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Conflict among Headteachers and Teachers: Are They Critical to Student Academic Performance in Ghanaian Public Basic Schools

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Abstract:

The study investigated the effects of conflict among headteachers and teachers on the academic performance of public basic school students in Kanda Custer of schools. Descriptive design was used for the study. A sample of 454 (5 headteachers, 50 teachers and 399 students) was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. A questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The study found that: interpersonal, intra-group, inter-group and intrapersonal conflicts were the conflicts that occurred between headteachers and teaching staff. Also, major causes of conflicts identified were misappropriation or embezzlement of funds by my headteacher, indiscipline in the school, and administrative incompetence of headteachers, teachers' attempt to force their values on other teachers, teacher-student relationship and conflict of interest. More so, mechanisms used to resolve conflicts included compromise, accommodating style, avoidance and cconfrontation. It was concluded that different types of conflicts existed among teachers and headteachers in the school. Also, conflicts can be causes misappropriation of funds, indiscipline in the school, and administrative incompetence of headteachers, Mechanisms used to resolve conflicts included compromise, accommodating style, avoidance and cconfrontation. It was recommended that in-service training should be organised by circuit supervisors and school counsellors for headteachers and teaching staffs on causes, effects and mechanism to resolve conflicts.

Keywords: Conflict, Students' Academic Performance, Headteachers, Teachers

1. Introduction

Education can be rated as an ideal approach to the development of society. The principal institutional mechanism for developing human capital is the formal education system of primary, secondary, and tertiary training (Nsubuga, 2003). Since education is an expenditure, the connection between education and economic-social growth is important and positive. In today's culture, thousands of people are named or elected to assume leadership positions and responsibilities. Leadership is exercised in schools and universities, in factories and fields, in business companies, in pharmacies and hospitals, in a country's civil and military organizations and public life, at all levels, in brief, in every way (Mehmood & Arif, 2011). Van de Grift and Houtveen, (1999) define instructional leadership as "the ability of the headteacher to initiate school improvement, to create a learning-oriented educational climate, and to stimulate and supervise teachers in such a way that the latter may exercise their tasks as effectively as possible". At the basic school level, leadership is visible by the designation of headteachers and assistance headteachers. The importance of leadership at the elementary school level is the need to coordinate the activities of staff and pupils to achieve the primary goals of educating learners. Hence, leadership helps in defining and achieving the tasks, goals and purposes of school education.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

It is widely accepted that quality education focuses on the competence and effectiveness of teachers, the availability of teaching and learning materials, the curriculum and the willingness of students to understand and replicate what has been taught. Little attention is paid, however, to what happens in the school environment, in the classroom, when teaching is in progress, and to the kind of relationship that occurs between the headmaster and the teacher, the teacher and the student, the teacher, the student, and even the school and the society in which the school exists. Conflict needs to be critically looked at and preventive measures should be adapted to enhance the school environment to allow teachers and students to live and work together in harmony. Conflicts between headteachers and teaching staff in public basic schools, in particular, could have adverse effects on teaching and learning especially when not handled properly. Thus, this conflict, when not resolved early, could turn headteachers and teachers into enemies or strain peaceful relationships and

make it difficult, if not impossible, for effective teaching and learning to go on. This may lead to a poor attitude of headteachers towards instructional supervision, a poor attitude of teachers towards teaching, unfair discipline by teachers and head coaches for students, and even a drop out of school for students. The study identified the various types of conflicts, causes, effects on academic performance and conflict management strategies that occurred in public basic schools in the Greater Accra Region with Kanda cluster of schools as a case area.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of conflict among headteachers and teachers on the academic performance of public basic school students in Kanda Custer of schools in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana.

1.3. Hypothesis

The paper was guided by one hypothesis and one research question respectively:

1.3.1. Hypothesis

- H₀₁: Student academic performance is not significantly influenced by teacher/headteacher conflicts in Kanda.
- H₁: Student academic performance is significantly influenced by teacher/headteacher conflict in Kanda

1.4. Research Question

What are the conflict management strategies used by headteachers to resolve conflict among headteachers and teaching staff at Kanda cluster of schools?

2. Related Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework to the Study

This study is guided by Thomas Kilmann's Conflict Mode (1983). Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) assesses an individual's behaviour in conflict situations—that is to say, circumstances in which the interests of two parties tend to be incompatible. In situations of conflict, we can define the actions of an individual in two simple dimensions: (1) assertiveness, the degree to which the person seeks to satisfy his or her concerns, and (2) cooperativeness, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns. These two dimensions of behaviour can be used to define five methods of dealing with conflict. These five conflict resolution modes are shown below.

Thomas identified five conflict-handling modes; Avoiding (unassertive, uncooperative), Competing (assertive, uncooperative), Accommodating (unassertive, cooperative), Collaborating (assertive, cooperative), and Compromising (intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness). This two-dimensional model provided some major advantages to conflict researchers (Tjosvold, 1996), as it presented a comprehensive way in which conflict behaviour is perceived by parties in conflict; additionally, it identified a variety of alternatives to competition, including collaboration.

Thomas (1983) viewed collaboration as an approach to conflict that transcended zero-sum assumptions; thus, he recommended a means of resolving conflict through problem-solving rather than through power struggles (Thomas, 1977). Thomas-Kilmann (1986) designed an instrument to assess an individual's behaviour in conflict situations. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), named after its creators, assessed individuals' behaviour when dealing with situations in which the concerns of two people appeared to be incompatible. Behaviour was described along two basic dimensions: (a) assertiveness, the extent to which individuals attempted to satisfy their concerns, and (b) cooperativeness, the extent to which individuals attempted to satisfy the other person's concerns.

2.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study was adopted from Sluzki's (2010) six stages of a conflict. These stages are conflicts, coexistence, collaboration, cooperation, interdependence and integration.

Table 1 overleaf shows Sluzi's 2010 model that offered a sound framework for the study.

Stage	Narrative	Emotion
Conflict	"Hostility is the only option"	Contempt, hostility, elation
Coexistence	"We are ready for hostile acts when needed"	Resentment, anger
Collaboration	"Hostilities are a fallback option"	Ambivalence
Cooperation	"Hostilities would be a major disadvantage."	Cautious empathy
Interdependence	"We need each other."	Acceptance of the past; cautious trust
Integration	"We are one."	Solidarity, friendly trust

Table 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study on Stages of Conflict

Source: Adopted from Sluzki (2010)

- Stage 1: Conflict: This stage entails active involvement in hostilities intending to damage the other party's life, livelihood or well-being. The basic tenets to establish or maintain a dialogue are broken. The participants'

emotions include hostility and contempt for the opponent. The rules of engagement with this study are clearly those of the zero-sum game: "Your loss is my gain."

- Stage 2: Coexistence: This stage is marked by the ability of the parties to coexist without open acts of violence. This stage remains dominated by behaviours that indicate ill intent. The prevailing emotions promoting and maintained by this point are the other party's anger and distrust. The rules of engagement between the parties continue to follow the principles of zero-sum play.
- Stage 3: Collaboration: Although suspicions of ill-intention remain a context, the scenario changes when certain activities in common or joint ventures are launched. The contact between the two parties is characterized by caution and a very cautious use of terms. A calmer ambivalence begins to reduce the clouds of mistrust as a dominant emotion.
- Stage 4: Cooperation: This stage is characterized by working together, and pursuing common goals. The dominant idea is "They may not be our friends, but they aren't acting like our foes". The parties realize that Hostilities would be a major drawback for all of those involved and peace is desirable.
- Stage 5: Interdependence: At this point, the realization of shared objectives overshadows the remnants of ill assumptions as the parties participate in cooperation and actions for the common good. Dominant ideologies indicate a consensus that "We need each other. Hostility would be childish, "and the positive aspect of the partnership must be carefully managed. Dominant emotions can include recognition of the past, and even forgiveness of past misdeeds, with caution and open attachment.
- Stage 6: Integration: This stage is characterized by an implicit assumption of good intentions which are displayed in plans, actions and strategies. Each party contributes to the growth and happiness of another. The dominant idea is "We are one. Hostilities do not even enter into consideration." The dominant emotions are solidarity, friendly trust, and perhaps even love.

2.3. Concept of Leadership

Although leadership is just an expression that is often used in conversation and is frequently described by various adjectives such as good leadership, influential leadership, effective leadership, poor leadership and bad leadership. Most scholars have concluded that the concept of leadership does not attribute to one specific definition. For instance, according to Northouse (2001), leadership is described as the selection of bases of influence. The transformational approach views leadership as a shared process. The outcome of this process is the ability to transform oneself, others, and the organization to new, unimagined heights of motivation and performance.

2.4. Concept of Conflict

According to Richard (2010), conflict is a disagreement between two or more people or between two or more choices. Similarly, Cannon (2004) simply refer to conflict as a disagreement or struggle between two or more people. Expanding on this definition, Babbitt and Hampson (2011) also state that 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 aroused and compromise are not considered an option. On the other hand, Brown (2002) writes that conflict is a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more people or groups of people, which is sometimes characterized by physical violence or assault. While Carter (2012) defines conflict as a situation, in which opposing viewpoints have come into a physical confrontation.

2.5. Nature of Conflict

Corvette (2007) stressed that Conflict is a part of life in organizations. Conflict is not something real, but it exists in the minds of the people who are party to it. It becomes visible as it shows itself in weeping, brooding, or battling. The problem is the failure of people to handle and overcome it effectively. Conflict can be positive if managed effectively. If not, conflict can be a destructive force in people and organisations.

Dana (2011) opines that we live in an age of conflict. In most organisations, the level and number of conflicts seem to be increasing. Employees are becoming more assertive in seeking their share of organizational incentives, such as rank, recognition, compensation, benefits and autonomy. Conflicts between groups are also growing. As there are so many interest and pressure groups in organisations, it is difficult to find a sense of community and reach any kind of agreement among them. Organizational functions, which are becoming increasingly complex, involve coordination between different functional and technical classes. This increased demand for the interdependence of tasks appears to promote group conflict. It has been argued that a dysfunctional dispute is an unhealthy, damaging disagreement between two or more individuals, that it transfers the attention of the participants from the work to be done to the dispute itself and the parties involved... This type of conflict becomes an obstacle in front of any movement toward development or better performance in organisations.

Wall and Callister (2009) concur with the above authors and indicates that men and women who have no calling to teaching vocation take up the training as teachers but have no interest in looking after the young people. These teachers find themselves inside the classroom doing a job they do not like but because they need money, they stick. He also indicates that due to lack of interest in teaching, the teachers become increasingly brutal to the students. Such teachers also become patronize to the politicians and receive protection. A teacher in this category causes trouble to the headteacher because he is sure of protection from the politician who would use the teacher to tilt scales in the political battlefield.

Ross (2009) demonstrates that some teachers are forced into the teaching profession without commitment. These teachers cause problems, lack discipline, and are chronic absentees in schools. Some engage in immoral acts with students or incite them against the school administration. Davies and Lindsay (2004) affirm the above views and indicate that there are teachers who take up the noble teaching profession yet they have no interest in it. These teachers display incompetence, laziness and lack interest in students' work. They lack self-discipline and are biased and inconsistent in their application of punishment meted out to students who break school rules. These teachers have no respect for school administration and sometimes incite students against the head.

Other administrators (headteachers) perceive causes of conflicts in their school as due to lack of commitment to work in their schools. There are things that principals do in their schools that posed a serious challenge to school management. Some of these include absenteeism, perennial lateness, dishonesty, inaccessibility and being autocrat or dictatorial according to Davies (2014). He further reveals that some headteachers have been forced to deal with conflicts in their schools, which are due to their own making. Some headteachers fail to perform well in educational administration because of frequent absenteeism in their schools. Babbitt and Hampson (2011) concur with these views and indicated that situations sometimes arose where the conflicts developed into serious personal differences between the stakeholders and were transferred into school environments. Cases arose sometimes when the headteacher was engaged in conflicts with a parent due to differences traced way back in their neighbourhood at home (Babbitt & Hampson, 2011). Melamed and Robbins (2010) have outlined the following as some of the common causes of conflict in the workplace.

2.6. Conflict of Interest

According to Hayes (2012), conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trusts, such as a lawyer, a politician, or an executive or a director of a corporation has competing for professional or personal interests. Such competitive interest will make it difficult to carry out its duties impartially. Nir and Eyal (2013) also defines conflict of interest as any situation in which an individual or a corporation (either private or government) is in a position to exploit a professional or official capacity in some way for their benefit. Conflict, therefore, arises when individuals in key or managerial positions try to use their office to subdue others.

In a school situation, for example, a head may by his position dupe (demand money and other material things) from teachers who default their professional obligations during inspections to fulfil his desire and ignore the professional goal of his or her visits. Conflict may occur if the demands become unbearable or the teachers resist complying with the conditions of the head (Nir & Eyal, 2013). Correspondingly, in this instance, Conflict of interest may give rise to an appearance of impropriety that may undermine confidence in that person's ability to act properly in his or her position and delay the achievement of the organizational objective. Contrary to this perspective, Hayes (2012) point out that conflict is caused by factors such as availability of resources, the fulfilment of psychological needs upholding personal values and maintaining self-preservation. These factors are explained as follows:

2.7. Values

Values are the beliefs, goals and standards held by people and as Mayer (2009) posits, Values are the principles people use to give meaning to their lives. Principles clarify what is good or evil, right or wrong, right or wrong, right or wrong. In agreeing with this definition, Bondesio (2010) asserts that values help one to define what is right or wrong in any situation, and provide a moral compass for one's life. According to them, conflict normally occurs when people who have different standards and beliefs make decisions.

However, as Mayer (2009) states, value differences are triggered by suspected or real conflicting belief structures. They demonstrate that value conflicts occur only when people want to impose one set of values on others or assert exclusive value structures that do not make room for divergent beliefs. To this, Hayes (2012) suggests that It is not helpful to try to change value and belief systems through relatively short and strategic mediation interventions; rather, it may be useful. helpful to support each participant's expression of their values and beliefs for acknowledgement by the other party. On the other hand, Mayer (2009) disagrees and makes it clear that different values do not need to cause conflict because people can live together in harmony with different value systems.

2.8. Self-preservation

Self-preservation refers to the inner desire to keep oneself and others safe from harm Bass (2013). This may include preserving physical, mental and social wellbeing. Conflict may occur when people harm or threaten to harm others. It can be seen that different factors can cause conflict at certain places and such factors serve as a conduit for conflict to occur. If people send their values and beliefs to workplaces, marriages and communities, there is bound to be a high probability for conflict to unfold as different people interact and work together (Bass, 2013).

2.9. The Role of the School Culture

The school culture gives its teachers a guide as to how they should conduct themselves (Flippo, 2009). The schools that have positive, collegial and professional culture show productivity and good results, while those with a truly negative culture show poor productivity, teaching and relationships (Flippo, 2009). Negative school cultures are associated with negative relationships and conflict (Flippo, 2009). However, parts of the school often have their own cultures and where these results in an issue, being reviewed in different ways cultures can give rise to conflicts (Robbins, 2014). Cultural clashes also tend to surface in a merger between departments of the school, or when departments have to work together on a certain project (Robbins, 2010). Another way in which culture can establish predisposition towards conflict is in those schools where the culture emphasizes competition. The teachers may believe that it is good for subunits or

departments to compete; therefore, they often establish structures and processes that encourage competition (Robbins, 2014). However, competition has the potential for conflict.

2.10. Teacher-learner Relationship

Teachers who maintained close relationships with learners reported that the learners were less likely to avoid school, seemed more self-directed, more cooperative, and more dedicated to learning. (Sava, 2012). These learners also mentioned being fonder of school and feeling less depression if they had a close relationship with their teachers. (Robbins & Alvy, 2013). Learners with good teacher-learner relationships showed better performance on measures of academic performance and school readiness and developed better social skills than those learners with tense relationships with their teachers (Vivar, 2016).

However, conflict arises due to the different teacher-learner relationship styles maintained by teachers. The humanistic and custodial approaches are distinguished. The humanistic approach emphasizes the importance of learners and the creation of an atmosphere that meets the needs of learners and leads to a democratic orientation between learners and teachers. (Sava, 2012). In this model, the relationship with learners is intimate, teachers are positive and open channels of communication are established. (Sava, 2012). The custodial approach is a conventional school model that offers a stable and controlled environment by stressing the preservation of order. (Sava, 2012). Learners are considered irresponsible and unruly, teacher-learner relationships are impersonal, and pessimism and mistrust prevail. (Sava, 2012). The conflict brought about by the two approaches may become more pronounced when learners have to be disciplined—since the humanistic approach teachers may be more lenient, while the custodial approach teachers may be extremely harsh.

2.11. Allocation of Responsibilities and Duties

The differences in the teachers' responsibilities, the levels of responsibilities and the frames of reference in the school may also become sources of conflict (Armstrong, 2010). In many schools, senior teachers, who are generally matured and experienced in teaching may be expected to give guidance to the young and newly appointed teachers, and monitor the work of young and newly appointed teachers—in addition to their duties and responsibilities (Robbins, 2014). This could cause tensions between the young and the more senior teachers. The young teachers may not fully understand the pressures and responsibilities of senior teachers and may view the involvement of the senior teachers in their work as an intrusion (Robbins, 2014). The young teachers may, therefore, not show the cooperation and support required of them. This could cause conflict between young and senior teachers.

The nature of duties and responsibilities also has the potential to cause conflict in schools. Many teachers view responsibilities such as scholar traffic patrol, ground duties and toilet cleaning as undermining their integrity (Le Roux, 2012). This could cause conflict among teachers, especially if these duties are not rotated. In many African schools, some male teachers have the responsibility of disciplining learners, especially in schools where the administering of corporal punishment is still the norm (Armstrong 2000). To Armstrong, this practice promotes the perception that female teachers have lower status than male teachers. This could cause conflict between male and female teachers, especially in cases where male teachers are reluctant to administer corporal punishment for whatever reason.

2.12. Lack of Communication

Robbins (2014) believes that communication in the school rate high on the sources of conflict. Conflict may be a result of lack of communication or inability to express oneself properly (Robbins, 2000). In a school set-up, the heads mostly convey messages to the teachers on which the teachers, in turn, have to communicate the same message to the students. This is vertical communication (Robbins, 2014). Then teachers may distribute the message among themselves. This becomes lateral communication (Robbins, 2014). The message may be distorted as it is communicated to the other teachers since it may no longer be the same message as it was communicated by the head. The distortion may be worse when the message is communicated by one teacher to another teacher; it may also lead to wrong interpretations or may become gossip (Robbins, 2010). Consequently, a communication gap may exist between teachers and head, as well as among teachers themselves (Robbins 2014).

Ineffective communication may play a great role in causing conflict, since it may negatively affect actions taken, feedback received and strategies to be implemented (Barker, 2009). Barker further believes that effective communication is preceded by planning how to pass messages across. Conflict may also result from situations where teachers feel that what they hear about their school is not adequate—a feeling that information is being withheld, or the information they receive is incorrect (Baker, 2009). The teachers' suspicion that outsiders may know more than they do may lead to conflict between teachers and the school management, and among teachers themselves. Personality factors.

2.13. Research Design

Descriptive design was used in this study. The research design refers to a detailed plan of how a research study is to be conducted using operational variables to be measured, selecting samples of interest, and the data collection process for answering research questions and testing assumptions, an analysis of data (Creswell, 2008). According to Bryman (2012), research design provides the framework for the collection and analysis of data. From the researcher's point of view, research design refers to the plan of action that links the philosophical assumptions to specific methods. Thus, research design serves as a blueprint that guides a researcher on the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data.

2.14. Population of the Study

The total population of this study is 454. This comprised 5 headteachers, 50 teachers and 399 students from the five schools in Kanda Custer of schools. The accessible population is 352: 5 headteachers, 50 teachers and 297 students.

2.15. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The total sample size for the study was 454, multi-stage sampling technique (purposive, comprehensive selection (criterion-based) and simple random sampling techniques) were used to select participants for the study. First, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the five schools in Kanda Cluster of schools. The reason was that these schools were experiencing conflicts involving headteachers and teachers and this conflict had impacted negatively on the academic performance of students. The power of purposive sampling is to select information-rich participants (Patton, 2002).

3. Data Analysis Procedure

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics such as simple frequency counts and percentages were used to analyse research questions 1. Also, inferential statistics such as linear multiple regression was used to analyse hypothesis 1 and 2. The reason was that these hypotheses sought to find out the extent to which the independent variables (conflicts among headteachers and teachers) influenced the dependent variable (academic performance of students). Indeed, Statistical Product and Services Solution-(SPSS) (version 21) was used to aid in the interpretation of statistics.

4. Data Analysis and Discussions

- Ho1: Student academic performance would not be significantly influenced by Teacher/Headteacher Conflicts.
- H1: Student academic performance would be significantly influenced by Teacher/Headteacher Conflicts.

The hypothesis sought to investigate the degree to which the dispute influences the academic performance of students in the Kanda school cluster. Linear multiple regression was used to analyse the data. The results are presented in Tables 2 and 2overleaf for teachers and headteachers respectively.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Conflicts	-10.323	1.119		-9.225	.000
Academic Performance	.470	.010	.855	46.397	.000

Table 2: Coefficients Result of Linear Multiple Regression by Teachers
Source: Field Data, (2018)
($p > 0.05$)

The results from Table 3 show that conflicts contributed significantly to the academic performance of students ($\beta = .855$, $p = .000$) at 0.05 alpha level. This result implies that the independent variable (conflicts between teachers and headteachers) influenced the dependent variable (academic performance of students). The results signify that students' academic performance cannot be described without mentioning conflicts between teachers and headteachers. The results could also infer that conflicts between teachers and headteachers were a key issue to boarder about when it comes to students' academic performance at Kanda Custer of School. Table 4 shows the results of linear multiple regression for headteachers.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Conflicts	-0.323	1.021		-1.201	.000
Academic Performance	.10	.010	.212	1.231	.000

Table 3: Coefficients Result of Linear Multiple Regression by Headteachers
Source: Field Data, (2018)
($P > 0.05$)

The results from Table 2 show that conflicts contributed significantly to the academic performance of students ($\beta = .212$, $p = .000$) at 0.05 alpha level. This result implies that the independent variable (conflicts between teachers and headteachers) influenced the dependent variable (academic performance of students). The results infer that the academic performance of students relied more on conflicts between teachers and headteachers. This could suggest that if conflicts are well managed in the school, it could help improve the academic performance of students and vice versa. From these results as indicated from Tables 2 and 3, it was concluded that conflicts significantly ($p = .000$) affected the academic performance of students in Kanda cluster of schools at 0.05 alpha level.

The findings concur that of Freiberg, Driscoll and Knights (2009) who use the notion of academic self-concept referring to individuals' knowledge and perceptions about themselves in academic achievements, and convictions that they can successfully perform given academic tasks at designated levels. They further stated that conflicts in the school can

significantly ($p=.000$) influence the academic performance of students. It was added that academic success reflects a more past-oriented, aggregated and reasonably stable judgment on one's self-perceived capacity in a specific academic context. Domain; while academic self-efficacy reflects a context-specific and reasonably forward-looking judgment on self-confidence for successful completion of the next subject-specific academic mission. Also, Good as cited in Freiberg, (2008) stated that conflicts can influence the academic achievement of students which encompasses actual accomplishment of the students of potential ability.

Also, Karcher (2009, p.12) stated that: there are two broad groups of definitions of academic achievement. The first may be considered more analytical since it relates to the numerical scores of the student's understanding, which measure the degree of adaptation of the student to school work and the education system. The second category is more subjective since its assessment of academic performance depends on the student's attitudes towards his or her academic achievement and on himself or herself, as well as on the attitudes of significant others towards his or herself. It was concluded that school conflicts could significantly influence the academic performance of students when not well managed.

Ichado (2008) also found that conflicts in the school can significantly ($p=0.02$) lead to low academic performance of students. Ichado (2008) considers low academic performance or academic failure as the situation in which the subject does not attain the expected achievement according to his or her abilities, resulting in an altered personality which affects all other aspects of life. Similarly, Tapia as cited in Ichado (2008) notes that whereas the current educational system perceives that a student fails if he or she fails to do so, it is more acceptable to assess if a student performs below his or her ability.

Moreover, Aliade (2008) defines Bad academic performance as a result measured by the examiner or testee and any other significance as falling below the anticipated level. The understanding of this anticipated or desired quality is best measured by the eternal cognitive capacity of the performance evaluator. Therefore, the evaluator or assessor can offer different interpretations depending on certain factors. It was concluded that school conflicts could have a significant impact on the academic performance of students. Botha, (2010) Described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below the required standard. The standards of excellence may vary from 40 to 100 depending on the subjective assessment of the evaluator or the assessor.

For example, a 70 per cent performance of Third Year Senior High students and in Junior High English Language examination is by all standards a very good performance. However, a cursory look at the performance and the individual examined and the standard of the examination he or she took could reveal that the performance was a very poor one. This shows that the concept of poor academic performance is very relative and this depends on so many intervening variables. Several studies have been conducted on how teachers' leadership styles affect students' performance. For example, Ross and Gray, (2006) discovered in a study conducted in Canada that teachers are often perceived as accountable for students' academic performance, but most researchers found that teachers have a very little direct impact on students' academic performance. The researchers hypothesized that teachers indirectly contributed to students' academic performance through teacher commitment and beliefs about their collective capacity. Ross and Gray re-analysed data from a database to test the link between leadership and students' academic performance. A total of 205 schools within two districts and 3,042 teachers were retained for research. Student academic performance was tested in grades three through six.

Data collection was performed using Likert items with a 6-point response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Results indicate that that the teachers' effects on academic performance of students primarily occur through leadership contributions to teacher perception of capacities, commitment to professional values and collective teacher efficacy. The indirect influence of leadership on student academic performance was minimal. Results indicate that every 1.0 standard deviation increase in transformational leadership resulted in a.222 SD increase in student academic results. The results indicated that the academic performance effects of leadership continue to be indirect, as the path from leadership to students' academic performance of (standardized regression weight .113, $p=.502$) was not statistically significant.

Likewise, the path from collective teacher efficacy, standardized regression weight of .270, $p = .122$ was also not statistically significant, suggested that the impact of mutual teaching effectiveness on achievement is likely to be mediated by a teacher's dedication to professional values. Research suggests that principals who pursue a transformational style of leadership have a greater effect on teachers' dedication to the school mission ($r = .75$; $p<.01$), which could have an indirect impact on the school process and student achievement.

In school situations, sometimes parents differ greatly with the teachers over the academic performance of their children. According to Mike (2010), parents place a lot of pressure on the teachers claiming that they contribute to the poor academic performance of the students. Such parents at times agitate for the removal of the headteacher and transfer of teachers to other schools. The students sometimes support the parents in the move and become indisciplined to the extent of physically demanding for the removal of the teachers. This is supported by Canary Cupach and Messman (2009) that poorly performing schools many at times are characterised by a lot of conflicts by the stakeholders

4.1. Research Question 1

What are the conflict management strategies used by headteachers to resolve conflict among headteachers and teachers at Kanda cluster of schools?

Results from Table 3 shows that majority 30 (60%) of the teachers strongly agreed to the statement that compromise is sometimes used to resolve conflicts, as compared to accommodating style is often used to resolve conflicts (56%), avoidance is frequently used to resolve conflicts (50%), confrontation is most of the time used to resolve conflicts

(50%) and collaboration is sometimes used to resolve conflicts (48%). It was evident from these results that headteachers put in some mechanisms to reduce conflicts in their schools.

	Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Compromise is sometimes used to resolve conflicts	3	6	25	50	8	16	30	60
2.	Accommodating style is often used to resolve conflicts	4	8	3	6	15	30	28	56
3.	Collaboration is sometimes used to resolve conflicts	5	10	18	36	3	6	24	48
4.	Avoidance is frequently used to resolve conflicts	6	12	10	20	9	18	25	50
5.	Confrontation is most of the time used to resolve conflicts	3	6	4	8	18	36	25	50

*Table 4: Results by Teachers on Conflict Management Strategies Used by Headteachers to Resolve Conflict
N=50*

Source: Fieldwork Data (2018)

Table 5 shows the results by headteachers on mechanisms they use to manage conflicts in their schools.

	Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Compromise is sometimes used to resolve conflicts	1	20	1	20	0	0	3	60
2.	Accommodating style is often used to resolve conflicts	0	0	0	0	1	20	4	80
3.	Collaboration is sometimes used to resolve conflicts	1	20	0	0	1	20	3	60
4.	Avoidance is frequently used to resolve conflicts	1	20	0	0	1	20	3	60
5.	Confrontation is most of the time used to resolve conflicts	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	100

*Table 5: Results by Headteachers on Conflict Management Strategies Used by Headteachers to Resolve Conflict
N=5*

Source: Fieldwork Data (2018)

Results from Table 5 show that all the headteachers strongly agreed that confrontation is most of the time used to resolve conflicts 5 (100%), followed by accommodating style is often used to resolve conflicts (80%), compromise is sometimes used to resolve conflicts (60%), collaboration is sometimes used to resolve conflicts (60%), and avoidance is frequently used to resolve conflicts (60%). From these results, it could be understood that headteachers believed in confronting individuals who are involved in conflicts as a way of resolving it could help them gather firsthand information that could be used to judge the case. Based on the results from Tables 3 and 4 it was concluded that mechanisms used to resolve conflicts by headteachers included: compromise, accommodating style, avoidance and confrontation.

This finding is in line with that of Bell and Song (2005) who emphasized that heads employed collaborating conflict management strategy to resolve conflict among teachers as collaborating embrace an involve of high agreeableness and high activeness and serve as both parties concerns are too important to be compromised. Deutsch and Coleman (2000) on the other hand found the problem-solving (collaborating) style to be more effective than other styles for attaining integration. They emphasized that collaborating style drives towards constructing solutions to conflict that meet the needs of all parties involved (each party in conflict desires to completely resolve the concerns of both parties; tries to collaborate with the other party to find a solution that completely addresses the concerns of both parties; seeking a problem to define the underlying issues of both people and finding an option that meets both issues). Also, Blitman (2002) calls out that in collaborating style parties are open, exchange information, examine differences between parties in order to reach a solution acceptable to both parties, and show openness to each other. Also, Blitman (2002) further added that the parties involve might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights, concluding to resolve some condition which would otherwise have opponents competing for resources, or confronting and trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.

5. Conclusion

From the study, it was established that student academic performance was significantly significantly influenced by the conflicts between teachers and head teachers. Indeed, the Inverse relation that existed between conflict and students' academic performance indicated That the more conflicts within schools go up, the more students' academic performance suffered. It was also established that if you are a headteacher in a Ghanaian basic school, you are more Likely to succeed when you resort to blend accommodating, avoidance and confrontational approaches in the management of your teachers.

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