAL

This dissertation of Agness Kazembe has been approved as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Education in Education Management.

Signed:  Date. 26/10/2016.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my sovereign God, my husband Shadrick Sikwese, my children Amariah, Lusayo and many to come, but especially my lovely mother Mrs. Janet Mushingwe Kazembe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks go to the Almighty God for seeing me throughout my studies. My gratitude and appreciation goes to my supervisor Dr T. Njobvu for his guidance and support. I am grateful to all the tutors and to Dr Masaiti, the course coordinator for their encouragement and useful hints on the research. My gratitude also goes to my wonderful husband Shadrack for his contribution and tireless support in the guidance and editing of this paper. I salute my lovely children for their patience and for enduring their mother's absence.

Furthermore, my sincere thanks go to my pastors, Moses and Ireen Bwalya for their prayers and encouragement throughout my studies. I would also like to sincerely appreciate the support, assistance and goodwill received from various people during my studies (Angela & David Daka, Paul & Perpetual Kalobwe, Barbra and Webby Kazembe, Mable & Edwin Simukonde and Mrs. Sungwe). I also wish to extend my appreciation to my family especially my parents Mr and Mrs Kazembe and my siblings. Lastly and importantly, special thanks go to my dear friends Pastor Alice, Mildred, Margaret, Ketra, Racheal, Hilda, Prisca and many more others who have contributed immensely to the completion of my study.

ACROYNMS USED

DEBS - District Education Board Secretary

IPC - Interpersonal conflict

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to explore the interpersonal conflicts between the teachers and head teachers in secondary schools of Kitwe district. A mixed approach was adopted which used structured interviews and questionnaires to collect data. The sample comprised of 36 participants, 30 teachers 6 from each of the five schools and six head teachers' one from each school. The study revealed that conflicts occur often in schools and that three quarters of the respondents indicated they have been engaged in an interpersonal conflict before. It was also found that conflicts are caused by many factors such as miscommunication, unfair resource allocations, lack of understanding, differences in opinion and absenteeism. Other causes pointed out were poor time keeping, stereotyping, and differences in perceptions, unethical conduct, allowances, strict supervision, ideologies, and personality clash and below average performance.

The study observed that interpersonal conflicts manifests in many forms. The common ones were said to be avoidance behaviour, emotional threats, and failure to carry out instructions, refusal to fund certain projects, incompetence, attending to classes late and differing unnecessary. Others were personal confrontation, communication breakdown and absenteeism.

The study indicated that interpersonal conflicts have a great impact on teachers. It brings about demotivation, hostile work atmosphere, low work morale and input, loss of interest in work and reduction in seriousness. Further it showed that interpersonal conflict results in delayed decision making, wastage of resources, staff and pupils indiscipline, ineffective schools and loss of vision for school. On the positive note, it was pointed out interpersonal conflict brings about desired change, improves decision making, challenges old habits and seeks permanent solution and improves the learner and teacher performance.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Overview

This chapter focuses on the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. The chapter also covers the theoretical and conceptual framework, delimitation and limitation of the study. The operational definitions have also been covered.

1.2 Background

It is a known fact that conflicts are a common part of human life that manifests in every human interaction such as in organisations and institutions. It has been noted by Kerzner (1998) that conflicts are inevitable. Therefore, it is not an eccentricity to find conflicts in organisations such as schools. However, conflict in organisations can be detrimental to employee satisfaction and job performance if it becomes excessive and unmanageable. The term conflict is widely defined. According to Cole (1998) conflict is a condition that arises whenever the perceived interests of an individual or a group clash with those of another individual or a group in such a way that strong emotions are aroused and compromise is not considered to be an option. In addition Hellriegel and Slocum (2007) refer to organisational conflict as a process in which one party, a person or group perceives that its interest are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. On the other hand, Hempel (2009) defined organisational conflicts as incompatible activities where one person's actions are interfering or obstructing another's.

The study by Sompa (2015) seems to indicate that in most schools, the level and number of conflicts seem to be increasing. Mostly these are interpersonal conflicts between the teachers and the school managers (head teachers). Wood et al (2010) has noted that interpersonal conflict is one major form of conflict that managers have to deal with given the highly nature of the managerial role. Interpersonal conflict has been defined by Rahim (2011) as conflict between two or more interacting individuals which is manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or differences between the parties involved in a conflict and can involve the same or different hierarchical levels or units. It has also been argued by Luthans (2008) that

interpersonal conflicts occur between two or more individuals in an organisation as a result of contact and interactions with each other.

In schools, the conflicts between the head teachers and teachers are seen to take many different forms such as teachers being unenthusiastic to obey the head teachers; they may not follow rules or accept to do any extra work, and not getting along easily with the head teachers. Teachers also develop a tendency of skipping the head teacher's authority by reporting to higher offices and requesting for transfer and many others. Head teachers may also adopt an authoritative approach, by pressurising teachers for nonstop working of the school activities and the use of threats, unnecessary use of punishment, avoidance behaviour and transferring of the teachers concerned. Such can however disrupt the smooth running of the school.

Conflicts in schools can be a source of concern because of the roles that schools play in society. It has been noted by UNESCO (2005) that societies and the world over look up to schools for the nurturing of those innovative ideas which transform the technological, economic and social dimensions of people's lives towards development. It has been seen that in most cases the conflicts between teachers and head teachers can be disruptive to the smooth running of the school. It may even affect the delivery by teachers which in return will affect many things including the learners' academic performance. Therefore, instead of encouraging a learning atmosphere as expected, the schools tend to turn into battle fields. In the same vein it has been argued by Hitt et al (2006) that the negative effects of conflict may prevent an organisation from achieving its goals, may waste time and effort and can lead to a low quality of work. They also have a negative impact on the motivation and productivity of employees.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Although not widely reported observations indicate that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers have become persistent and are slowly becoming part of the school-life especially in Kitwe district. In most cases, this has resulted in disruptions in the smooth running of the schools as it negatively impact on the teacher's morale to teach. Omboko (2010) has noted that unresolved conflicts between teachers and head teachers over time create anxiety and stress which further intensify active conflicts.

Looking at the Zambian context studies that have been done focus on the management strategies employed by head teachers in the management of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers (Sompa: 2015). However, the focus of this study was to explore interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers by focusing on causes, forms or manifestations and the impact on both the teacher and the head teacher. If this study was not done, interpersonal conflicts in schools would remain a mystery that may continue to disturb the normal operation of the schools.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers. The study focused on the causes, forms/manifestations and the impact of the interpersonal conflicts in selected secondary schools.

1.5 Objectives

The following were the objectives of the study

1.5.1 General objectives

To explore interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers in selected secondary schools of Kitwe district.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

1. To ascertain the extent of interpersonal conflicts in schools.
2. To establish the common forms and causes of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers.
3. To assess the effects of interpersonal conflicts on the work quality of the head teacher and teacher.

1.6 Research questions

1. To what extent are the interpersonal conflicts in schools?
2. What are the causes of the interpersonal conflicts between the head teachers and teachers?

3. What are the common forms of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers?
4. What are the effects of interpersonal conflicts on the head teachers and teachers work quality or experience?

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The study was only confined to selected secondary schools of Kitwe district on the Copperbelt where the researcher resides, hence making it more accessible to carry out the research. The study was also limited to a sample size of thirty five respondents.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The study was only confined to five selected public secondary schools of Kitwe district hence, the findings may not have the representation of all public secondary schools in the district and the country, therefore, similar studies may need to be carried out in other secondary schools in order to generalise the results. The researcher found a serious apathy in answering of questionnaires as many teachers shined to take part.

1.9 Significance of the study

The study will highlight the forms, causes and the effects of interpersonal conflict in schools. The study will benefit educationists such as the teachers; head teachers and the district education board secretary (DEBS) in that they will be aware of the existence of interpersonal conflicts in schools.

The results of the study may also be useful to education researchers, educational planners and other scholars of educational management as it may enhance the knowledge on interpersonal conflicts. The study may also add to the literature on the interpersonal conflicts in secondary schools.

1.10 Operational definitions of key terms

This section explains the meanings of the main concepts and terms that have been used in this study.

Conflict: refers to a state of unresolved differences between two or more individuals or two or more groups of people.

Interpersonal conflict: refers to conflict between two or more interacting individuals, manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or differences between the parties involved in a conflict.

Cause of conflicts: refers to the factors that trigger conflicts.

Forms of conflicts: different manifestations or behaviours that indicates the presences of conflict

Effects of interpersonal conflicts: the outcomes or consequences of conflicts.

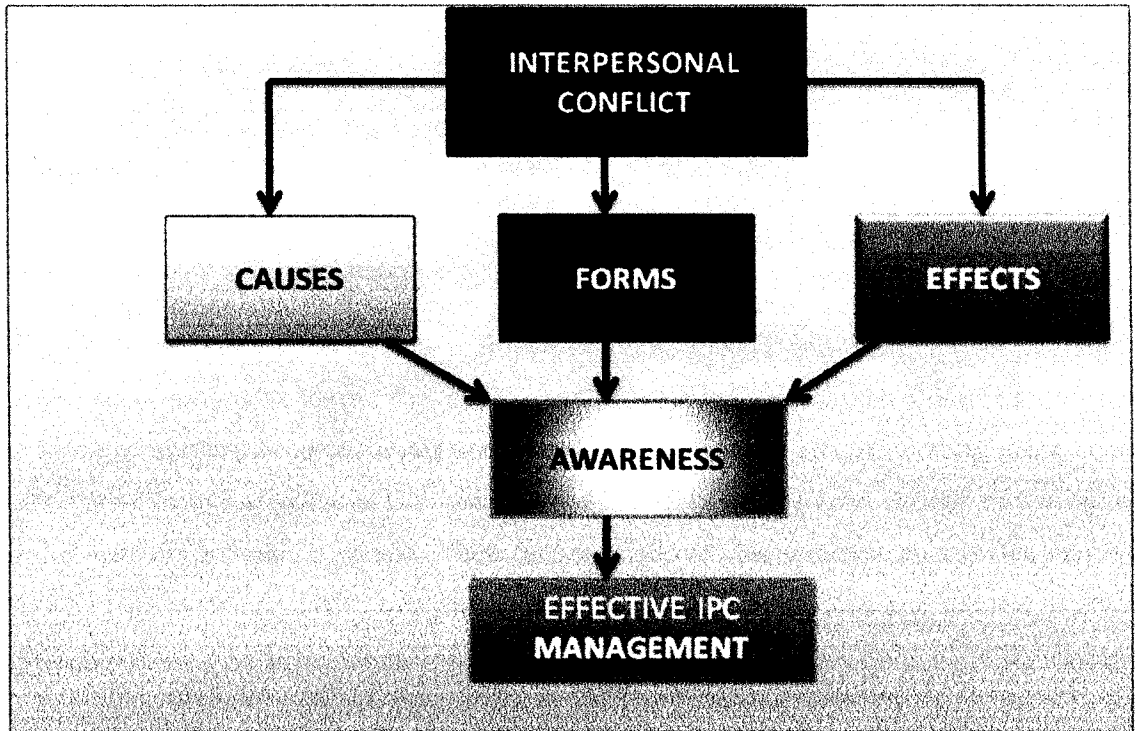
1.11 Theoretical framework

The research will employ a social psychological theory of self-other orientation that provides the basis of a theory of interpersonal conflict and aggression. According to Ziller (1969), it is believed that conflict leads to aggression toward self or others given the conditions of reduction in self esteem and social interest, and the development of an unchanging self centred theory of behaviour.

This theory impacted on the study because of its assumption that conflict will lead to aggression towards oneself and others under the given conditions. In schools it is believed conflicts leave a permanent mark on the people involved and that it has potential to bring out the behaviour likely to disturb the smooth running of the school.

1.12 Conceptual Framework

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



It is the researcher's view that an awareness of the causes, forms and effect of the interpersonal conflict between teachers and head teachers is likely to result in the effective management and resolution of the conflict.

1.13 Summary

The chapter looked at the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and research questions. It also included the significance of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework, delimitation and limitations of the study and operational definitions. The following chapter focuses on the literature review expressed by other scholars.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The chapter focuses on the literature from different scholars and countries around the world related to interpersonal conflicts under the main themes of the study. The chapter presented literature on different scholarly definitions of interpersonal conflicts, its forms, the causes of conflicts, and the effects of interpersonal conflicts.

2.2 Definitions of interpersonal conflicts

They are many definitions of interpersonal conflicts. Larson and Mildred (2000), define interpersonal conflict as clashes that involve two or more individuals who perceive each other as being in opposition to preferred outcomes and or attitudes, values or behaviours while Orlich et al (2001) opined that interpersonal conflict involves the open clashes of the values of different individuals or groups. They further observed that this type of conflict may be visible or invisible and that it may range between peaceful opposition and the use of force and aggression.

Furthermore Wood (2003) views interpersonal conflicts as conflicts that occur between two or more persons that work together in groups or teams. In addition Rahim (2001) defined interpersonal conflict as conflicts between two or more members of the same or different hierarchical levels or units that may take a visible or invisible form of conflict that ranges from peaceful opposition to use of violence. Beheshtifar and Zare (2013) added to the definition and referred to interpersonal conflicts as conflicts that manifest between people which are involved in the project or between different groups of interest. They also referred to an interpersonal conflict as a process through which a person or a department frustrates another from obtaining the wanted result. Similarly, Henry (2009) noted that interpersonal conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other.

The above is what scholars have perceived interpersonal conflict to be. However the researcher perceives interpersonal conflict to be the differences that arise between or among individuals which prevents them from working together to achieve a common goal. As to

what head teachers and teachers perceive interpersonal conflict is what the researcher intended to find out.

2.3 Occurrence and Forms of interpersonal conflicts in organisations

Barker (2009) has argued that, it is likely for conflicts to exist whenever and wherever people have contact. This assertion indicates that conflicts are a common part of human life that manifests in every human interaction such as in organisations and institutions. Schools as organisations are one notable habitat of conflicts especially interpersonal conflicts. Mohamad Johdi and Raman (2011) affirmed that conflict cannot be avoided even in education as schools and colleges are a part of organizations.

It has been noted by Chung and Megginson (1981) that we live in an age of conflict. They opined that in most organizations, the level and number of conflicts seem to be increasing as employees are becoming more firm in demanding their share of organizational rewards such as status, recognition, pay, benefits, and autonomy. Further it has been noted that conflicts among groups are also increasing due to many interest and pressure groups in organizations making it is difficult to find a sense of community and reach any kind of agreement among them.

Conflicts are said to manifest in many forms. Roloff (1987) conceptualised conflicts as an interactive process that is manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities such as individual, group, organization, etc. Rahim (2001) is of the view that conflict takes various forms, such as dyadic conflict, involving persons or groups, and coalition behaviour, involving more than two parties. In addition De Janasz, et al (2006) observed that conflict is not something that is a tangible product but it lies in the minds of the people who are parties to it. They noted that conflict does become tangible when it manifests itself in arguing, brooding, or fighting.

A study by Katumanga (2000) shows that conflicts manifests in many forms such as absenteeism, perennial lateness, dishonesty, inaccessibility and being autocrat or dictatorial. Fisher (2000) has observed that the common tactics used in interpersonal power struggles include the exaggerated use of rewards and punishments, deception and evasion, threats and emotional blackmail, and flattery or ingratiation. He observed that unresolved power conflict usually recycles and escalates to the point of relationship breakdown and termination. In addition, it has been noted that the forms of interpersonal conflicts may also include rude

behaviour which unlike workplace rudeness would also include instances of respectful yet contentious disagreement.

It has been observed by Talmaciu and Maracine (2010) that the various types of conflict that exist in organizations include data conflicts, structural conflicts, relationship conflicts, and interest conflicts. He further noted that conflicts often manifests in, grievances, lawsuits, complaints, strikes, and disciplinary actions. According to Wright (1999) conflict may occur in a physical sense when two or more unlike staffs' moves to occupy the same space at the same time in which there is logical inconsistency and the process of solution are identical. He further observed that conflict may involve individual or group disagreements, struggles, disputes, quarrels, or even physical fighting and wars.

According to Jehns (1995), the forms of interpersonal conflict include task and relationship conflict. This may mean that interpersonal conflict may occur because of the job itself or because of the relationships at work. Williams (2011) noted lack of acknowledgement about viewpoints or opinions could lead an individual to assume that his or her competence is being challenged and relationship conflict might result.

In schools, interpersonal conflicts may take the form of skipping authority which entails failure to report to ones immediate supervisor, not being in talking terms, withdrawal and refusal to carry out instructions. The research intended to further investigate the common forms of interpersonal conflicts in schools.

2.4 Causes of interpersonal conflicts

In organisations, it has been observed that conflicts stem from more than one source, and so their true origins may be hard to identify. There are a number of reasons that have been pointed out as to what causes conflicts in organisation. Conflicts may be between co workers, employees and employers or between supervisor and supervisee. In schools, it can be between teachers, teachers and pupils and teachers or head teachers. Causes of conflicts can be categorised in the following.

2.4.1 Personality factors

It has been noted by Auerbach & Dolan (1997) and, Rahim (2001) that the most common personality factors associated with organizational conflict are skills and abilities, personality conflicts, perceptions, diversity, and personal problems. Luthans (1998) also noted that interpersonal conflicts are caused by many factors such as personality differences, the perceptions, clashes of values and interests, and power and status differences

2.4.1.1 Skills and abilities

It has been noted more often than not that the members of any department or work team have different levels of skills and abilities. Because of this Auerbach & Dolan (1997) has observed that conflict can result when an experienced employee must work with a beginner who has good theoretical knowledge but few practical skills. For example, Pukkapan (1999) observed that a long-serving teacher in school who graduated many years ago and is familiar with the old way of teaching may have a conflict with young novice teacher who has an advanced technique of teaching. Assaf (2004) is also of the view that interpersonal conflicts are mainly caused by individual differences.

2.4.1.2 Personality conflicts

It has been observed by Rahim (2001) that that personality conflicts are a reality in any group setting, including the workplace. Rahim noted that at every workplace there always seems to be at least one co-worker who is difficult to get along with and that one of the most difficult personality traits is abrasiveness. An abrasive person is said to be often hardworking and achievement-oriented, but critical and insensitive to other people's feelings. Other notable irritating personality traits include laziness and gossiping.

2.4.1.3 Perceptions

It has been noted by Auerbach & Dolan (1997) that much organizational conflict stem from the fact that employees and managers have different perceptions of situations. For example, the head teacher may feel that a teacher is underperforming in teaching, whereas the teacher may feel that the best job possible is being done. As alluded to by Ivacevich and Matteson (2002) any workplace is made up of individuals who see the world differently. Consequently, conflict occurs when there is a lack of acceptance and understanding of these differences. In addition Larson and Mildred (2000) argue that people in organisations with particular

references to their inclination, such as their attitude like insubordination towards authority can create conflict in the workplace.

A study done by Kipyego (2009), in Kenya reviewed that, people differ and see things differently since the levels of education, social status, conviction, character, belief structure, past occurrence, the affection shown in the home and a lot of other factors that affect human behaviour differs. Kipyego further observed that people have different styles, principles, values, beliefs and slogans which in turn determine their choices and objectives; as a result, this provokes conflicts.

2.4.1.4 Diversity

More often than not, there is increasingly diverse in organisation such as differences in age, cultural background, ethics, and values that can be a source of conflict among employees. For instance, it has been noted that a long-serving staff who feels loyal to the school may clash with a young newcomer staff who sees the school as nothing more than a stepping stone Rahim 2011; Auerbach & Dolan 1997.

2.4.1.5 Personal problems

It has been noted by Auerbach & Dolan (1997) that when people bring their personal problems to work, their performance tends to suffer and may clash with co-workers who are indebted to “pick up the slack.” As such a teacher who may have a problem at their home may fail to teach effectively in their class because they may lack of concentration. This may create confrontations with others who may not understand.

2.4.2.1 Organisational factors

Apart from personality factors, scholars have also noted that interpersonal conflicts are caused by factors associated to the organisation. Luthans (2002) observed that lack of communication; role incompatibility and work stress are among the causes of the interpersonal conflicts. In highlighting organisational factors as the causes of interpersonal conflicts Deaconu (2005), noted that the most common ones are identification and dislocation from the group; the differences of power; status and culture; ambiguity; insufficient resources; and the pressure of time. Newstrom and Davis (2002) outlined the following factors as the causes of interpersonal conflicts; organisational change, different sets of values, threats to status, contrasting perceptions, lack of trust and personality clashes. Similarly,

Mullins (2005) also perceived the following factors as the causes of interpersonal conflicts; limitations in resources, unfair treatment, organisational change and role incompatibility.

2.4.2.2 Role ambiguity

According to Luthans (2008) role ambiguity occurs when an individual does not have adequate information on the nature of the work required in the organisation. Maher (2004) observed that role ambiguity occurs due to a lack of proper job description or a lack of proper understanding of the nature of the job. In this vein, the study by Katumanga (2000) indicates that some head teachers perceive causes of conflicts in their school to be due to lack of commitment by some teachers to work in their schools which manifests in absenteeism, perennial lateness, dishonesty, inaccessibility and being autocrat or dictatorial. He further reveals that at times conflicts in schools are as a result of the head teachers own making as they fail to perform well in administrative duties due to frequent absenteeism from their schools.

2.4.2.3 Role incompatibility

According to Luthans (2008) interpersonal conflict may occur when an individual performs more than one concurrent role which includes incompatible goals. With regard to conflicts in schools, Rono (2000) observed that the conflicts in schools are sometimes created by poor leadership qualities of some head teachers. In the same vein, studies conducted in the Republic of Kenya (2001), point out that the conflicts in schools are created by head teachers due to inappropriate managerial skills in planning, budgeting and expenditure control. The study has further noted that conflicts are further agitated by head teachers when they place a lot of pressure on the teachers claiming that they contribute to poor academic performance of the students.

2.4.2.3 Common resources

Common resources are another cause of conflicts in schools. Rahim (2001) has noted that in many organisations, people are obliged to share resources and that the scarcer the resource the greater potential for conflict. For example, having very few books in the department may create conflicts when many teachers would need to use them at once. Having few resource guides and computers which may have many users may also create conflicts in schools. It has also been argued that too often, employees feel they have to compete for available resources in order to execute their jobs.

Barker and Gum (1994) is of the view that in an environment where resources are scarce and people compete for the available limited resources, conflicts occur despite the awareness of how scarce the resources may be and that partial distribution of the limited resources increases the probability of conflict to occur. In addition, Meeks (2005) noted that conflict may arise when there are insufficient available resources in an organization such as a school. In this instance, teachers try to have their share of the available limited resources such as dusters, text books and chalk, in the course of the struggle for the limited resources conflicts emerge between teachers and head teachers as well as teachers amongst themselves.

According to Miller (2005), if resources are not enough to be shared equally, hard decisions are made and that these decisions may provide fertile grounds for conflict because some people may not have their share as wished. Wattam (2005) also believes that under normal circumstances, conflict occurs when there is scarcity of commodities such as raw materials or intangible things such as prestige, influence, status or time. Irene (2011) also agrees that conflict is likely to be minimal where there is plentiful supply of such commodity and where there is a scarcity, the potential for conflict increases.

2.4.2.4 Work stress/over working

Survey studies carried out in some secondary schools of Cape Town reported by Seamus (1995) show that over working causes conflicts between head teachers and teachers who are unmotivated in their work. It was observed that some teachers go into the teaching profession as a last resort when other alternatives are lacking and that such teachers may never settle in their jobs as professionals. They work to earn a salary with the hope that they will soon leave the profession. Foster (1989), affirm this view and indicates that unmotivated teachers will not produce good results and that complaint, lack of discipline, irritability and fighting the head-teacher characterizes their work. The head teacher will always be at the centre of blame. He or she will not get anything done without running into trouble with the teachers.

2.4.2.5 Lack of communication

Eccles and Gabarro (1996) believe that different communication styles can lead to misunderstanding between employees or between an employee and a manager. In their view, lack of communication drives conflict “underground”. On that stand, Whetten and Cameron (2005) contend that an important message may not be received if effective communication channels are not used. For instance, a manager’s instructions may be misinterpreted, or decision makers may arrive at a different conclusion because they use different databases. In

this regard, Nelson-Jones (1995) says that conflict based on poor communication, misinformation or misunderstanding tends to be factual hence, clarifying previous messages or obtaining additional information generally resolves the dispute. Assaf (2004) is also of the view that interpersonal conflicts are mainly caused by lack of communication.

2.4.3 Favouritism

A study by Omboko (2010) reveals that head teachers sometimes find themselves in conflict with teachers due to the head teacher favouring some teachers. A case of such favouritism was reported by Omboko (2010), where a head teacher was accused by some teachers of favouring other teachers to an extent of allowing their children to remain in school without paying fees. He further goes on to state that teachers and head teachers have conflicts which have remained unsettled over time which creates anxiety and stress which further intensifies existing conflicts.

In the Zambian context, the study by Sompa (2015) indicates that interpersonal conflicts are caused by many factors such as communication breakdown, responsibilities not being shared fairly, incompetent supervision, late coming, absence from work without a reason, head teacher wanting to engage himself or herself into teacher's affairs, unsatisfactory class allocation, showing favouritism to some teachers by management, laziness by teachers and poor management strategies.

2.5 Effects of interpersonal conflict

It has been noted that conflicts tends to have a great impact on both the organisation and the individuals in any organisation. Scholars have noted that the impact can have the dysfunctional or functional outcome. Kipyego (2009) has argued that interpersonal conflicts can have positive or negative effects for the school set up depending on the environment created by the head teacher as she or he manages and regulates the conflict situation.

2.5.1 Negative effects

It has been argued by scholars that the effects of conflicts depend on how it is managed. Henry (2009) opined that if conflicts are approached negatively they can be destructive and uncontrollable thereby creating ineffective working groups and making production to suffer. He further noted that conflicts can also reduce the exchange of ideas and information, break

down communication, and diminish trust and support. In schools, it is typical for teachers to lose focus and boycott work after confrontations with the head teachers.

Parker and Stone (2003) termed dysfunctional conflicts as destructive conflict. These conflicts are usually not purposeful and practical such as arguing over private home matters that may have nothing to do with work or impact work in any way. Wood et al (2010) adds that these conflicts are disruptive and distributive as it could lead to the non-realising of an organisation's goals. Usually there is a shift in focus from attaining the organisational objectives to who is right regarding the matter at hand. Barker and Gum (1994) held a similar view when they noted that many times, in the midst of conflict, conflicting individuals or groups will put their own interests or goals above those of the organisation, hence reducing the organisation's effectiveness.

According to Scott (2001) frequent and powerful interpersonal conflicts in an organisation can have a demoralizing impact on the behaviour of people in that conflict often develops into hostility which also causes people to withdraw both physically and psychologically. In a school situation, this is seen in many instances such as staying away from work and not attending to classes. It has further been noted by Rahim (2011) that dysfunctional conflict possibly will result in sadness, feelings of stress and being stretched or overworked which in turn result in less or poorer communication with colleagues. Rahim added that this eventually leads to distrust, doubt and negative personal relationships.

According to Nelson & Quick, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2009 interpersonal conflicts may results in the break-down of relationships among colleagues and at the same time alienating individuals and leading to the forming of contesting groups; drawing on feelings or perceptions rather than on the real underlying aspects as causes. Relationship breakdown is one notable impact of conflicts between teachers and head teachers and as they seriously begin to even avoid contact with one another. The research done by Omboko (2010) indicates that conflicts between teachers and head teachers end up having either of them being transferred or dismissed. However in reality, it is mostly the teacher that is on the disadvantaged side. Because of this, learning in the school is interrupted which in turn impacts negatively on students' academic performance.

Further Tillet and French, (2006) have noted that the possible outcomes of conflicts could be anger, anxiety, distress, fear and aggression thus impeding on self-development and even

problem solving. In addition to that, they noted that these outcomes could result in non-social behaviour such as being self-destructive, verbal and physical abuse, or violence resulting in further breakdown of unity, playing the blaming game, non-cooperation and even explosive behaviour. Similarly Owens (2001) also opines that frequent and powerful conflict can have a devastating impact on the behaviour of people in an organisation in that conflict often develops into hostility which also causes people to withdraw both physically and psychologically. Bipath (1987) also added that it may also result in absenteeism and high staff turn-over while Haraway & Haraway (2005) have added that it may even lead to death.

2.5.2 Positive effects

However contrary to dysfunctional conflict, which appear to imply that conflict seems to have a negative implication with negative outcomes, scholars have also suggested that conflict also offers the potential for functional outcomes. Wood (2003) has noted that conflict can be functional when it is constructive and interactive. For instance a conflict in a school can be deemed constructive if it brings out the desired results. Conflict may arise between the head teacher and teacher who perpetually come late for work. However when change is seen after confrontation then the conflict can be said to be constructive.

Wattam (2005) has noted that conflicts are essential in any organisation including the school in order to arouse change and innovation. He also observed that conflicts highlight the problems and inefficiencies in a working environment. In addition, it has been noted by Cannie (2002), that conflict is a spin around which change occurs in workplaces. It has been noted that when society and people disagree their focus is highlighted and important issues defined.

Further, Cannie (2002) opined that conflict is a valuable force in any organisation and, if managed correctly, it can be a possible force for innovation and change. Similarly, it has been noted by Larson and Mildred (2000) that when conflicts are effectively managed, it can lead to outcomes that are productive and can enhance the health of the organisation overtime.

The functional extent of conflict is concisely summarised by Rahim (2001, p. 7) when he states that, *"if a social system is to benefit from conflict, the negative effects of conflict must be reduced, and positive effects must be enhanced."* Therefore, according to Rahim (2011) conflict has the potential to have positive outcomes if the negative dimensions of it can be reduced within an organisation. This means that people have to be made aware of the fact that

there are positive aspects that could emerge as a result of conflict among individuals (Erickson & Mc Knight, 2001).

It has been noted by Tjosvold (1998) that conflict is a mechanism that allows perceiving benefits of cooperative work. He further argued that conflict is considered psychologically and socially healthy because it provides a breather for frustrations and enables a feeling of participation and even of joy and is socially healthy because it encourages opposition to the status quo and provides conditions for social changes and democracy stemming from pluralism and respect to diversity. Similarly Hocker and Wilmot (1995) alluded to the following as the positive effect: improving the quality of decisions, stimulating involvement in the discussion and building group cohesion.

2.6 Summary

The study focused on relevant literature by other scholars related to interpersonal conflicts between supervisors and subordinates. The next chapter presents the methodology the study adopted.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study that is the research designs, the research site, and target population of the study, the study sample and sampling techniques. It also presents the data collection instruments, procedures for data collection, as well as the methods of data analysis.

3.2 Research design

William (2006) defines research design as what holds the research project together. This section therefore highlights the strategies that the researcher used to collect data. The study used a mixed method approach a methodology that involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The research opted to use this method because the integration of the two methods proved to provide a better understanding of the research study than using either one of them. Under qualitative approach interviews were used to collect the data and quantitative came in with the use of questionnaires. Hence the study used structured interviews and questionnaires. A qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. According to Best (1995) qualitative studies are those in which the descriptions of observation is not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms but not suggesting that numerical measures are never used; rather, other means of descriptions are emphasized.

3.3 Research site

The study was carried out in Kitwe district on the Copperbelt province. The schools included Mindolo, Chimwemwe, Kitwe boys, Chibote girls and Matete secondary schools.

3.4 Target population

According to Sidhu (2003) population in research refers to the total or whole of objects or individuals regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study. This study therefore targeted all secondary schools head teachers and teachers in Kitwe district.

3.5 Study sample

According to Sidhu (2003), sampling is the process of selecting a representative unit from a population. Similarly, Cohen and Manion (1994) expand this definition by explaining that in sampling, the researcher endeavours to collect information from a smaller group or subset of the population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study. The study was comprised of thirty six respondents. These included six head teachers from each of the six schools and thirty teachers' six from each school.

3.6 Sampling techniques

The research employed both random and purposive sampling method. According to Palys (2008) purposive sampling involves selection of informants based on an important characteristic under study. The schools were sampled conveniently. Only those that were easily accessed were sampled. The teachers however were purposefully picked. Only those who have served for more than three years at a particular station were sampled. Three males and three females who have been at the station for more than three years were considered.

3.7 Data collection instruments

It has been noted by Ary and Razaviet (2002) that instrumentation refers to a process used to solicit information in research. There are a number of instruments that are used to conduct research but in this study questionnaire and interviews were used. The study collected data from head teachers using structured interviews while the questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers. The researcher was writing down responses from the structured interview.

Sidhu (2003) defines a questionnaire as a form arranged and distributed to secure responses to certain questions. It is simply a device for soliciting answers to questions listed on a form which are filled by the respondent. Since the sample schools for the study were widely spread in the district, the researcher found it necessary to administer questionnaire. It was appropriate for questionnaire to be administered so that all the subjects could be reached within a short time.

It has been noted by McMillan and Schumacher (1993) that an interview consists of a direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the subject. In the same vein Ndagi (1997) also opined that interview is unique in that it involves the collection of data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. Leedy (2000) defines a research interview as two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information.

3.8 Data collection procedure

The researcher sought authorisation from the district education board secretary's office to conduct research in selected schools in the district. In each of the six schools, permission was sought from the various heads of schools then the researcher met the teachers of each school to seek their willingness to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered a day after the preliminary contact.

Both primary and secondary data were sought after in order to achieve the objectives set for the study. The primary data were collected through questionnaires and interview. While secondary data consisted of the review of literature on interpersonal conflicts in various organisations.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis has been defined by LeCompte and Schensul (1999) as the practice of reducing huge amounts of collected data to make sense of them. In this study, data was analysed using inductive approaches to analysing qualitative data. The method of analysis that was used is that of thematic content analysis and tables. It is said that the process of thematic content analysis is often very similar in all types of qualitative research, in that the process involves analysing questionnaires, identifying themes within those data and gathering together examples of those themes from the text.

The steps taken in data analysis were similar to those suggested by Creswell (2009). The researcher first transcribed the data and this was followed by reading of the same transcription several times. As the researcher read the scripts codes in symbolic forms were assigned to the suggested data. This step was followed by the grouping and combing of

similar codes. The fourth stage involved presenting data as a category with each category explained as a qualitative narrative.

The final stage was the interpretation of data and linking of the findings to the literature and from the researcher's interpretation based on the data.

3.10 Ethical considerations

It has been noted by Resnik (2010) that ethical considerations are a set of ethics or guidelines for responsible conduct of research. The researcher therefore sought consent from relevant authorities. The University of Zambia/Zimbabwe Open University authorised the researcher to conduct a research and the District Education Board Secretary permitted the researcher to carry out the research in selected schools. Permission was also sought from the School managers in order to interview them and to administer questionnaires to teacher. The researcher respected the rights and opinions of all respondents. The names of the respondents were not revealed. This indicated high confidentiality and assuring respondents that the information to be collected was used exclusively for academic purposes and not any other.

The researcher obtained informed consent from participants before they took part in the study, meaning that, the participants knew exactly what they were being asked to do, and what the risks and benefits were, before they agreed to take part. The participants were informed of exactly who the researcher was, where the researcher was coming from and what the researcher was doing. Furthermore, the participants were also informed that there would be no incentives provided in order to take part in the research.

The participants were also assured that the data they gave would be made anonymous; this means the participant's names were removed in order to protect their identity as well as the names of the schools being cited using codes and not their actual names. Furthermore, information collected was treated with confidentiality.

3.11 Summary

This Chapter has presented the methodology used in the study. It focused on the research design, sampling techniques and procedures, the sample size and methods used to collect and analyze the findings of the study. The next chapter presents the results on exploring of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

The results in this chapter are presented in line with the research questions of the study in chapter one. However the study will also present the demographic data of respondents. Important to the presentation of the study are the following research questions;

1. To what extent are the interpersonal conflicts in schools?
2. What are the causes of the interpersonal conflicts between the head teachers and teachers?
3. What are the common forms of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers?
4. What are the effects of interpersonal conflicts on the head teachers and teachers work quality or experience?

4.2 Teachers demographic data

4.2.1 Table 1. Distribution of teachers by age range

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage %
20-30	5	16.7
30-40	16	53.3
40-50	6	20
50-60	3	10
Total	30	100

The table shows the age range of teachers. The highest range of respondents was between the ages of 30-40 while the lowest was between the ranges of 50-60.

4.2.1.1 Table 2 Distribution of teachers by gender

Gender	No. Of respondents	Percentage
Females	15	50%
Males	15	50%

The table shows the gender distribution of respondents which was 50-50.

4.2.1.2 Table 3 Distribution of teachers by working experience

Period	No. Of respondents	Percentage
0-5	3	10
5-10	15	50
11-15	7	23.3
16- above	5	16.7
Total	30	100

The table shows the working experience of respondents. The highest range of respondents has worked between 5-10 years making 50% of the sample while the list has worked between 0-5 years amounting to 16.7%.

4.2.1.3 Table 4 Distribution of teachers by relationship

Response	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	5	15	5	2
percentage	10%	16.7%	50%	16.7%	6.6%

The table shows how teachers described their relationship with the head teachers. The majority of teachers indicated that they have a good relationship with head teachers. 10% indicated that they have an excellent relationship, 16.7% indicated that they have a very good

relationship. Similarly, another 16.7% showed a poor relationship while 50% indicate a good relationship.

4.2.2 Table 5. Distribution of head teachers profile and demographic data

School	Age	Gender	Work experience	Relationship with Trs.
School A	41-50	M	0-5	Good
School B	41-50	M	0-5	Good
School C	51-60	F	11-15	Excellent
School D	51-60	M	11-15	Good
School E	51-60	M	11-15	Good

The table shows the demographic information of the head teachers who took part in the study.

4.3 To what extent are the interpersonal conflicts in schools?

4.3.1 Table. 6 Distribution on teacher's responses on the occurrence of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers in schools

	No of respondents	Percentage
Not at all	1	3.3%
Rare	9	30%
Often	14	46.7%
Very often	6	20%
Total	30	100%

When asked on the occurrence of interpersonal conflicts in schools, 1 teacher indicated that the conflicts do not occur at all, 9 indicated that conflicts are rare, 14 observed that conflicts often occur while 6 noted that conflicts occurs very often. Therefore the highest response was that conflicts occur often in schools while the least response was that conflicts do not occur at all.

4.3.2 Table. 7 Distribution on Head teacher's response on occurrences of interpersonal conflicts

Response	No of respondents	Percentage
Not at all	0	%
Rare	3	60%
Often	2	40%
Very often	0	%
Total	5	100

Table 7 shows that out of the five head teachers, three respondents indicated that conflicts rarely occur while two indicated that conflicts often occur.

4.3.3 Table. 8 Distribution on teacher's involvement in interpersonal conflicts

Response	No of respondents	Percentage
Yes	22	77.3%
No	8	22.7%
Total	30	100

From the 30 teacher respondents who took part in the study, 22 teachers representing 77.3% responded yes to having been involved in an interpersonal conflict with head teachers. The remaining 8 representing 22.7% responded no to having been involved in the conflict before.

4.3.4 Table 9 Distribution on the head teacher's involvement in conflicts

Response	No of respondents	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0
Total	5	100

Despite others responding that conflicts are rare, all the responded indicates that they have been engaged in an interpersonal conflict before.

4.4 What are the causes of the interpersonal conflicts between the head teachers and teachers?

4.4.1 Table. 10 Distribution on teacher's responses on the causes of conflicts

SCHOOL	TEACHERS RESPONSE
School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Misinformation to the head teachers by other officers -Differences in opinion regarding issues -Misunderstanding by the head teacher -Allocation of funds and favouritism -Head teachers not meeting teachers expectation
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Differences in opinions regarding management -Staying away from work without permission -Power and status difference -Not following the right channels of communication -Mistrust by head teachers -Jealous and power hungry
School C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Insufficient resources -Misunderstanding -Ignorance of job descriptions -staying away from work
School D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Misunderstanding of issues and mistrust -Segregation towards giving of tasks -Personal hatred by head teachers -Failure to carry out instructions -Disagreement between teachers and head teachers -Different opinions
School E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -misunderstanding -lack of concern for teachers by head teacher

	-lack of understanding by head teacher -staying away from work -unequal distribution of resources
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The table shows the responses from the teachers on the causes of conflicts. The table shows that misunderstanding was a common response in all the five schools. Other common responses were differences in opinion, lack of understanding by the head teacher and staying away from work. Some of the exact responses were as follows; interpersonal conflicts are caused by misinformation to the head teachers by teachers who may want favours from the head teacher. It was also noted that staying away without permission creates conflict with the head teachers because they fail to understand that it's not intentional.

Conflicts are also said to be as a result of lack concern for teachers, personal hatred and failure by the head teacher to meet teachers regularly. Others causes cited were disagreement, resource allocation and segregation when giving out tasks.

4.4.2 Table 11 Distribution on head teacher's response on the causes of conflicts

SCHOOL	HEAD TEACHERS RESPONSE
School A	-Communication break down -Lack of trust on both parties -Lack of knowledge on terms of condition -Poor time keeping -Stereotyping
School B	-Poor communication -Differences in perceptions
School C	-Misunderstanding and unethical conduct -Allowances -Strict supervision -Ideologies -Personality clash -Below average performance
School D	-Differences in perceptions over issues

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cultural differences -unethical conduct
School E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Failure to tolerate and understand one another -Failure to appreciate each other -time keeping

Table 11 shows the head teacher's responses on their perceived causes of conflict which were almost similar with the responses given by teachers. They observed that conflicts are mainly caused by communication problems i.e. either communication breakdown or lack of communication. Other factors related to communication are lack of knowledge on terms of condition, lack of trust on both parties, and misunderstanding. Further causes pointed out were poor time keeping, stereotyping, and differences in perceptions, unethical conduct, allowances, strict supervision, ideologies, and personality clash and below average performance.

One head teacher noted that;

“the problem is that some teachers are so poor with time keeping that you can't just tolerate them”.

Another reported that;

“some teachers do not take time to read the conditions of service which results in doing the wrong things”.

4.5 What are the common forms of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers?

4.5.1 Table 12 Distribution on teacher's responses on forms of conflicts

SCHOOL	TEACHERS RESPONSE
School A	-Avoidance behaviour -Emotional threats -Personality differences
School B	-Refusal to carry out instructions -Attending to classes late -Avoidance behaviour -Incompetence -Emotional threats
School C	-Avoidance behaviour -Emotional threats -not attending to classes
School D	-Refusal to carry out instructions -Emotional threats -Avoidance behaviour -Refusal to fund certain projects
School E	-Refusal to give permission -Avoidance behaviour -Threats -Differing unnecessary differing

The table above shows the common forms/manifestations of interpersonal conflicts between the head teachers and teachers. Many teachers responded that avoidance behaviour is the most common form of interpersonal conflicts followed by emotional threats. Avoidance behaviour entails avoiding a personal that one is in conflict with while an emotional threat involves using emotions to show how one truly feels. Other forms noted by teachers were refusal to carry out instruction, refusal to fund certain projects, incompetence, attending to classes late and differing unnecessary.

4.5.2 Table 13. Distribution by head teachers on the forms of conflicts

SCHOOL	RESPONSE
School A	-professional failure to comply with lawful instructions -indiscipline -refusal to carry out instructions
School B	-personal confrontation -unnecessary misunderstandings
School C	-personal confrontation -absenteeism
School D	-Communication breakdown -failure to plan work
School E	-refusal to carry out instructions -transfer requests -staying away from work

The table shows the different ways which are seen by head teachers as the common forms or manifestations of interpersonal conflicts. It was observed that in an atmosphere of conflicts, there is always that professional failure to comply with work demand. Also noted were personal confrontation, communication breakdown and absenteeism. One head teacher narrated that;

“conflicts usually manifests in avoidance behaviour where a teacher avoids contact with you at all cost... this behaviour is mainly accompanied by refusal to carry out instructions”.

4.6 What are the effects of interpersonal conflicts on the head teachers and teachers work quality or experience?

4.6.1 Table 14 Distribution on teacher's responses on the effects of conflicts

SCHOOL	TEACHERS RESPONCE
School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Loss of interest in work-Hostile work environment-It becomes difficult to ask for academic assistance-De-motivation
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Low input in work-Avoiding any contact with the head-Frustration-Changing for the better-Low morale
School C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Production rate is affected-Stopped preparing work-failure to prepare lesson plans
School D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Reduction of seriousness of work-Feelings of disturbance and frustrations-Low morale-De-motivation-No effort in work
School E	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Failure to plan work-De-motivation-Loss of morale

Table 14 shows teacher's responses on their perceived effects of interpersonal conflicts on work. Most of the responses indicate that the conflicts affected their work negatively. Some of the common responses were failure to plan work, loss of morale, demotivation and feelings of frustrations. Some of the exact responses drawn from the questionnaire were that "I couldn't just plan my work after the confrontation with the head teacher". Others indicated that they felt very disturbed and frustrated. One positive effect recorded was changing for the

better. One teacher observed that she was fond of going late for work but the conflict made her change for the better.

4.6.2 Table.15 Distribution table on head teacher's response on the effects of conflicts

SCHOOL	HEAD TEACHERS RESPONSE
School A	Delayed decision making and implementation Wastage of resources Staff and pupils indiscipline Misplacement of human resources Effective schools Loss of vision for the school
School B	Poor work performance
School C	Improves decision making Seeking permanent solution Counteract lethargy Challenge old habits Stressful situations
School D	Quality of learner and teacher performance
School E	It hinders development Makes schools not to achieve its objectives/goals of quality delivery of learning

Table 15 shows head teacher's responses on the effects of conflicts. Most of the responses suggest that conflicts have a negative effect. The responses given were that conflicts results in delayed decision making and implementation, wastage of resources, staff and pupils indiscipline, misplacement of human resources and loss of vision for the school. The positive effects are that conflicts improves decision making, seeks permanent solution, counteract lethargy and challenge old habits. Other exact responses were that 'interpersonal conflict led to improvement in the quality of learner and teacher performance'. It was also observed that conflicts hinders development and makes schools not to achieve its objectives/goals of quality delivery of learning.

Summary

The chapter endeavoured to present the results on exploring interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers. The results were presented in line with the four research questions set out in Chapter One of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings in chapter four by relating them to the literature reviewed in chapter two in the light of the four objectives and the conceptual framework of this study. The major findings are discussed under four headings derived from the research questions. This is however, meant to provide sufficient answers to the four objectives and realize the purpose of this study.

5.2 To ascertain the extent of interpersonal conflicts in schools.

In order to determine if interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers really occur or not, the research sought to ascertain the extent of interpersonal conflicts in schools.

5.2.1 Responses from teachers

The results of the study showed that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers do occur in schools. Out of the 30 teachers who took part in the study only one indicated that interpersonal conflicts do not occur at all. 14 respondents observed that conflicts are often while 9 opined that conflicts rarely occur. 6 respondents observed that conflicts occur very often. The seriousness of these interpersonal conflicts have further been assured by the fact that when asked if they have been in any interpersonal conflict with head teachers before even those who responded to conflicts as being rare answered 'yes', to being involved in the conflict before as 22 teachers responded yes while only 8 responded 'no', to having being involved in the conflict before.

5.2.2 Response from head teachers

With regards to the head teacher's responses on the occurrence of conflicts in schools, two head teachers pointed out that conflicts rarely occur while three indicated that conflicts often occur in schools. However, they all said 'yes,' to having been involved in an interpersonal conflict before. This corresponds to the literature on what scholars have said about the episode of conflicts in organisations. They are all of the view that, conflicts are an everyday

present reality of every organisation. As noted by Barker (2009) conflict exists wherever people come into contact. This assertion is true as can be observed from the various conflicts in homes or organisations where people come into contact on a daily basis.

5.3 To establish the common forms and causes of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers.

The research also sought to establish the common forms or manifestations of conflicts in schools, by asking the respondents the common forms of conflicts that they have ever experienced.

5.3.1 Teacher's response on the forms/Manifestations of interpersonal conflicts

The study found that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers are mostly manifested in avoidance behaviours where both the teachers and head teachers avoid contact with each other. Another common response was that conflict comes in form of emotional threats as head teachers are fond of threatening the teachers concerned. Other responses were refusal to carry out instructions and personality differences. In addition, teachers indicated that other manifestations of interpersonal conflicts are absenteeism, not attending to classes, attending to classes late and refusal by the head to fund certain projects.

These findings correspond to that of Roloff (1989), who noted that avoidance behaviour may be a way of showing incompatibility and disagreement. Similar to the findings in this study is Fisher (2000) who observed that conflicts manifest in emotional threats. Further a study by Katumanga (2000) also agrees with the findings of the study as it showed that conflicts manifest in absenteeism and perennial lateness. The study established new aspects of interpersonal conflict, as findings indicate that interpersonal conflicts manifest in not attending to classes, attending to classes late and refusal by the head teacher to fund certain programmes and projects.

5.3.2 Head teachers response

On the other hand, the head teachers pointed out that interpersonal conflict is usually manifested in professional failure to comply with instruction, personal confrontation, and clashes in class, school and in human resource management. This behaviour indicate incompatibility and can be supported by Orlich et al (2001) who opined that interpersonal conflict involves the open clashes of the values of different individuals or groups. Like the teachers, the head teachers also revealed that interpersonal conflicts also come in absenteeism, refusal to carry out instructions, failure to plan work and taking offense at any little thing. This may mean that both head teachers and teachers perceive conflicts to take almost the same form.

5.3.3 Causes of interpersonal conflict

The study also established the causes of interpersonal conflicts in schools by asking respondents to state what led to the conflict that they were involved in and what they perceive to be the common causes of conflicts.

5.3.3.1 Teacher's response on the causes of interpersonal conflicts

The study revealed that there were many causes of interpersonal conflicts between the teachers and head teachers. It was discovered that most of the teachers perceived misunderstanding as the major cause of conflicts between head teachers and teachers. In all the five schools, misunderstanding came up as the most common cause followed by differences in perception or opinions. Misunderstanding is usually as a result of the difference in points of views and perceptions. This finding strongly coincides with the literature in this study. Auerbach & Dolan (1997) and Kipyego (2009) are of the view that many conflicts in organisations are as a result of people's differences in perceptions. As noted by Ivacevich and Matteson (2002) any workplace is made up of individuals who see the world differently consequently, conflict occurs when there is a lack of acceptance and understanding of these differences. Similar to the foregone aspect, was failure by the head to meet the teacher's expectations.

Another common response of the causes of conflict was finances. Some teachers referred to this aspect as insufficient resources while others put it as unequal allocation of funds. Scholars have noted that finances in whatever form may cause conflicts. It can be due to sharing of common resource (Rahim 2001) or when the resources are insufficient in an organisation (Meeks 2005). Other causes that were indicated were; not following the right channel of communication and failure to carry out the head teacher's instructions. Jealous and personal hatred was also cited as being among the causes of these conflicts. However, jealous and personal hatred are new phenomenon.

5.3.3.2 Head teachers response

The responses from the head teachers also established that there are many causes of conflicts between the teachers and head teachers. The study showed that conflicts are caused by communication breakdown, lack of trust on both parties, lack of knowledge on the terms of condition, poor time keeping and stereotyping. Others are poor communication, differences in perceptions, misunderstanding and unethical conduct, allowances, strict supervision, ideologies, personality clash and below average performance. Communication breakdown was an outstanding response from the head teachers as all of them indicated that conflicts usually result when there is a communication breakdown. Literature seems to suggest that communication problems lead to misunderstanding which results in conflicts as noted by Nelson-Jones (1995). Further, it has also been observed that conflicts are caused by differences in perceptions over issues, cultural differences, failure to tolerate and understand one another and failure to appreciate each other.

5.4 To assess the effects of interpersonal conflicts on the work quality of the head teacher and teacher.

In order to determine the impact that interpersonal conflicts have on teachers and head teachers, the study sought to assess the effects of conflicts on the work quality of the head teacher and teacher.

5.4.1 Responses from teachers on the effects

The study revealed that interpersonal conflict comes with it serious effects that may be productive or unproductive. The unproductive effects included; demotivation, hostile work atmosphere, low work morale and input, loss of interest in work and reduction in seriousness. Indeed many teachers indicated that they felt so demotivated as a result of being engaged in a conflict with the head teacher. These aspects alluded to, may cause officers to lose focus therefore agreeing with scholars in literature that indeed conflicts may result in failure to meet the organisational objectives (Barker and Gum 1994). It is clear from the literature and the findings that interpersonal conflicts brings out emotions that may arouse tension at work which may cause loss of focus and direction thereby, rendering the organisation to be unproductive.

On the other hand, the effects of interpersonal conflicts can be profitable to the organisation hence the need to embrace it. The positive effects alluded to in this study include; the change of attitude for the better by both the teachers and head teachers concerned and also the changing of friends for the better. This assertion is in line with Cannie (2002) who argued that conflict is a spin around on which change occurs in workplaces. Similarly, Wattam (2005) has noted that conflicts are essential in any organisation including the school in that, it arouses change and innovation. It is therefore necessary to identify interpersonal conflicts that bring in positive effects which result in the organisational productivity.

5.4.2 Head teacher's response

Head teachers have also added there voice by acknowledging that interpersonal conflicts have more of negative effects than positive ones. They indicated that interpersonal conflict results in delayed decision making, wastage of resources, staff and pupils indiscipline, ineffective schools and loss of vision and direction for the school. These assertions are in line with Owens (2001) who observed that frequent and powerful conflicts can have a devastating impact on the behaviour of people. In the school organisation for example, interpersonal conflict often develops into hostility which may cause people to withdraw both physically and psychologically.

The study also established that interpersonal conflicts not only cause stressful situations but also drains energy. Similarly, literature by Tillet and French (2006) indicated that the possible outcomes of conflicts could be anger, anxiety, distress, fear and aggression thus impeding on self-development and even problem solving.

Contrary to the negative effects, the study findings also brought out the positive effects. Similarly to the positive effects of the interpersonal conflicts highlighted by the teachers, head teachers also indicated that interpersonal conflicts bring about; challenge of old habits, seeks permanent solutions, improve decision making and quality of learner and teacher performance. It can be concluded then that, all these positive effects or outcomes of interpersonal conflicts make it essential to the wellbeing of the school organisation.

5.5 Summary

The chapter focused on discussing the findings in relation with literature review and presented according to the research objectives. The next chapter highlights the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

The chapter gives an overview summary of the research study. It is drawn based on the research findings and the literature of the study.

6.2 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers in selected secondary schools of Kitwe district. This was done by ascertaining the extent of interpersonal conflicts in schools, establishing the common forms and causes of interpersonal conflicts between head teachers and teachers and by assessing the impact of interpersonal conflicts on the work quality of the head teacher and teacher.

The study used the mixed method approach which used structured interviews and questionnaires to collect data. The sample comprised of 36 participants, 30 teachers 6 from each of the five schools and six head teachers' one from each school.

The study revealed that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers occur often, with nearly all the respondents indicating that they have been involved in a conflict before. The forms of interpersonal conflicts were said to include; avoidance behaviour, emotional threats, and failure to carry out instructions, refusal to fund certain projects, incompetence, attending to classes late and differing unnecessary. Others were personal confrontation, communication breakdown and absenteeism.

A number of factors were observed to be the cause of these interpersonal conflicts. Among the factors were; misunderstandings, differences in opinion, lack of understanding and absenteeism. Other causes pointed out were poor time keeping, stereotyping, and differences in perceptions, unethical conduct, allowances, strict supervision, ideologies, and personality clash and below average performance.

It was also established that interpersonal conflicts have both positive and negative effects on the school organisation. The negative effects of interpersonal conflict included; de motivation, hostile work atmosphere, low work morale and input, loss of interest in work and reduction in seriousness. Even the head teachers acknowledged that mostly interpersonal

conflicts have more of negative effects than positive. They indicated that interpersonal conflict results in delayed decision making, wastage of resources, staff and pupils indiscipline, ineffective schools and loss of vision for school. On the contrary, the positive effects of interpersonal conflicts were; challenging of old habits, change of attitude, improving decision making and quality of learner and teacher performance. It is therefore, imperative that interpersonal conflicts are not viewed as entirely harmful to the organisation but that they also bring about positive changes that result in increase of the organisational performance and quality productivity.

6.3 Recommendations

In the light of the major findings above, the following recommendations are being proposed with regards to how interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers can be handled for the betterment of the school organisation.

1. It is imperative that the ministry appoints qualified head teachers with knowledge in the education management and conflict resolution skills. This can drastically help the school to minimise conflicts that are unproductive and embrace conflicts that are productive.
2. The head teachers should involve teachers in decision making activities in schools so as to inculcate in them the sense of belonging and to develop effective communication in schools. This gesture is likely to improve communication and enhance teachers understanding of the vision of the head teacher.
3. The head teachers should ensure that responsibilities and tasks in schools are shared evenly by all teachers. This is likely to create feelings of responsibility and identification among many teachers. This also creates transparency.
4. The ministry of education should ensure that codes of conduct are adhered to and that both the teachers and head teachers follow the job descriptions. The teacher should know what is required of him/her and execute their duties to the best of ability. Likewise the head teachers should be conversant with their job description and ensure to do his/her role as professional as possible treating everyone fairly without favour.
5. There is need for teachers to be professional and uphold power and status by respecting their superiors. Teachers need to therefore be willing to buy in the vision of the head teacher and possibly consult their superior when not clear so as to avoid unnecessary conflicts that may halt productivity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Interview guide for head teachers

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia collecting information on interpersonal conflicts between school head teachers and teachers. The information you will give is strictly for academic purposes. Kindly answer all the questions freely, correctly and honestly. All the answers you give will be treated confidentially.

Thanking you in advance.

1. Gender (a) Male ☐ (b) Female ☐
2. Age range (a) 20-30 ☐ (b) 31-40 ☐ (c) 41- 50 ☐ (d) 51-60 ☐
3. For how long have you been serving in the position of head teacher?
(a) 0-5yrs ☐ (b) 6-10yrs ☐ (c) 11- 15yrs ☐ (d) 16yrs and above ☐
4. How would you describe your relationship with your teachers in the school?
(a) Very Poor ☐ (b) Poor ☐ (c) Good ☐ (d) Very Good ☐ (e) Excellent ☐
5. What do you understand by the term conflict?
.....
.....
6. What do you understand by the term interpersonal conflict?
.....
.....
7. Have you ever been involved in any conflict with any of your teachers?
(a) Yes ☐ (b) No ☐
8. What do you think could have led to the conflict?
.....
9. What do you perceive to be the causes of interpersonal conflicts between you and your teachers in your school?
.....
.....
10. State the common forms of interpersonal conflicts that have happened between your office and teachers in your school.
.....
.....
.....

11. What are the effects of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and your office in your school?

.....
.....

12. How would you rate the occurrence frequency of conflict between you and the teachers in your school? (a) Not at all ☐ (b) Rare ☐ (b) Often ☐ (c) Very often

13. What recommendation would you give to reduce interpersonal conflicts in schools?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix 2
Questionnaires for teachers

Dear Respondent,

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia collecting information on interpersonal conflicts between school head teachers and teachers. The information you will give is strictly for academic purposes. Kindly answer all the questions in this questionnaire freely, correctly and honestly. All the answers you give will be treated confidentially.

Thanking you in advance.

1. Gender (a) Male ☐ (b) Female ☐
2. Age range (a) 20-30 ☐ (b) 31-40 ☐ (c) 41- 50 ☐ (d) 51-60 ☐
3. For how long have you been teaching? (a) 0-5yrs ☐ (b) 5-10yrs ☐ (c) 11-15yrs ☐
(d) 16yrs and above ☐
4. What do you understand by the term conflict?
5. What do you understand by the term interpersonal conflict?
6. How would you describe the relationship between you and your head teacher?
(a) Very Poor ☐ (b) Poor ☐ (c) Good ☐ (d) Very Good (e) Excellent ☐
7. Have you ever been involved in any conflict (disagreement) with any of your head teachers?
(a) Yes ☐ (b) No ☐
8. How would you rate the occurrence of conflict between teachers and the head teacher in your school? (a) Not at all ☐ (b) Rare ☐ (b) Often ☐ (c) Very often
9. What led to the conflict?
10. What do you perceive to be the causes of interpersonal conflicts?
(a) Personality differences ☐ (b) Power and status difference
(c) Insufficient resources ☐ (d) Other.....
11. What are the most common forms of interpersonal conflicts that you have experienced?
(a) Emotional threats ☐ (b) Avoidance behaviour ☐ (c) Refusal to carry out

instructions [] (d) Other

12. How was your work affected by interpersonal conflicts?

.....
.....

13. What recommendations would you give to reduce interpersonal conflicts between teachers and head teachers in schools?.....

.....
.....

Thank you for taking part in the study!