

Causes of conflict among school personnel in Gwanda District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: This study sought to investigate causes of conflict in the urban and peri-urban secondary schools in Gwanda District, Zimbabwe. The instruments used were survey questionnaire and interview with the selected respondents. The descriptive survey design was used to collect data through survey questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The data was presented using tables and percentages. The results show, that conflicts in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools occur among teachers in the same department; among teachers in different departments; between teachers and the school heads and among teachers, parents and students. The study established that conflict was influenced by both structural and personal factors among personnel in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. The main structural causes of conflict were identified as sharing of resources, poor work conditions and administrative style used by leadership. The major personal factors that cause conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools were differences in personalities, poor dissemination of information and favoritism at work by leadership. The study recommended that school heads and Heads of Departments be equipped with conflict resolution skills in order to identify potential causes of conflict and subsequently manage conflict in schools. The study further recommended the establishment of conflict resolution committees in every school and that government and School Development Committees work towards improving teachers' working conditions to reduce the rate of conflict in schools.

Keywords, Causes, Conflict, urban, peri-urban, structural factors, personal factors

I. INTRODUCTION

The study focused on the causes of conflict in urban and peri-urban Secondary Schools in Gwanda District. In schools, conflict usually occurs between school heads and teachers, teachers and teachers, teachers and pupils, teachers and parents, pupils and pupils, and schools and their community (Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah 2015). Conflict is part of daily life, normal, essential and unavoidable human phenomenon (Doğan, 2016) because where there is human interaction; there is a likelihood of agreements and disagreements. These agreements and disagreements among individuals and groups lead to conflicts. Literature cited by Johdi and Apitree (2012), Shahmohammadi (2014) and Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah (2015) indicate that conflict happens whenever disagreements exist in a social setting over issues of substance or whenever emotional antagonism creates friction, disagreement or discord between individuals or groups when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group. Kipyego (2013) concurs with Laue (1990) in Johdi & Apitree (2012) and Tschannen-Moran, 2001 in Shahmohammadi, 2014) in that conflict pertains to the opposing ideas and actions of different entities fueled by the opposition of one party to another, in an attempt to reach an objective different from that of the other party resulting in an antagonistic state. Conflict is also viewed as a relational disagreement or incompatibility disagreements between and among individuals and groups over incompatible goals, resources, thoughts, rewards or emotions which lead to bitterness and opposition (Behrman, 1998; Borisoff & Victor (1989) in Barmao 2012; (Doğan, 2016); Laue 1990 in Johdi & Apitree, 2012; Shahmohammadi, 2014; Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah 2015; Owens (1995) in Adeyemi, 2009). Laue (1990) in Johdi & Apitree, (2012) expressed that conflict may arise when wants, needs and beliefs between two or more parties struggle to agree. In other words conflict occurs whenever people disagree over their interest, needs, wants or values, goals, motivations, perceptions, ideas or even desires. Conflict can therefore be said to be a contest or disagreement between two or more opposing parties with differing needs, ideas, beliefs, values and goals co-existing in the same organization and can be harmful to employee satisfaction and job performance if it becomes excessive and unmanageable.

When conflict occurs there is a tendency for morale to be lowered hence it connotes a stressful, unhappy, depressing, annoying and frustrating state of affairs that may adversely affect teaching, learning, and

schooling effectiveness (Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah, 2015). Within the school institutions conflict makes the educational process more complicated.

A study carried out in Nkayi District in Zimbabwe by Mapolisa & Tshabalala (2013) revealed that almost every week the head has to deal with one or two cases of conflict. Another study by Makaye & Ndofirepi (2012) on Conflict Resolution between heads and teachers in Masvingo District in Zimbabwe also indicated that barely a month passes without either the head conflicting with the teachers or the teachers amongst themselves. The Chronicle Newspaper of the 26th of June 2014 reported a case of conflict in one High School in the city of Bulawayo between the school teacher and a student which finally resulted in a physical fight in which the student beat the teacher after a dispute over gloves that were not part of the school attire.

According to De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider (2006) in Johdi & Apitree (2012), (Doğan, 2016), Mapolisa & Tshabalala (2013), Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah (2015) and Dick & Thodlana (2013) conflict is a fact of life and is inevitable at all levels of human life and is a common phenomenon in organizations and workplaces and that if managed effectively, conflict can be constructive or functional and if not, it can be a destructive or dysfunctional force in people and organizations. While functional conflict can present opportunities for improvement, dysfunctional conflict is unhealthy, destructive and can create unwanted divergence in their learning environment and shift the focus of teachers and students in a school situation from the work to be done to the conflict itself and the parties involved (Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah, 2015). In the school environment conflict can have adverse effects on the academic environment, including affecting the morale of educators, the pace at which they work, and increasing absenteeism and negatively impacts on pupils' performance and can become an obstacle towards achieving educational development or better performance (Jennings & Wattam, 2004 in Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah, 2015; Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013). Doğan (2016) and Rawlings (1996) in Dick & Thodlana (2013) argues that if conflict is properly managed it presents ideal opportunities for learning or improved efficiency, develops the skills of communication, opens up important issues or highlights problems, develops trust, relieves anxiety, suspicion and trust and brings about sustainable development. Conflict therefore is part of doing business to any wise leader and is not necessarily a bad thing as long as it is managed effectively. Basically, the factors of organizational conflict in school can be classified into two main categories: structural factors and personal factors, (Johdi & Apitree, 2012). It is the concern of this study to identify the causes of conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban Secondary Schools. Structural factors are discussed next.

II. STRUCTURAL FACTORS AS SOURCES OF CONFLICT

The structural factors relate to the nature of the organization and the way in which work is organized (Johdi & Apitree, 2012). These include administration incompetence, specialization, and in-discipline among the teachers, status differences, sharing resources, goal differences and poor working conditions.

Some conflict situations among the school personnel are a result of the head's leadership style. A study by Dick & Thodlana (2013) in Zimbabwe revealed that much of the school management practices was characterized mainly by dictatorial tendencies reinforced by top-down chain of command with inflexible administrative mandates from higher levels of authority enforced with harsh consequences for any form of dissent. Often there is underlying tension between school heads and teachers because most people do not like being told what to do as is usually the case with an overly strict and autocratic school head who is frequently in conflict with the teachers (Johdi & Apitree, 2012).

Specialization among teachers can be a cause of conflict in schools. Secondary Schools are staffed with experienced long serving teachers and inexperienced young teachers who have recently graduated from training with the most recent teaching ideas. As such, staff members in a school or department have different levels of specialized subject related knowledge. It is this specialized training and knowledge that trained teachers use to scold the untrained non degreed and degreed temporary teachers deployed in the Secondary schools resulting in conflict among the parties. Conflict can result when an experienced teacher must work with a novice who has good theoretical knowledge but few practical skills (Auerbach & Dolan, 1997 in Shahmohammadi, 2014). For example, a long-serving teacher in the school who is familiar to teach in the old way will have a conflict with young newcomer teacher who has an advanced technique of teaching, (Pukkapan, 1999 in Shahmohammadi, 2014). The young teachers may perceive the elderly teachers as old fashioned. The two different perceptions of teaching held by the recently graduated young teachers and by the experienced long serving teachers may result in conflict when the two groups are unwilling to work together.

Indiscipline among the teachers may be a source of conflict in schools. Seamuns in Kipiyege (2013) argues that some teachers go into the teaching profession as a last resort when other alternatives of employment have failed to materialize and it is these teachers that never settle in their jobs as teachers. Seamuns in Kipiyege (2013) argues that such teachers work only to earn a salary and they are bound to complain, murmur, grumble, relax and even fight the school head who demands that work be done. To them, always the head is in the centre of blame. The current economic problems in Zimbabwe have resulted in lack of employment forcing many young

people to join the teaching profession not because they like it but because they have no other option. In this case heads of schools are likely to encounter challenges when dealing with such teachers who lack commitment and dedication to the profession. On the other hand, Kiyego (2013) postulates that it is not only indiscipline from teachers, but other behavior committed by the school heads that also pose a challenge to school management and these include absenteeism, lateness, dishonesty, inaccessibility and autocracy. Such school heads as posited by Katumanga in Kipyego (2013) find it very difficult to enforce discipline among their own teachers.

Status differences can be another source of conflict in schools. In many organizations, including schools, principals are granted privilege denied to other employees or teachers. For instance, managers and principals may enjoy flexible hours, free personal long-distance calls, and longer breaks (Johdi & Apitree, 2012; Shahmohammadi, 2014). According to Walker in Kipyego (2013) some school heads tend to be taken up by status of their position that they regard themselves as inseparable from office. Whoever challenges such authority often has to encounter aggression and threats. Such actions on the part of the school head also cause conflict between the teachers and the head.

Provision and sharing of scarce resources is a common cause of conflict in schools. Schools have limited resources that must be shared equitably among teachers and learners of which some might get less than what they desire. According to Johdi & Apitree (2012) and Shahmohammadi (2014) in many schools teachers are obliged to share the scarce resources and the scarcer the resources are, the greater is the potential for conflict. Dick & Thodlana (2013) argue that in schools it is not feasible for all departments to get a budgetary allocation of funds that enable the departments to purchase all their requirements. Hence some are likely to get more and others less. This inequitable distribution of scarce resources creates conflict between departments, teachers and between departments and school management (Dick & Thodlana, 2013; Kipkemboi and Kipruto, 2013). Similarly, lack of adequate physical and financial resources was also noted as one of the major factor that influenced management conflicts in Kipkaren Division (Kipkemboi & Kipruto 2013). Kipkemboi & Kipruto (2013) posited that some conflict among the school personnel sometimes is a result of inadequate school resources. In some cases heads of schools are blamed for the lack of teaching and learning resources resulting in conflict between school administration and teachers or parents. In some schools where there are double sessions or hot-sitting, classes share the same classrooms and furniture. If one class using the classroom first delays to vacate the classroom timeously or fails to handover a clean and swept classroom for the next session, conflict between the two teachers might occur. Teachers quite often blame the school heads for not providing requisite resources yet the same heads are quick to demand good results.

Champoux (2003) in Johdi & Apitree (2012) and Deutsch (1973) in Madziyire et al. (2010) contend that schools are complex and dynamic places where teachers and departments develop different ways of doing their work hence develop different and incompatible goals which increase the chances of conflict among staff members. Schools are composed of teachers with differences in age, cultural backgrounds, ethics, and values, beliefs, goals, attitudes, socio-economic status and political persuasions hence there is bound to be conflict when such teachers come to work together with their perceptions on issues is different (Madziyire, Mukeredzi, Mubika & Thodlana, 2010; Rahim, 2001 in Shahmohammadi, 2014). Madziyire et al (2010) posit that such incompatible activities and goals exist among the teachers in the education system from time to time. In a school situation, different departments may extensively concentrate on the achievement of their departmental goals and might not be willing to cooperate with one or two other departments when a need arises hence conflict ensues (Madziyire et al. 2010). In some schools administration might desire to save funds while at the same time demanding good results in such instance teachers may request that funds be allocated for purchasing the desired teaching and learning material, clashing with the ideas of the school administration resulting in conflict. In some instances the school head and head of academic department might have different goals for improving the quality of teaching in the school. The school head might prefer to recruit newly graduated teachers with more advanced teaching skills while the head of academic department might prefer to train the long serving teachers the new teaching techniques.

Okotoni & Okotoni (2003) noted that teachers work in highly de-motivating conditions due to poor pay by the government. Such a scenario is quite evident in Zimbabwe where for a long time teachers have been confronted with dire situations in terms of conditions of service. Some schools face a lot of difficulties in providing the necessary facilities and even teaching materials. Manayiti reported in the *Newsday* of 4 September (2014) that education facilities in many parts of Zimbabwe are still in a sorry state. Besides the high literacy rate associated with Zimbabwe, school infrastructure has remained an eyesore and the government has been challenged to work on improving the education sector. According to the report, some schools do not have basic facilities including staffroom and teaching materials while some school heads lack even offices to transact official duties. Such conditions are highly de-motivating and constitute fertile ground to stir up conflict of any nature.

Personal factors as sources of conflict

The personal factors relate to differences between organizational members (Johdi & Apitree, 2012). The most common personal factors associated with personal conflict are the level of skills and abilities, different personalities, poor communication, favoritism at work and feeling insecure at work by leadership.

Teachers as human beings have different personalities which result in them doing things differently. These diverse personalities can create the potential for conflict (Ndhlovu 2006). Rahim (2001) in Johdi & Apitree (2012) admitted that different personalities are a reality in any group setting, including the school workplace as there always seems to be one co-worker who is difficult to get along with. There are some people who are generally referred to as difficult to deal with. G. & A. Partners (2010) identified the following as the difficult people to deal with in conflict resolution: the bulldozer, the exploder, the complainer, the wet blanket, the know it all, the abrasive person and the staller. The bulldozers are those that are abusive and abrupt while the exploders are those that burst in emotions and are filled with rage. The wet blanket are the pessimistic, they always believe things will never work as long as there has been a conflict. The “know it all” are those that call themselves experts in all matters while the abrasive person is often hardworking and achievement oriented, but critical and insensitive to others’ feelings and finally the stallers are the habitually indecisive.

Different personalities, according to Johdi & Apitree(2013) can result in underlying tension between school heads and some teachers. Some teachers are reluctant to obey the principals, they do not like to follow rules or accept extra work, hence do not easily get along with their principals. This is because most people do not like being told what to do. According to Shahmohammadi (2014) principals too adopt an authoritative leadership style, for example they pressurize teachers for an uninterrupted working of the school activities hence conflict between teachers and the school principal occurs frequently at any time in the school. According to Afful- Broni (2013) some teachers just do not like the fact that certain people are their administrators. Some of the teachers feel more competent than their administrators and as such do not always cooperate with them. Such teachers literally do not have regard for the ranks of such heads. They believe they are more capable especially if they possess higher qualifications than the school head.

Another common cause of conflict is poor communication, which can lead to misunderstandings and allow barriers to be erected (Johdi & Apitree, 2012 and Shahmohammadi, 2014). Johdi & Apitree (2012) contend that both too little and too much communication can lead to conflict. They argue that when there is too little communication, teachers and departments do not know enough about each other’s intentions, goals and plans and coordination can become difficult and misunderstandings are more likely to occur which can result in conflict. According to Johdi & Apitree (2012) too much communication on the other hand can result in misunderstandings that cause conflict too. Shahmohammadi (2014) and Johdi & Apitree (2012) contend that perhaps the easiest way to prevent conflict is to ensure good communication. The school head therefore needs to constantly meet with all sectors of the institution to speak out and set the record straight to avoid distortions that may lead to conflict (Madziyire et al. (2010). In a school set up the head should periodically hold scheduled meetings with Heads of Departments, Senior Teachers, all teachers, support staff, student representatives and School Development Committees in addition to emergency meetings.

Favoritism is another cause of conflict in schools. Favoritism means to prefer someone or group of people from others just because management likes him/her or them. Due to favoritism, conflict arises in organizations because the workers are not selected according to agreed criteria. Omboko in Kipyego (2013) contends that school heads sometimes favor other teachers at the expense of others. This kind of treatment results in discontentment among other teachers. Smith (2013) posits that favoritism in the workplace means giving preferential treatment to one or more employees. This unfair treatment to favor certain people in an organization such as a school disturbs the state of employees and affects job satisfaction among employees. Preferential treatment can be intentional; for example, an employer could assign the choicest responsibilities to the most veteran worker. Preferential treatment can also be subconscious; for example, employees might notice that an older male supervisor seems to treat young female workers with friendly smiles and encouragement while benignly ignoring male workers in the hallways resulting in conflict. In favoritism, decision makers consciously favor their friends at the expense of others who are more deserving. By not treating everyone equally, a manager is fostering a sense of resentment and separation that can de-motivate employees and damage team unity. Resentment, anger and hatred are the consequences of discrimination which eventually lead to rumors, jealousy and conflicts at the workplace. Jealousy leads to vicious rumors which in turn lead to back stabbing. Under such an environment, members are filled with distrust towards the head of institution and disputes are not easily resolved. Favoritism is a natural phenomenon and as such it is bound to affect any organization, including schools.

Usually, teachers in a school have different levels of qualifications, skills and abilities. Johdi and Apitree (2012) cite Auerbach & Dolan (1997) contend that conflict can result when an experienced employee works with a novice who has good theoretical knowledge but few practical skills. An example is an experienced long serving

teacher who graduated many years ago and is likely to have some conflict when working with young graduates displaying the most current and advanced teaching techniques.

Insecure leadership can be a source of conflict in schools. According to Rabinowitz (2014) insecurity has to do with the feeling that one is not up to the tasks they face. They may even believe that they're fooling people with their air of competence, when they know they're really not very capable at all. Insecurity can be crippling to both the school head as the leader and the group or the school. Such leaders can often target a person whom they feel has slighted them or let them down, even if the person has done so totally unwittingly. Rabinowitz (2014) goes on to assert that instead of creating a conducive atmosphere for resolving conflict, an insecure boss usually resorts to bullying, arrogance, and power games. The tiniest little mistake is blown out of proportion as they believe they never make mistakes and that it is always someone else's fault. Therefore it is important for school heads to be equipped with various conflict resolution strategies.

III. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher preferred the descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey is a study that involves a planned collection of data over a large area for the purpose of making description (Oppenheim, 1996). In this regard, the study was intended to examine existing situations about conflicts in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. The descriptive survey design was preferred for this study as it was found to be most ideal for gathering original data for purposes of describing certain perceptions, opinions, attitudes, relationships and orientations that are held by a population too large to observe directly such as the one under study (Tshuma & Mafa in Tichapondwa (2013). The descriptive survey was selected since it is perhaps the most frequently used method of research that describes what we see the actual picture of a situation and observe beyond the situation, thereby giving a comprehensive picture (Leedy, 1993). The descriptive survey approach therefore enabled the researcher to make accurate observations of the actual situation in line with Leedy's (1993) argument that the descriptive survey “---looks with intense accuracy at the phenomena of the moment and describes precisely what researchers see.” The descriptive survey research design also enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth information, extract patterns and compare relationships between the variables and facilitate generalization of one's findings to the larger population (Maree, 2007; Borg & Gall, 1996). The use of the descriptive survey in this study facilitated objectivity and helped the researcher develop an understanding of the world as it is ‘out there’, independent of the researcher's personal bias, values and idiosyncratic notions (Borg & Gall, 1996; Maree, 2007). To achieve this objectivity, the researcher had to be personally detached from those being studied through the use of objective instruments such as standardized questionnaires to collect data and had them complemented by interviews for in-depth data. The researcher presented the research findings in the form of tables together with the description of analysis of trends, comparing groups and relating variables that revealed general tendencies in the data.

Since the target population of secondary schools in the Gwanda district is too large to effectively study, four peri-urban and two urban secondary schools were selected. This was done by means of the stratified sampling technique which Cohen and Manion (1994) define as a technique of dividing population into homogeneous groups of subjects with similar characteristics. Data from each level was sought to gain in-depth knowledge of what conflict meant to each stratum of the population and its causes in the sampled schools. These helped the researcher to analyse the data from the sample and to draw conclusions about the larger population (Maree, 2007).

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the causes of conflict among school personnel in Gwanda District's urban and peri-urban Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe. The survey questionnaires and interviews conducted with school heads and deputy heads revealed that conflict occurred in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools and that appeared in a variety of forms involving teachers in the same department, departments against each other, teachers and school heads as well as teachers, parents and students. The existence of conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools concurs with Doğan (2016), Afful Bruno (2012), Dick & Thodlana (2013), Chung & Megginson (1981) in Johdi & Apitree (2012), De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider (2006) in Johdi & Apitree (2012), Mapolisa & Tshabalala (2013), Opoku-Asare, Takyi1 & Owusu-Mensah (2015) in that conflict was an inevitable fact of human life at all levels of an organization and workplace. The study looked at structural factors and personal factors as the underlying causes of conflict.

V. STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT

The structural factors focused on were unimpressive conditions of work, administrative style of leadership, lack of transparency, indiscipline among teachers, provision and sharing scarce resources and status differences and specialization. Provision and sharing scarce resources is discussed first.

Table 1: Structural causes of conflict

Factors	Frequency	%
Unimpressive work conditions	21	25
Administrative style of leadership	20	23.80
Indiscipline among teachers	5	5.95
Provision and sharing scarce resources	29	34.52
Status differences and specialization	3	3.57
Differences in goals	6	7.14
Total	84	

Provision and sharing scarce resources

Data in table 1 show that the provision and sharing of scarce resources (34.52%) is the major cause of structural conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. Interviews revealed that the provision and sharing of resources that are of concern to teachers include those that affect the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Therefore failure to provide adequate teaching and learning resources by school heads while at the same time demanding quality results is the central cause of conflict between school heads and teachers. One teacher revealed that pupils share textbooks in a ratio of 1-5 hence it became difficult to give pupils homework and any additional work. They also murmured about teaching from under trees especially during the cold and rainy season because classrooms are not enough hence such inadequate provision of resources was a source of conflict between teachers and heads. The existence of conflict over sharing resources concur with findings by Johdi & Apitree (2012) and Shahmohammadi (2014) in that in many schools teachers are obliged to share resources and the scarcer the resources are, the greater is the potential for conflict. The study also confirmed findings by Dick & Todhlana (2013) and Kipkemi & Kipruto (2013) that under current circumstances of high budgetary constraints it is not feasible for all departments to get budgetary allocation of funds that enable the departments to purchase all their requirements. Hence conflict over provision of resources is inevitable in schools as some departments are allocated more according to needs while others less.

Unimpressive work conditions

Data in table 1 show that unimpressive work conditions was the second major conflict fuelling factor (25%) in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. The findings of this study highlighted poor working conditions of teachers in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools as including poor remuneration and poor provision of teaching and learning facilities. Interviewed participants indicated that low salaries could not meet their basic needs and as such they were highly demotivated. The findings of this study therefore concur with Kipyego (2013) and Okotoni & Okotoni (2003) who indicated that teachers in schools experience demotivating conditions due to poor pay by the government. Some respondents highlighted poor accommodation where they share one cottage with four other teachers. The study confirms the report by News day of 4 September 2014 that educational facilities in many parts of Zimbabwe are in a sorry state. This study therefore suggests that if the working conditions and provision of facilities are not improved the high literacy rate in Africa associated with Zimbabwe is under threat.

Administrative style

The study reveals that administrative styles of school heads (23.80%) are also a cause of conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. Unrealistic expectations by some school heads to manage disciplinary problems and disputes are underlying causes of conflict. The findings of this study concur with Dick & Thodhlana (2013) and Johdi & Apitree, (2012) in that autocratic tendencies by school heads are a common cause of conflict with teachers. Autocratic heads tend to fail to achieve purposeful cooperation and collaboration among teachers hence teachers lack self commitment and personal motivation. Such autocratic tendencies by school heads do not develop teachers to be innovative and self motivated to continuously develop and drive the school as an organization.

Indiscipline among teachers

In responding to the extent to which indiscipline among teachers causes conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools, 5.95% respondents were in the affirmative as indicated in table 1. This study in a way confirmed observations by Seamuns in Kipyego (2013) that some teachers go into the teaching profession only to earn a salary hence lack commitment. The findings of this study concur with Kipyego (2013) in that such teachers are always in disagreement with the leadership and anticipate leaving all the time and always murmur and grumble over workloads. The study also agrees with Kiyego (2013) and Katumanga in Kipyego (2013) in that some school heads are constantly absent, late and inaccessibility hence find it very difficult to enforce discipline among the teachers. The findings also concur with Dick & Thodhlana (2013) in that schools need to have disciplinary structures for resolving conflict affecting teachers, students parents and school heads.

Differences in goals

When responding to whether status differences cause conflict among Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools, 3.57% respondents were in the affirmative as reflected in table 1. In the main, status and differences in goals cause limited conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools and to an extent concurs with Kipyego (2013) and Johdi & Apitree (2012). This cause of conflict in the few schools could be resulting from different teachers' varied background, beliefs, incompatible goals, attitudes, socio-economic status and political persuasions as revealed in Champoux (2003) in Johdi & Apitree (2012) and Madziyire, Mukeredzi, Mubika & Thodlana (2010). Conflict in these few schools could also be emanating from incompatible activities and goals between teachers and administration in which some departments concentrate on achieving departmental goals at the expense of overall institutional cooperation and collaboration.

Status differences and specialization

Status differences and specialization is of minor effect in causing conflict (3%) in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. The existence of the specialization form of conflict concurs with Auerbach & Dolan, 1997 in Shahmohammadi, (2014) that it could be emanating experienced teachers regarding themselves as superior to the recently graduated inexperienced teachers and the young inexperienced teachers feeling that they have the most recent teaching ideas to offer against old experienced teachers with old teaching styles. On the other hand school heads as indicated by Walker in Kipyego (2013) tend to be taken up by status of their position that they regard themselves as inseparable from office and are enjoying privilege denied to other employees or teachers resulting in conflict with teachers (Johdi & Apitree, 2012; Shahmohammadi, 2014). This further transcends to a situation where the recently graduated teachers scorn the old experienced teachers, non degreed teachers and temporal teachers resulting in conflict.

This therefore means that in a few schools, heads could be enjoying exclusive privileges that are not extended to teachers resulting in conflict (Johdi & Apitree, 2012). This study concurs with Johdi & Apitree (2013) in that conflict in schools arises from the status and specialization between the old experienced and young inexperienced teachers recently graduated from training. Conflict resulting from personal factors is discussed next.

VI. PERSONAL FACTORS

The data in table 2 reveals the major personal factors influencing conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools under differences in personalities, poor dissemination of information, favoritism at work by leadership, different levels of qualifications, skills and abilities and insecurity by school heads over qualifications.

Table 2: Personal Factors causing conflict

Factors	Frequency	%
Different levels of qualification, skills and abilities	6	7.14
Poor dissemination of information	24	28.57
Favoritism at work by leadership	14	16.67
Head feeling insecure over qualifications	6	7.14
Different personalities e.g. difficult people	34	40.48
Total	84	100

Differences in personalities

The differences in personalities as cause of conflict range the highest personal factor (40.48%) in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools as reflected in table 2. The interview sessions had most respondents indicating that different personalities were the major personal factors influencing conflict in the schools under study. The finding concurs with (Ndhlovu 2006; Rahim (2001) in Johdi & Apitree 2012) who opined that people have different personalities and as such are bound to do and perceive situations and phenomena differently. It is these differences in opinion, perceptions, responses to diverse situations among teachers that create a potential for conflict among Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. Differences in personalities allow for arguments and disagreement to be voiced out to enable the head to know how to handle certain individual staff members and situations. Hence findings of the study concur with Doğan (2016), Putman in Afful-Broni (2012) and Rawlings (1996) in Dick & Thodlana (2013) in that if properly managed by a wise school head conflict is necessary for authentic involvement, empowerment and institutional sustainable development. Therefore this study finds it to be very crucial for any school head to be equipped with the skills of handling conflict. Hence the study concurs with G and Partners (2010) in that maximum effort needs to be made by school heads towards accommodating and moulding all characters exhibited by different teachers. Poor dissemination of information is focused on next.

Poor dissemination of information

Poor dissemination of information as revealed in table 2 above is rated the second highest personal factor (28.57%) fueling conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. The interview sessions had most respondents indicating that poor dissemination of information were the main personal factors influencing conflict in their schools. These findings concur with Johdi & Apitree (2012) who contend that conflict in organizations is also influenced by too little or too much communication. The interview sessions with the teachers revealed that school heads do not communicate their decisions, expectations or school developments to staff and stakeholders hence concur with Plunkett et al (1997) in Ndhlovu (2006) in that communication is seldom perfect. The study agrees with Johdi & Apitree (2012) and Shahmohammadi (2014) in that the poor communication in Gwanda urban and peri-urban Secondary Schools leads to misperception and misunderstandings leading to conflict among staff members. While the study concurs with Dick & Thodlana (2013) in that schools lack communication it is also in agreement with Ndhlovu (2006) and Madziyire et al. (2010) in that there is need for the school head to constantly meet with staff to clarify issues to clearly and honestly communicate their ideas and feelings to staff. The study recommends in line with Shahmohammadi (2014) and Johdi & Apitree (2012) that perhaps the easiest way to prevent conflict is to ensure good communication. Favoritism is articulated next.

Favoritism at work by leadership

The findings of the study as reflected in table 2 show that favoritism at work by leadership is the third highest personal factor fueling conflict (16.67%) in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. This is in line with Omboko in Kipyego (2013) who posit that school heads sometimes favor some teachers at the expense of others and this fosters a sense of resentment, anger and hatred. It is this resentment that brews rumors, jealousy and conflict at work place. An environment full of jealousy leads to backstabbing thus hindering effective teaching and learning since staff members are filled with distrust towards the school head. Heads of schools therefore need to practice fairness and transparency so that they can create trust and good relationships among staff. Different levels of qualifications are discussed next.

Different levels of qualifications, skills and abilities

The study revealed that the different levels of qualifications caused limited conflict (7.14%) in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. The findings of the study however concur with Johdi & Apitree (2013) and Afful- Broni (2013) who highlighted that tension sometimes arises between heads of institutions and their subordinates over qualifications as some teachers sometimes feel they are more qualified and competent than their administrators. Such teachers neither cooperate with their school heads nor have regard for the ranks of such heads. The study also concurs with Pukkapan, 1999 in Shahmohammadi (2014) in that conflict exists between long-serving teachers and young newcomer teacher over old and latest techniques of teaching. The few such cases in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools suggest that there is respect of staff members' qualifications. The feeling of insecurity by heads over qualifications is discussed next.

Head feeling insecure over qualifications

When responding to whether the heads ever felt insecure over qualifications, 7.14% responses were in the affirmative. The findings of the study suggests that most school heads in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools are adequately qualified and draw respect from their teachers hence conflict due to qualifications is at its bare minimum. The findings do not concur with Rabinowitz (2014) who argues that insecure leaders resort to bullying, arrogance and power games instead of creating good working environments. Inadequately qualified and insecure heads tend to blow things out of proportion even over trivial issues. This is probably due to the education system in Zimbabwe that no longer promotes teachers to the post of headship without degrees. Conflict resolution strategies are discussed next.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The study established that conflicts in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools occur among teachers in the same and different departments; between teachers and the school heads and among teachers, parents and students. The study established that conflict was influenced by both structural and personal factors among personnel in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools. Structural factors include poor work conditions, administrative style, in-discipline among teachers, status differences and sharing of resources. The main causes of conflict within structural factors were flagged as the sharing of resources, poor work conditions and administrative style used by leadership. Indiscipline among teachers, differences in goals and status differences were also highlighted but to a lesser extent. Personal factors influencing conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools were reflected as different personalities, poor dissemination of information, favoritism at work by leadership, different levels of qualification and school head feeling insecure over qualifications. The major personal factors that influence conflict in Gwanda urban and peri-urban secondary schools were identifies as differences in personalities, poor dissemination of information and favoritism at work by leadership while differences in personalities and school heads' insecurity over qualifications caused conflict

to a lesser extent. The study concluded that school heads and heads of departments need to be equipped with conflict management skills in order to manage conflict in schools.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the conclusions made above, it is therefore recommended that:

- Teachers and school heads be equipped with conflict management skills through in-service training workshops and seminars.
- It is also recommended the teacher education curriculum include courses on conflict resolution and management as a form of preparation future teachers for the real world of teaching after training.
- The study also recommended that the government should seriously consider improving the conditions of service for the teachers to restore the dignity of the profession as well as provide adequate teaching and learning resources.
- The study further recommends the establishment of conflict resolution committees, newsletters, peer support groups and suggestion boxes to facilitate conflict resolution and communication with stakeholders.

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