

**THE ROLE OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING CONFLICT AMONG  
SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT, IN THE  
FREE STATE PROVINCE**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this research study:

**THE ROLE OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING CONFLICT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT, IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE** is my own independent work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete list of references.

.....  
**M F MPHATSOE**

.....  
**DATE**

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This study is dedicated to:

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## **ABSTRACT**

This purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the deputy principals in managing conflict among secondary school teachers in the Lejweleputswa Education District, in the Free State Province. Two questionnaires, one for the deputy principals and one for teachers, were developed. The questionnaires were administered on six deputy principals and twelve teachers from six secondary schools in Monyakeng, Nyakallong and Kutloanong townships. The qualitative approach was mainly used for the collection and analysis of data. The study revealed that conflict was common in the surveyed township secondary schools. The study found that the causes of conflict for the township secondary school teachers included poor communication, shortage of resources and facilities, work overload, gossiping, high rates of absenteeism and poor performance of teachers. The study further revealed that the role of the deputy principals was crucial in the handling of conflict in schools. The conflict resolution strategies commonly applied by the deputy principals included negotiations, accommodating, collaborating and compromise. However, avoiding, arbitration and competing strategies were avoided by the deputy principals. The role of the deputy principals in resolving conflict was found to focus more on building relationships and collegiality among teachers in the township secondary schools. It was recommended that schools are provided with adequate resources and facilities, as well as adequate teachers; that counseling sessions to be introduced for teachers, and that training in stress and conflict management is also introduced for township secondary school teachers. A conflict resolution model appropriate for the township secondary schools was also developed.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a normal occurrence in human interactions, or it is an endemic part of human relationships (Alberts, 2001: 46; Emiliani, 2003: 108). Conflict emanates from differences in thinking patterns, attitudes, beliefs and expectations (Alberts, 2001: 46). In organisations such as schools and workplaces conflict may result from disagreements with regard to goals and the processes towards the achievement of those goals (Dimmock & O' Donoghue, 2000: 2; Robbins, 2000: 38). In many instances, the main goals and intentions of conflicting parties are the same, but the differences are found in the approaches adopted and processes followed towards the achievement of those goals (Martinez, 2004: 29). For instance, in an institution of learning, all may agree about the need for the introduction of a new programme, but there may be differences as to whether the programme is introduced in phases over a period of a few years, or it is introduced once. These differences may result in conflict, especially if one party believes that the other party may benefit from a particular approach (Manktelow & Carlson, 1996: 12). Hence Jones (2005: 106) believes that conflict is inevitable in human relations, and it is often the result of perceived differences rather than real ones.

Conflict can be both disruptive and constructive: conflict is disruptive if it lowers the morale of people, leads to a poor self-concept, and reduces inter-group cooperation (Van Deventer, Kruger, Van der Merwe, Prinsloo & Steinman, 2003: 26). Conflict is constructive if it clarifies issues of importance, solves problems, and helps in the building of cohesiveness among people (Robbins, 2000: 85).

George and Jones (2002: 658) believe that conflict is a mutually reinforcing factor if the conflict experienced ends up serving the best interests of both parties. Constructive conflict compels people to challenge their assumptions and to consider new positions (Xaba, 2004: 313). Constructive conflict also enhances group loyalty and, increases motivation and performance within the group. Conflict may be a motivator for change, and may contribute to the building of relationships. What is needed is a thorough understanding of conflict and ways to manage it effectively to the advantage of the organisation (Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman, 2001: 363; Van Schalkwyk, 2004: 165). Therefore, the handling of conflict determines whether the conflict breaks or builds the organisation.

Teachers interpret conflict in different ways, due to their perceptions of the situation (Avruch, Black & Scimecca, 2001: 85). The individuals' perceptions of conflict may greatly influence their attitude, reaction (behaviour) and the handling of the conflict (Cater, 2003: 2). The individual educator's perception of conflict may also influence their perceptions on the way conflict is resolved by the deputy principal. For instance, teachers who are not pleased with the outcome of the conflict may perceive the deputy principal's effort to resolve conflict as biased and favouring one party over the other party. It is, therefore, important that teachers understand conflict, its causes and its resolution strategies in order to develop positive perceptions on conflict and its resolution.

This study proceeds from the assumption that schools are complex organisations due to the magnitudes of people, resources and cultures found in them. The complexities of people and their cultures, as well as their access to and utilisation of resources make conflict within the school an unavoidable reality (Cater, 2003: 2). The existence of conflict risks human relationships, which are crucial for the successful and effective teaching and learning process. Therefore, the emphasis should be on extreme caution in handling conflict – in order to avoid the permanent or long-term damage to human relationships which could be caused by conflict if not properly handled.

Therefore, the role played by the school management team, especially that of the deputy principal, is important in dealing with conflict among teachers.

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors which caused conflict among teachers in the secondary schools of the Lejweleputswa district, as well as the role of the deputy principal in dealing with conflict among teachers in these schools.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The issue of conflict in South Africa is complex. The history of racial discrimination and apartheid may have promoted conflict and cliquing. The apartheid laws compelled people to group in terms of race, religion, clan, tribe and language, with one group perceiving the other group as inferior and too low for any recognition and respect (Liebenberg, 2011: 7). Consequently, people treated each other with suspicion. This law-induced grouping of people promoted further discrimination and conflict between individuals and groups. The culture of discrimination and conflict, which may have been created during *apartheid*, continues to influence relationships between people and groups (Liebenberg, 2011: 7). During *apartheid*, Africans, who were always the lowest and most disadvantaged in the pecking order, perceived most conflict handling strategies as worsening their plight; and they consequently resisted and rejected efforts to resolve conflict (Ybarra & Ramon, 2004: 819). Township school teachers may also be victims of some historical cliquing and groupings, which may be a good breeding ground for conflict. Therefore, the need for effective conflict handling mechanisms and for conflict education becomes even more crucial.

The participation of teachers in union activities also contributed to the existence of conflict in particularly township schools. The unionisation of labour in South Africa emerged during the *apartheid* era, and its purpose was to bring down the *apartheid* government through workers' strikes and resistance – with the intention of rendering companies, schools, municipalities

and other institutions ungovernable (Liebenberg, 2011: 8; Xaba, 2004: 315). Despite the existence of democracy in South Africa, and the promotion of democracy in schools by the South African Schools Act of 1996, the signs of cliquing, resistance and conflict still exist in schools. It is, therefore, necessary to manage conflict effectively so as to avoid situations which will make schools ungovernable.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study will be beneficial to school managers, the SMT, teachers, learners and the Department of Education (DOE).

The school managers will benefit from this study since they will realise the extent of conflict among teachers in their schools. The school managers will also learn of the various strategies of handling conflict, the manner in which deputy principals apply these strategies, as well as the perceptions of teachers on conflict and its management within the schools. This would enable the school manager to handle conflict properly and to intervene in cases where conflicting parties are dissatisfied with the deputy principals' handling of their conflict. In this way an appeal process would be created to address dissatisfaction among teachers.

Teachers could also benefit from this study since they will understand what conflict is, and immediately recognise when conflict exists among them. The teachers' recognition of a conflict situation is crucial since it will help them to realise the need for the deputy principals' intervention, and thus subject themselves accordingly to the conflict handling processes as determined by the deputy principal. The other benefit for teachers is that conflict which is effectively handled leads to a positive view of conflict and improves relationships among them.

Learners will also benefit from this study since they will be taught by teachers who know conflict and who try to avoid a conflict situation by demonstrating

good human relationships. The relationships between learners and teachers will also improve, and this could positively influence the behaviour and discipline of learners.

The Department of Basic Education will benefit by having peaceful schools, in which the learners and teachers respect each other and strive towards the improvement of relationships. Such schools would be easily manageable, and have a great possibility of experiencing high rates of performance and good results.

The conflict resolution skills are transferable to many life situations. Therefore, school management teams, teachers and learners can, directly or indirectly, acquire such skills and this could contribute to the reduction of tensions among members of the school community and create a conducive learning environment.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Some degree of conflict is inevitable among teachers. The critical issue is that the handling of conflict should be in such ways that its detrimental effects are removed, the relationships among teachers are not negatively affected, and the functioning of the school is not compromised. The literature indicates that conflict threatens to compromise the unity and collegiality among teachers in many schools (Ramani & Zhimin, 2010: 1088). The common complaint among teachers involved in conflict is the lack of transparency, as well as the promotion of partiality and favouritism in the processes of handling conflict (Education in the Middle East and North Africa, 2011: 1). Therefore, school managers are not perceived as handling conflict to the benefit and satisfaction of all parties involved. The negative perception could be the result of negative experiences of conflict, a lack of knowledge of effective conflict handling mechanisms and the poor understanding of the nature of conflict by both teachers and managers. Therefore, a need for conflict education exists.



## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The preceding discussion leads to the following questions:

- What are the causes of conflict among teachers?
- What is the role of the deputy principals in resolving conflict among teachers?
- Which techniques are suitable for helping the deputy principals to resolve conflict among teachers?
- What are the expectations of teachers from the deputy principals' intervention in conflict among teachers?
- What can be done to reduce conflict among teachers?

## **1.6 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to investigate the causes of conflict among secondary school teachers in the Free State Province, as well as the role of the deputy principals in resolving conflict among these teachers.

In order to accomplish this aim the following objectives should be realised:

- to determine the causes of conflict among teachers;
- to determine the role of the deputy principals in conflict management;
- to determine the effects of conflict among teachers;
- to develop a conflict resolution model for the township secondary schools to reduce conflict among teachers.

## **1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study operates under the social identity theories. Social identity theories stress the importance of self-esteem and positive identity particularly with regard to relations between in-groups (allies) (Cunningham, 2006: 4). Social identity refers to the ability to establish identities which are acceptable to

members of a social group (Robinson, 1996: 12; Shavitt, 1989: 23). The approval of membership to a group may also influence self-esteem, emotional significance, as well as political and religious affiliations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Scott & Lane, 2000). Therefore, organizational membership is dependent on the social identity adopted. Social identity theory may, therefore, be regarded as something rational, constructive and socially functional or something irrational, pathological and socially dysfunctional (Sisson & Storey, 2001). The social identities are not permanent, but keep on changing with age, values and circumstances (Inglehart & Weizel, 2005: 94; Tanti, Stukas, Halloran & Foddy, 2004: 23). This has important consequences, particularly for conflict management.

## **1.8 ASSUMPTION**

The assumption which informs this study is that conflict exists among township secondary school teachers, and the management thereof is problematic. The conflict that exists among township secondary school teachers results from a number of factors, which include poor conditions of service for township secondary school teachers, shortage of facilities and resources in the township secondary schools and gender stereotypes as perpetuated by culture. The past history of *apartheid* and discrimination also promoted conflict since township people, including learners and the community, experienced a lot of injustices, and thus developed a spirit of resistance and rejection of solutions.

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1.9.1 Research methodology**

The research approach followed in this study will be both qualitative and quantitative.

### 1.9.1.1 Qualitative approach

Qualitative study is used to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants will interpret them (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 397; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 8). It is mostly conducted in a natural setting, and describes people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (Cresswell, 2001: 14). Generally, it does not require extensive resources to conduct, but it is useful in understanding the usual and the exceptional circumstances of people (Neuman, 2005: 196; Payne & Payne, 2004: 210).

The principles of qualitative research are respect, non-coercion, non-manipulation and support for democratic values (Heppner & Heppner, 2004: 136; Gill & Johnson, 2002: 34).

In this study the quantitative approach was mainly used.

### 1.9.1.2 Quantitative approach

Quantitative approach focuses on measurements and amounts of the characteristics displayed by the participants and events that the researcher studies (Thomas, 2003: 1). It uses numbers and statistical methods. It tends to be based on numerical measurements of specific aspects of phenomena, and it seeks measurements and analyses that are easily replicable by other researchers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 397). The quantitative approach is advantageous in the case of researches which involve a very big group of participants, since the same questions can be asked to a big group of people in the same way (Houser, 2005: 118).

Although the qualitative approach was mainly used in this study, the graphs, tables and percentages were used in this study for the recording and the representation of data collected through the questionnaire. However, emphasis was placed on the qualitative interpretation of data collected. The

graphs, tables and percentages only helped to enhance understanding, which would not be possible with a purely qualitative approach (Silverman, 2001: 24). Hence the elements of the quantitative approach are also found in this study.

#### 1.9.1.3 The descriptive approach

The descriptive approach was followed in this study. Description appraises the character of conditions as they represent themselves (Bryman, 2001: 313). The descriptive approach is oriented towards providing thorough descriptions of social phenomena, as well as their meaning and their implications. This approach was chosen because it is flexible and exploratory; it is also contextual since it captures the naturally occurring behaviour of participants in their natural setting, and in the way the participants themselves view their behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 12).

To enable the researcher to arrive at the relevant conclusion, it is imperative to look into the research instruments.

### 1.9.2 Research instruments

#### 1.9.2.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a data gathering instrument used when factual information is desired. It is used to elicit reactions, beliefs and attitudes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 46). The questionnaire can be used to obtain comparable data from all participants because the same questions are asked to all research participants (Gay & Airasian, 2003: 280; Struwig & Stead, 2001: 18).

In this study two sets of questionnaires were used: one for the teachers, and another one for the deputy principals. The questionnaire for teachers contained questions on the possible causes of conflict in their schools, and how conflict was handled by the deputy principals. The questionnaire for also contained questions on the possible causes of conflict in the schools; deputy

principals were also required to indicate the possible manifestations of conflict on teachers.

## **1.10 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING STRATEGY**

### **1.10.1 Population**

The population for this study consisted of the deputy principals and teachers from secondary schools in Monyakeng (Wesselsbron), Nyakallong (Allanridge) and Kutlwanong (Odendaalsrus) in the Lejweleputswa Education District, in the Free State Province. There was a total of 345 secondary school teachers, and a total of 20 deputy principals of secondary schools in the three townships mentioned above.

### **1.10.2 Sample**

Due to constraints related to time and money the sample for this study consisted of six deputy principals and twelve teachers from the townships of Nyakallong, Kutlwanong and Monyakeng. The total of the sample was eighteen participants.

### **1.10.3 Sampling strategy**

Simple random sampling was used. Simple random sampling implies that every individual has an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample (Houser, 2005: 98). This level of random selection is regularly done and helps to minimise selection bias (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 113).

## 1.11 DATA COLLECTION

Data Collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can negatively impact the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results.

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 46). While the data collection methods vary from discipline to discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same for all disciplines, including fields of study such as physical and social sciences, humanities and business studies. Regardless of the field of study or preference for defining data, accurate data collection is essential to maintaining the integrity of research. Both the selection of appropriate data collection instruments and clearly delineated instructions for their correct use reduce the likelihood of errors occurring (Babbie, 2007: 47).

The consequences from improperly collected data include the following:

- inability to answer research questions accurately;
- inability to repeat and validate the study;
- distorted findings resulting in wasted resources;
- misleading other researchers to pursue fruitless avenues of investigation;
- compromising decisions for public policy, and
- causing harm to human participants and animal subjects (Most, Craddick, Crawford, Redican, Rhodes, Rukenbrod & Laws, 2003: 1339).

In this study the questionnaires were distributed to schools, and handed over to the deputy principals and teachers. These questionnaires were then collected after 7 working days.

### **1.12 DATA ANALYSIS**

In a qualitative data analysis the emphasis is on the stated experiences of the participants and on the stated meanings they attach to themselves, to other people, and to their environment (Babbie, 2007: 47). Those carrying out qualitative research sometimes make use of direct quotations from their participants, arguing that such quotations are often very revealing (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 464). The cardinal principle of qualitative analysis is that causal relationships and theoretical statements can clearly emerge from and grounded in the phenomena being studied. The theory emerges from the data that it is not imposed on the data (Psychology Press, 2012: 3).

In this study data analysed was mainly qualitative. The codes were allocated to data obtained through the questionnaires, for the purposes of summarising, sorting, sifting and establishing patterns, commonalities and differences (Creswell, 2001: 140; Strauss & Corbin, 2004: 179).

### **1.13 ETHICAL ISSUES**

The researcher applied to the Department of Education, in the Free State Province, for permission to conduct research in the identified secondary schools. The principals of identified schools were also informed in writing of the involvement of their schools in the study. The participants were informed that the information they provided would be handled with strict confidentiality, and that they may not provide their names or those of their schools – in order to protect the identities of individuals and schools which participated in this study.

The participation in the study was also voluntary. Participants were also informed that the information they provided would not be used for any other purpose, except the study in question.

## **1.14 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.14.1 Conflict**

Rankin (2007: 1) defines conflict as a process in which one party perceives that another party has taken some action that may result in negative effects on its major interests.

Smith and Cronje (2000: 345) define conflict as the interaction of independent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims and values, and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realisation of these goals.

Mitchell (2004: 125) defines conflict as the clash and competition between goals of groups, or interference with the goals, ideas and interests of the other group.

According to Werner (2007: 231) conflict can be defined as a situation where differences in power, values and attitudes give rise to disagreement, opposition or animosity between two or more parties.

For the purpose of this study, all the above-mentioned definitions are relevant since they all indicate a social conflict in which individuals or groups have opposing goals and interests.

### **1.14.2 Conflict management strategy**

Van der Westhuizen, De Bruyn, Erasmus, Janson, Mentz, Steyn and Theron (2002: 302) state that a conflict management strategy is the method used to



manage all forms of tension, including severe conflict between individuals or groups.

The conflict management strategy is viewed as diagnostic processes, interpersonal styles, negotiating strategies and other interventions that are designed to eliminate prolonged and excessive conflict (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001: 363; Bakker, 2005: 24).

According to Kenney and Watson (2000: 5) a conflict management strategy is an attempt to persuade the one party to move from their original position in order to accommodate the other party.

For the purpose of this study, all of the above definitions are acceptable. However, the definition by Van der Westhuizen, De Bruyn, Erasmus, Janson, Mentz, Steyn and Theron is the most appropriate.

### **1.14.3 Conflict resolution**

Conflict resolution is conceptualised as methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict (Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier & Chin, 2005: 200). Often committed group members attempt to resolve group conflict by actively communicating information about their conflicting motives or ideologies to the rest of the group (e.g. intentions, reasons for holding certain beliefs), and by engaging in collective negotiation. Ultimately, a wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflict exist, including mediation but not limited to negotiation, diplomacy and creative peace building (Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier, & Chin: 2005: 200).

Conflict resolution can be regarded as any process that resolves or ends conflict via methods which can include violence or warfare (Black, 2000: 504). Alternatively it can be viewed as a non-violent process that manages conflict through compromise or through the assistance of a third party who either facilitates or imposes a settlement or resolution (Black, 2000: 504). If initial,

attempts to solve the problem are not successful, the use of mediation services; a formal problem-solving process that allows all parties to work towards a written, mutually satisfactory agreement.

Conflict resolution means a process of resolving dispute or disagreement. It mainly aims at reconciling opposing arguments in a manner that promotes and protects the human rights of all parties concerned (Van Deventer, Kruger, Van der Merwe, Prinsloo & Steinman, 2003: 26).

Conflict resolution refers to the elimination of conflict, or the implementation of strategies which will help to eradicate tension among employees whereas conflict management is the purposeful interventions by managers to stimulate and encourage beneficial or helpful conflict resolution, and to resolve suppress or prevent harmful conflict (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002: 78).

Conflict resolution can be regarded as any process that resolves or ends conflict via methods which can include violence or warfare. Alternatively it can be viewed as a non-violent process that manages conflict through compromise or through the assistance of a third party who either facilitates or imposes a settlement or resolution. If initial attempts to solve the problem are not successful, the use of mediation services, a formal problem-solving process that allows all parties to work towards a written, mutually satisfactory agreement is encouraged (DeChurch & Marks, 2001: 10).

For the purpose of this study, the definition by Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier and Chin is the most appropriate.

#### **1.14.4 Conflict management**

Conflict management is the practice of identifying and handling conflict in a sensible, fair and efficient manner (Kuhn & Poole, 2000: 578). Conflict management requires such skills as effective communicating, problem-solving and negotiating (Kuhn & Poole, 2000: 578).

Conflict management involves implementing strategies to limit the negative aspects of conflict (Rahim, 2002: 208). Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills and establishing a structure for management of conflict in your environment (Rahim, 2002: 208).

For the purpose of this study, both definitions are acceptable.

#### **1.14.5 Deputy-Principal**

The deputy-principal is a person who assists the principal with the management tasks in the school (DoE, 2000b: 2). According to the Department of Education (2002: 16), the deputy principal assists the principal with authority amongst teachers and learners.

The deputy principal is person who plans and leads professional development activities for teachers, administrators, and support staff (Kafee & Moore, 2004: 79). The deputy principal participates in education-related activities, attends meetings and provides support to teachers on behalf of the school principal (Kafee & Moore, 2004: 79).

For the purpose of this study, both definitions are acceptable.

#### **1.14.6 Teacher**

A teacher is regarded as someone who helps the learners to find the best instructional path and leads the child to adulthood and to career opportunities (Bantjies, Driver & Maile, 2007: 68).

A teacher is a person who provides education for learners (Kramer, 2000: 175). The role of teacher is often formal and ongoing, carried out at a school or other place of formal education (Kramer, 2000: 175).

For the purpose of this study, both definitions are acceptable.

#### **1.14.7 Principal**

The principal is the person who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and for observing the policies of the school and of the Department of Education (DoE, 2000a: 3).

The principal is the educator who has executive authority in a school, gives instructions to other staff members and sees to it that the effective learning and teaching is taking place (DoE, 2002: 16).

According to Bantjies, Driver and Maile (2007: 68) a principal is a person who ensures that the school is managed satisfactorily and in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures.

For the purpose of this study, all the above definitions are acceptable.

#### **1.15 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The research will be conducted in the field of Education Management. The role of the deputy principals in addressing conflict among township secondary school teachers received attention in this study. The study was conducted in the following townships of the Free State Province:

- Nyakallong (Allanridge),
- Kutlwanong (Odendaalsrus), and
- Monyakeng (Wesselsbron).

## **1.16 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study are not generalised due to the small area of the Free State Province studied, as well as the small number of participants. The qualitative approach, as the main approach applied in this study, also places some limitation on the study.

## **1.17 PROGRAMME OF THIS STUDY**

- Chapter one deals with the introduction, significance of the study, statement of the problem, the aim of the study, literature study, research methodologies and the definitions of concepts used in this study.
- Chapter two contains a review of the relevant literature on conflict, conflict resolution strategies and conflict resolution models.
- Chapter three focuses on the research methodology.
- Chapter four deals with the results of the study, and
- Chapter five deals with findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- In Chapter six the conflict resolution model recommended for the township secondary schools is discussed.

## **1.18 CONCLUSION**

Conflict is commonly found in schools due to the high number of people involved, the nature of school activities and the expectations of the community, the DoE and individuals. However, the handling of conflict by the school managers could be crucial in determining the experiences of teachers who are involved in conflict, as well as the influence of conflict in the future relationships of parties which were in conflict. It is for this reason, therefore, that the handling of conflict should be beneficial to the school and its operations.

The next chapter will focus on the literature study on conflict and conflict management.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The human relationships play an important role in the emotional and psychological being of teachers and learners in schools. The environment for effective teaching and learning depends on positive relationships among teachers, learners and the school management team. However, conflict in schools is a reality due to the number of people assembled in one place, the overlapping of activities, and the pressure to complete tasks within specified times. By implication, conflict is inherent in the school system. The establishment of disciplinary committees in schools, the many charges against teachers and learners, and the subsequent hearings, as well as the regular tensions among teachers, are indications of the existence of conflict within the school. It is, therefore, crucial to sensitise teachers and learners on the existence of conflict and the need to manage it effectively – without compromising the school's core functions of teaching and learning.

In this chapter the literature review on conflict is considered. The different views on conflict, the different stages of conflict, and the different sources of conflict for teachers are discussed. The different conflict handling strategies, as well as the different models of conflict resolution also receive attention.

### **2.2 CONFLICT IN GENERAL**

#### **2.2.1 Explanations of conflict**

Conflict is any situation in which two or more parties feel in opposition to one another (Newstrom & Davis, 2002: 261). Conflict is regarded as a process that begins when one party is negatively affected by actions or intentions of another party, or when the goals of one party are about to be negatively affected by the goals of another party; or when one party tries to prevent or

block another party from achieving its goals (Champoux, 2000: 199; Le Roux, 2002: 165).

Conflict can also be experienced in cases of opportunistic and inconsistent behaviours (George & Jones, 2003: 551). Opportunistic behaviour is defined as behaviour which promotes self-interest and is inconsistent with prior contact or agreement (Cheng & Sheu, 2012: 563). This is common in cases where partners have different sets of goals, and where one group may subvert alliance goals if it becomes necessary to achieve its own goals (Das, 2006: 231). In some instances, members of an organisation may agree on goals, but conflict may arise from disagreements over the actions or methods to be followed to accomplish those goals (Van Deventer, Kruger, Van der Merwe, Prinsloo & Steinman, 2003: 30). Therefore, the events leading to conflict include disagreements, debates and annihilation of an opponent (DoE, 2000a: 16). The annihilation of opponent is more characteristic of a physical fight, while verbal conflict is initiated by the airing of direct or indirect accusations against a colleague, and which require the opponent to reply or respond (Jacquemet, 2006: 401). Conflicts are viewed as violations of contractual agreements or legally-mandated behaviour that should be resolved by restoring justice to the aggrieved parties (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003: 199). However, physical clashes or fist fights among teachers do take place, albeit rarely.

The general view of conflict is negative. However, conflict is part of life and it is inevitable in the school situation (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002: 359; Robbins, 2000:385). Robbins and De Cenzo (2004: 370) observe that organisational conflict can best be understood as a dynamic process underlying organisational behaviour. Steyn (2002: 78) defines conflict as an interactive state in which the behaviours or goals of one actor are incompatible with the behaviours or goals of some other actor or actors. According to Steyn (2002: 232) 'actor' in the previous statement refers to any social entity from the individual to the corporate body itself. Conflict should not be viewed as something bad or something to be avoided, rather it should



be viewed as something to help the organisation to grow. Conflict is, therefore, an unavoidable aspect of humanity, and any attempt at avoidance of conflict may create a long-term problem for an organisation and its employees (or the school and teachers within it) (Rollinson, Broadfield & Edwards, 2000: 405). Conflict is also caused by situations in which the individuals' comfort is perceived to be under threat (Baker, 2002:8). Jehn (1997: 288) describes conflict as a result of differences of ideas and opinions among members of an organisation about the task being performed. These differences could be on the organisation's strategic position or information to be included in a report. Conflict is viewed as incompatibility of interests, and is often caused by a misalignment of goals, motivations and actions (Chen, Minson & Tormala, 2010:118). According to Chen, Minson and Tormala, (2010: 118) the incompatibility of interests, goals, motivations and actions may not be real, but may only be perceived to exist.

The school is usually a big organisation, with many operations and activities, and with many people involved in these activities. Consequently, conflict is likely to occur, due to differences in goals, strategies and approaches (Baker, 2002:4). Therefore, the effective handling of conflict in schools is important. The handling of conflict in schools proceeds from the assumption that teachers have largely cooperative, and not competing goals – a stance which makes conflict something that needs to be addressed for the mutual benefit of the school and its people (Robbins & De Cenzo, 2004: 370).

The influences of the past education dispensation in South Africa may have been in conflict with current education practices. Teachers were trained to be harsh on learners, to use oppressive teaching methods, and to take full control of classroom situations (Maluleke, 2009: 3). In contrast, the democratic education dispensation advocates for discussions and debates between teachers and learners, and more lenient and humane forms of dealing with learner ill-discipline (Van der Westhuizen, 2002: 305). These differences may cause intra-personal and inter-personal conflict. The situation stresses the unavoidability of conflict, as well as the importance of sensitising

teachers and learners on the possibility of conflict, and the need to handle it effectively.

### **2.2.2 Conflict education and Peace Education**

Conflict education involves training of teachers or learners in conflict resolution, conflict management and mediation (Jones & Bodtke, 2007: 109). Such training helps teachers and learners to avoid conflict situation, and to deal with conflict should it arise. Jones and Bodtke (2007: 110) believe that the training of the whole staff and all learners in conflict education has an added advantage of peer mediation, whereby teachers or learners themselves resolve conflict among themselves, without the involvement of authority. This practice could save authorities a lot of time, and may also help them to reduce stress associated with conflict.

The handling of conflict could also lead to peace education, whereby teachers and learners are trained on personal fulfilment and the creation of a cooperative society, as well as on rejecting war, militarism and arms races (Page, 2010: 852). Peace education could also be viewed as education towards the prevention of violence and conflict (Clayton, Ballif-Spanvill & Hunsaker, 2001: 2). Therefore, conflict education and peace education could go a long way in addressing and settling conflict in schools.

Jaffar, Abdul Tharim & Shuib (2011: 194) and Paulson and Rappleye (2007: 345) found that conflict in schools produces tension and detract team members from performing tasks. Therefore, if conflicts are not properly managed, they may cause teaching delays, undermined team spirit and increased education costs. However, the implication is that conflict is a phenomenon that may give rise to problems for individuals, groups and organisations if not effectively managed.

### **2.2.3 Types of conflict**

There are four primary types of conflict. These types are:

- intrapersonal (within an individual);
- interpersonal (between individuals);
- intra-group (within the same group); and
- intra-group (between different organisations or groups) (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001:366).

Each of these four primary types of conflict will be briefly discussed.

#### 2.2.3.1 Intrapersonal conflict (within an individual)

Intrapersonal conflict develops out of the individual's own thoughts, ideas, emotions, values and predispositions (Inoue & Kawakamia, 2010: 174). Intrapersonal conflict indicates the presence of conflicting ideas, feelings and opposing views within the individual (Mullins, 2005: 905). Characteristics of intrapersonal conflict are uncertainty, hesitation, stress, anxiety and depression (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 2000: 217). The true source of conflict may be found within the individual, and personality traits play an important role in intrapersonal conflict (Van der Westhuizen, 2002: 304). For instance, some individuals, when faced with difficult situations are likely to take decisions and accept the outcome of their decisions; while others may be indecisive and reluctant to take decisions when faced with difficult situations. The lack of a decisive and firm action may promote intrapersonal conflict (Steyn, 2002: 76). In a school situation, the common source of intrapersonal conflict may be the differences in the cultures of the learners and of the teachers (Martinez, 2004: 31). For instance, the teacher may have conflicting ideas with regard to applying a particular disciplinary measure due to the different cultural and religious backgrounds of learners involved.

Intrapersonal conflict may also be caused by roles an individual has to play. For instance, individual teachers may not be happy with the performance or

behaviour of some staff members and may wish to report such behaviour to the school management, without jeopardising their friendship with colleagues (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002: 13). The deputy principals may be very firm or strict in their execution of duties, but may also have a strong desire to be accepted by their colleagues (Xaba, 2004: 313). These situations may cause tensions and disagreements within an individual teacher.

Dayton (2010:31) found that intrapersonal conflicts often stem from negative internal and external thinking patterns. Negative internal thinking is derived from a person's own patterns of thinking. When individuals become overwhelmed they develop negative patterns of thought which trigger anxiety, helplessness and depression (Dayton, 2010: 33). Negative external thinking comes from societal, familial and cultural pressures, patterns and biases (Dayton, 2010: 35). The existence of negative thoughts within an individual promotes the development of internalised conflicts; and these internalised conflicts may further promote dysfunctionality in both the internal and interpersonal worlds of the individual (Dayton, 2010: 35). Intrapersonal conflict may, therefore, negatively affect teachers psychologically and emotionally (internally).

#### 2.2.3.2 Interpersonal conflict (between individuals)

Interpersonal conflict occurs between two or more people. In any organisation interpersonal conflict indicates the presence of conflicting ideas and feelings among the employees, or between employers and employees (Champoux, 2000: 202). This is the most common and visible type of conflict in schools and other organisations. In the school environment this could imply conflicting ideas and feelings among teachers, or between teachers and learners. Feelings such as anger, suspicion, fear and rejection are usually associated with interpersonal conflict (Van der Westhuizen, 2002: 305). Le Roux (2002: 165) states that conflict between groups within an organisation results in increased personality clashes, decreased mutual understanding, poor communication and reduced performance. Interpersonal conflicts also

negatively affect emotions and the self-concept (Robbins, 2000: 385). All the aforementioned issues are good recipes for lack of cooperation among workers, leading to poor production or poor results within an organisation or school.

Although most causes of interpersonal conflict among teachers are found within the school, there are cases where such clashes between colleagues may start outside the school. For instance, two colleagues may be competing for the chairmanship of a soccer club, or a position in a political structure (Gordon, 2002: 178). Such conflicts may be transferred to the school, and negatively affect communication and cooperation on school matters between these colleagues (Kreitner, 2000: 496; Thomson, 2002: 166).

Conflict among teachers may have a negative impact on the health and the lifestyle of teachers. Many teachers experience low morale; some complain about illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, ulcers and heart attacks; while others plan to leave the profession, or go on early retirement because of continuous interpersonal conflict (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002: 8; Steyn, 2002: 77). The impact of interpersonal conflict on colleagues of the same organisation may be detrimental to the progress and production of the organisation. In a school situation this could imply poor cooperation in activities which promote the academic development of learners.

### 2.2.3.3 Intra-group (within the same group)

Intra-group conflict is distinctive in that it occurs between members of a group, who should be united over a common characteristic or objective (Inoue & Kawakamia, 2010: 174). In many organisations workers are divided into groups or departments, teams and units. This division could be mainly for purposes of executing duties, control and management. Although such groupings were mainly for the genuine operational requirements of the organisation, such groupings may, however, develop into cliques or conflict groups. The different objectives and approaches may further split groups and divide individuals

within groups (Carlsson-Wall, Kraus & Lind, 2011: 322). Departmental harmony is essential for helping workers within the department to produce good results and maintain high morale at the workplace. However, cliques and conflict groups may have a negative effect on the performance of the department or unit.

Apart from groups formed genuinely on operational grounds, some groupings may be due to ethnic, religious, gender and personality differences (Carlsson-Wall, Kraus & Lind, 2011:322). Intra-group conflict is destructive when it alienates individuals within groups, and when it results in win-lose situation where people choose sides and work towards defeating the other side (Carlsson-Wall, Kraus & Lind, 2011: 322).

However, not all intra-group conflict is negative. Masari and Petrovici (2011: 421) found that intra-group conflict may help generate creative tensions which may lead to more effective contributions to the organisation's goals.

#### 2.2.3.4 Inter-group conflict

Inter-group conflict is when two or more groups have differences of opinion that could lead to a general breakdown in cooperation; it could be a clash between different groups or departments (Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman, 2001: 371). Inter-group conflict occurs between two competing or distinct groups (Inoue & Kawakami, 2010: 174).

Inter-group conflict is more likely to occur if one group controls and distributes resources; or if one group determines the rewards due to the other group or to the organisation as a whole (Robbins, 2000: 386). The potential for conflict exists since the one group may tend to show strong partiality towards its own members in allocating favourable outcomes and strong partiality towards the other group in distributing negative outcomes (Maluleke, 2009: 2). The disadvantaged group may feel pressurised and undermined by the actions of

the other group (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 2000: 230). This may cause intergroup conflict.

### **Horizontal and vertical conflict**

**Horizontal conflict** occurs between departments or work groups which are at the same level of authority (Rollinson *et al.*, 2000: 404). For instance, two departments or work groups may be in conflict because the school manager has not clearly defined their areas of authority. Their decision-making areas may overlap and one group may view the other as invading its space. This may cause conflict. Horizontal conflict may also be caused by ambiguities. Ambiguities reduce the clarity about who is responsible for performing a certain activity, and may increase the likelihood that one person may ignore some responsibility and assume that it is someone else's responsibility (Rollinson *et al.*, 2000: 393). Ambiguities of this type are often the result of poorly managed organisations, where roles and responsibilities of the different employees are not clearly indicated or overlap (Kreitner, 2000: 518). In a school situation this could imply that rosters for duties such as ground duties and street patrols are not well kept, leading them to being reluctantly performed by specific volunteers, or not performed at all.

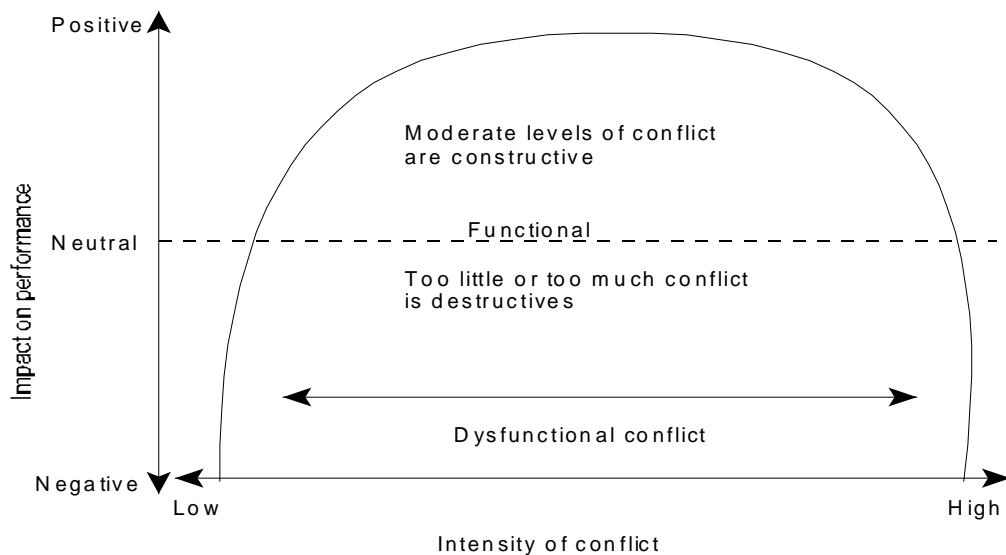
**Vertical conflict** occurs between people and their supervisors, such as between the educator and the deputy principal, or between the principal and the deputy principal (Mullins, 2005: 905). In a school situation authority is distributed according to a certain hierarchical order (Gordon, 2002: 376). Therefore, conflict may occur if the lower person (for example, the educator) challenges or undermines decisions or the authority of the immediate supervisor (for example, the deputy principal). Ikeda and Veludo-de-Oliveira (2005: 2) observe that people at a certain level experience more conflict within their own group than with groups higher or lower. For instance, the top management peers may differ in terms of strategies of handling a situation. These differences may lead to conflict.

#### 2.2.3.5 Functional and dysfunctional conflict

Conflict has the potential to motivate and bring the best out of people, and it also has the potential to lower morale and stifle progress. Robbins (2000: 328) defines functional conflict as conflict that is valuable for the organisation, and that which supports the aims of the organisation; and dysfunctional conflict as conflict that hinders the performance of the organisation.

Rollinson *et al.*, (2000: 408) also believes in functional and dysfunctional conflict. The figure below depicts the authors' views:

**Figure 2.1: Functional and dysfunctional conflict**



(Source: Robbins, 2000: 445)

The following can be deduced from figure 2.1:

Robbins (2000: 445) views functional conflict as the moderate levels of conflict which are constructive and can be associated with high levels of performance in the organisation. Conflict is functional if it improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity and innovation, encourages interest and curiosity among staff members, provides a medium through which problems



can be aired and tensions released and fosters an environment of self-evaluation and change (Robbins, 2000: 445). Functional Conflict can improve the quality of decision-making by allowing all view points, particularly the ones that are unusual or held by a minority, to be weighed in important situations. The moderate conflict in a school may stimulate teachers towards greater work ethics, good duty-consciousness, cooperation and creativity (Nqidi & Sibiyi, 2002: 8). Some conflict is also beneficial, and can encourage organisational innovation, creativity and adaptation (Gordon, 2002: 375). Functional conflict may promote higher worker enthusiasm, the implementation of better decisions, and a search for new approaches that may resolve disagreements or long-standing problems; it may also energise the conflicting parties to be more creative and to experiment with new ideas (Gordon, 2002: 375). Once conflict is resolved, the individuals may be more committed to the outcome through their involvement in solving it (Rollinson *et al.*, 2000: 409).

While functional conflict could be good for an organisation, dysfunctional conflict may be disastrous for an organisation. Massey and Dawes (2007: 1119) found that dysfunctional conflict has negative psychosocial and task outcomes, and that high levels of dysfunctional conflict are associated with reduced task orientation, reduced intelligence dissemination and reduced responsiveness to requests and instructions. Similarly, Gordon (2002: 375) found that dysfunctional conflict reduces the quality of strategy formulation and implementation. Rollinson *et al.*, (2000: 409) believe that dysfunctional conflict limits the people's ability to achieve their goals, promotes negative attitudes and destroys relationships among employees. The existence of too much negative conflict may be destructive since it may remove focus from important tasks and may interfere with efforts to achieve goals (Steyn, 2002: 78). The implication is that dysfunctional conflict could result in poor performance, lower morale and increased tension among employees. In a school situation the above may imply a lack of cooperation and ineffective process of teaching and learning due to low morale and tension among

teachers. These may impact negatively on learner performance (Keller, 2001:550).

Although the existence of conflict may be viewed as problematic for an organisation, however, where there is too little or no conflict at all, complacency may be promoted, and this may lead to the loss of creativity and a high performance edge (Champoux, 2000: 200). Therefore, a manageable amount of conflict is essential for the well-being of any organisation.

#### **2.2.4 Stages of conflict**

The researchers agree that conflict is not a sudden event, but a process which occurs over a period of time, and in different stages (Brookins, 2012; Champoux, 2000; George & Jones: 2003). Although researchers agree that conflict occurs in stages, they, however, do not agree with regard to the number of stages in which conflict occurs. In this study eight, five and four different stages of conflict are discussed.

##### **2.2.4.1 Eight stages of conflict**

Brookins (2012: 3) identifies the following eight stages of conflict:

#### **Stage 1:No conflict**

The initial meeting of employees and the beginning of operations in an organisation may be characterised by the absence of conflict – since employees may have not acted in ways that threaten the well-being of others and their goals. However, this stage does not last forever since pressure to complete work or projects may cause conflict among workers.

#### **Stage 2:Latent conflict**

As the pressure to complete work or projects intensifies, workers may have different ideas as to which procedure may be effective in enabling the speedy completion of the work at hand. The existence of differences in approaches, ideas, values and personalities has a potential for conflict. However, these differences may not be a problem on their own, but any statement, event or situation may expose them and lead to conflict.

### **Stage 3:Emergence**

At this point conflict emerges and the different parties become fully conscious of the existence of conflict. The workplaces are wrought with situations which may require workers to rely on their individual personalities, ideas, strengths and approaches (Brookins, 2012: 4). These situations expose differences among different workers. The differences cause discord and tensions as different people or parties recognise them. This stage is also characterised by the insistence of different people or groups on their own approaches and ideas, and the subsequent rejection of ideas of other people. This situation promotes conflict (Champoux, 2000: 206). The initial conflict may be between two people, or between two small groups of people.

### **Stage 4:Escalation**

At this stage conflict escalates, draws more people into the situation and heightens tensions. At this stage people choose sides, and view their opponents as the enemy (Kriesberg, 1998: 3).Existing or past tensions may also be thrown into the situation, and it becomes difficult for conflicting parties to come to a resolution.

### **Stage 5:Stalemate**

Stalemate is the most intense stage since the conflict has spiralled out of control, to a point where neither side is in a position nor willing to back down from their stances. Even in a situation where a member of one side feels that there may be merit in the other side's view, there is unwillingness to admit it because of a need to protect interests and 'save face'. Kriesberg (1998: 5) views the escalation stage as destructive and as having the potential to prolong conflict.

### **Stage 6: De-escalation**

Even the most intense conflicts calm down at some point, as one or more of the persons involved in the conflict realise they are not likely to reach a conclusion if they continue with their unwillingness to look at the conflict from all sides. De-escalation refers to the decrease in the severity or scope of conflict, and it precedes the resolution of the conflict (Kriesberg, 1998: 6). During this stage, parties begin to negotiate and consider various solutions.

### **Stage 7:Resolution**

After considering various solutions conflicting parties may be able to resolve the conflict. Of utmost importance for the organisation is for the parties involved to consider the solution and refrain from referring to previous issues or causes of the conflict (Kriesberg, 1998: 4). A mediator or authority may play an important role in emphasising important actions and steps to 'cement' the resolution (Kriesberg, 1998: 4)

### **Stage 8: Peace building and reconciliation:**

At this stage it may be necessary to repair the relationships that may have been damaged during the escalation of conflict, since conflicting parties may have used harsh words while in the midst of the conflict. Also here, a mediator

or authority may play an important role in bringing the participants together (Kriesberg, 2010: 5)

#### 2.2.4.2 Six stages of conflict

Sluzki (2010: 66) identifies six stages of conflict, which he represents in a table below:

| <b>STAGE</b>                  | <b>NARRATIVE</b>   | <b>EMOTION</b>                                       |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <b><i>Conflict</i></b>        | <b><i>"Hostility is the only option"</i></b>               | <b><i>Contempt, hostility, elation</i></b>           |
| <b><i>Coexistence</i></b>     | <b><i>"We are ready for hostile acts when needed"</i></b>  | <b><i>Resentment, anger</i></b>                      |
| <b><i>Collaboration</i></b>   | <b><i>"Hostilities are a fall-back option"</i></b>         | <b><i>Ambivalence</i></b>                            |
| <b><i>Cooperation</i></b>     | <b><i>"Hostilities would be a major disadvantage."</i></b> | <b><i>Cautious empathy</i></b>                       |
| <b><i>Interdependence</i></b> | <b><i>"We need each other."</i></b>                        | <b><i>Acceptance of the past; cautious trust</i></b> |
| <b><i>Integration</i></b>     | <b><i>"We are one."</i></b>                                | <b><i>Solidarity, friendly trust</i></b>             |

(Source: Sluzki, 2010: 66)

Each stage will be discussed below.

#### **Stage 1: Conflict**

This stage entails an 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 in this stage are unambiguously those of a 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 dominant emotions that sustain and are sustained by this stage are resentment and mistrust of the other party. The rules of engagement between the parties still follow the principles of zero-sum games.

## **Stage 3: Collaboration**

While assumptions of ill intent still loom as a background, the scenario changes when some activities in common or joint projects are initiated. The communication occurring between the two parties is characterised by caution and a very careful choice of words. A calmer ambivalence begins to reduce the clouds of mistrust as a dominant emotion.

## **Stage 4: Cooperation**

This stage is characterised 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 realise that hostilities would be a major disadvantage for all of those involved and peace is desirable.

## **Stage 5: Interdependence**

At this stage the materialisation of the common goals overshadow the remnants of assumptions of ill intent as the parties engage in joint planning and actions toward the collective good. The dominant narratives display a consensus that “We need each other. Hostility would be foolish,” and the constructive nature of the relationship is carefully maintained. The dominant emotions may include acceptance of the past and even forgiveness for prior misdeeds, with cautious trust and open attachment.

## **Stage 6: Integration**

This stage is characterised 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.

### 2.2.4.3 Five stages of conflict

Kalmus (2012: 1) has identified the following five stages of conflict:

#### **Stage 1: Emergence**

Emergence is when the conditions for conflict arise and a potential conflict becomes one. It starts with "potential opposition or incompatibility," and it indicates that the opportunity for conflict is ripe, due to schisms in communication, action or personal issues. .

#### **Stage 2: Escalation**

In this stage, the conflict escalates as both parties perceive the other's intentions as erroneous or unfair. This is the stage where the parties involved begin exhibiting behaviours in direct opposition to the opponent's perceived intentions, such as competitive statements and avoidance tactics.

#### **Stage 3: Crisis**

At a certain point in a conflict, the adversaries become so polarised in their opposition that neither party wants to concede even though neither is poised to win the conflict. This crisis or emergency stage may be reached after strategies for domination have failed, support has fled, resources have

dissolved or the cost of perpetuating the conflict has become too great. Often this is when a stalemate occurs.

#### **Stage 4: Negotiation**

Once both parties in a conflict recognise that they have reached a stalemate, their tenacity for their position loosens, their emotional intensity and attachments soften and their willingness to listen to the other party increases. At this point, the situation reaches the "de-escalation" stage and the possibility for some sort of settlement emerges. Strategies such as compromise and bargaining take place at this stage.

#### **Stage 5: Resolution**

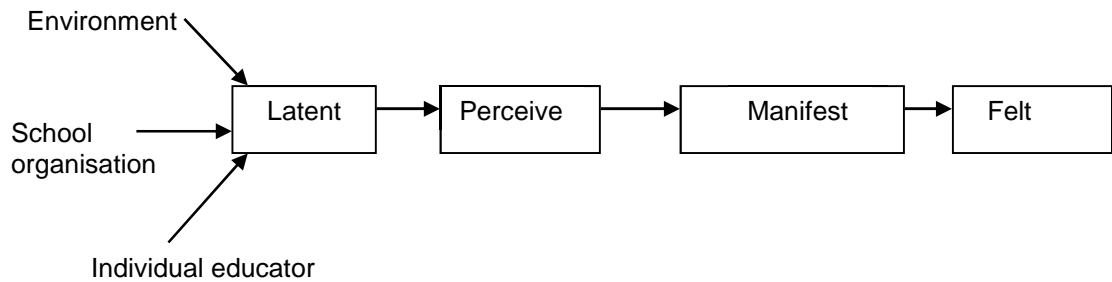
This is the stage at which the conflict is resolved, and attempts are made to reconcile the parties involved in conflict. Hence some authors call this stage Settlement/Resolution stage and Peace building and Reconciliation stage (Brahm, 2003: 126;Kriesberg, 1998: 6).



#### 2.2.4.4 Four stages of conflict

According to George and Jones (2003: 661) conflict may flow in stages as follows:

**Figure 2.2: Conflict stages**



(Source: George and Jones, 2003: 661)

Each stage is discussed below.

##### **Stage 1: Latent conflict**

Every conflict begins with a latency period: a period when the potential for conflict exists, but it has not yet developed (George & Jones, 2003: 661). Latent conflict refers to the existence of factors within the person, group, or organisation that have a potential to lead to conflict, or the existence of conditions conducive to the occurrence of conflict (Robbins, 2003: 403). Ariza-Montobbio and Lele (2010: 190) view latent conflict as a form not of open agitation, but more of hidden tensions. Latent conflict may exist for very long periods of time before it becomes visible, and before those involved in the conflict are conscious of it and behave accordingly (Champoux, 2000: 206). In some instances latent conflict may never emerge, unless it is triggered by some action or behaviour by one of the groups involved (Champoux, 2000: 206). In a school situation latent conflict may be promoted by different strategies and approaches, disagreements, competition for resources and facilities, negative attitudes, and tense relationships among teachers

(Champoux, 2000: 206; George & Jones, 2003: 61). The potential or conduciveness of conditions for conflict created by factors mentioned above implies that even a minor incident may cause conflict. Managing the potential or conduciveness for conflict could help in preventing the actual conflict.

The Conflict Research Consortium (2006: 2) found that latent conflict exists whenever individuals, groups or organisations have power differential that bothers one or the other. The results showed that an inevitable power differential produces latent conflict in all social relations. Democratic institutions provide a peaceful avenue for conflicts to be discussed (Brahm, 2003: 12).

### **Stage 2: Perceived conflict**

Nel, Gerber, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Son and Werner (2001: 149) state that perceived conflict refers to the potential for conflict that the observer perceives to exist. The stage of perceived conflict begins when one party becomes aware that their goals are being thwarted by the actions of another party; the one party may search for the origins of the conflict, define why the conflict is emerging, analyse the events that lead to its occurrence and determine the problems existing between the two parties (Champoux, 2000: 204). Sometimes a group can perceive a conflict situation even if the other group is not promoting such a condition (Champoux, 2000: 204). The perceived conflict has the potential to change behaviour from a mood of relaxation to a mood of threatening, attacking and accusing others (Brahm, 2003: 23).

### **Stage 3: Manifest conflict**

Manifest conflict is the actual conflict between the two parties (Nel *et al.*, 2001: 149). Conflict can be oral or written, or it can be a physical aggression (Champoux, 2000: 204). Physical aggression is a strongly negative conflict

behaviour intended to injure an opponent (Nel *et al.*, 2001:153). Brahm (2003: 126) found that manifest conflict includes the use of violent force.

#### **Stage 4: Felt conflict**

Felt conflict is the emotional part of conflict (Gordon, 2002: 380). During the stage of felt conflict, conflicting teachers develop negative feelings about each other (Gordon, 2002: 380). At this stage the teachers involved in conflict develop us-versus-them attitude, and blames the others for the conflict. As conflict escalates, cooperation among teachers declines (George & Jones, 2003: 664).

#### 2.2.4.5 Synthesis

The above discussion confirms that conflict occurs in stages, from the stage of no conflict or calmness, through the stage of high levels of conflict or crisis, to the stage of resolution and reconciliation. Each stage has its own observable signs, behaviours and actions. The actions and behaviours of one group could be a reaction or response towards the moves or signals of the other group, or a declaration of intent by a specific group. Sluzki (2012: 69) noted that stages in a conflict are sequential: the different stages follow each other as predicted, and are not skipped, but may deteriorate or tumble back to the previous stage.

The knowledge of these stages by, especially teachers and school managers could be effective in dealing with conflict. The knowledge of these stages could help with appropriate and relevant action; it could also help to prevent bitter escalation of conflict – since some bitter escalations of conflict have a possibility of causing serious damages to relationships among employees. Mullins (2005: 109) indicates that some serious damages to relationships are not easy to correct, and may cause long tensions that may be detrimental to the operations of the organisation. It is, therefore, crucial that these stages are known and their negative impacts are ameliorated.

### **2.2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of conflict**

Although conflict may hurt people physically and emotionally, it may also bring out of people the best communication, socialising and persuasion skills. Vandello, Michniewicz, Goldschmied (2011: 1173) believe that in any conflict situation, all parties involved in the conflict have to appeal to the perceptions and sympathies of outside observers. This implies that the members of the conflicting parties, whilst pursuing their course and fighting against the other party, have to also convince observers that their course is correct, just and beneficial to other members of the same community or organisation. This requires the ability to properly shape behaviour and statements, and to communicate clearly and adequately. The promotion of skills such as communication, debates, tolerance, efficiency and duty-consciousness could be acquired in the process (Robbins, 2003: 283). Such skills, once acquired, could form part of the work ethics of the individual, thus benefiting the organisation.

Conflict has a serious impact on loyalties and relationships. Conflict has the tendency to establish strong relationships between members of the same group, and to promote and strengthen loyalty to the group and its course or aims (Plank & Newell, 2007: 61). Thus, members of the same group may work together to improve strategies and to modify aims. The closeness between members of the same group also promotes interdependence (Plank & Newell, 2007: 61). However, the opposite could hold true for members of the other group: members of the one group could view members of the other group as enemies and unreliable (Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 111). This could have disastrous consequences for people working in the same organisation, since the animosity may continue even after the conflict had been resolved. Hence the resolution of conflict should address factors which may negatively affect future relationships among individuals.

Conflict has the ability to improve working relationships. Lee, Riley and Hampton (2010: 356) state that collaboration, attention and face-to-face

interactions always improve after the resolution of conflict. People who were involved in conflict show more respect and consideration of others, and wish to involve others in decisions and operations. The tendency to consult others makes them to feel wanted and valued; and thus they contribute constructively in the implementation of plans and strategies (Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 112). The 'buy-in' of all parties, which is so important in the implementation of strategies and policies, is thus acquired and plans are implemented with great support of all workers.

Robbins (2000: 385) mentions the following advantages of conflict in a school situation:

- hidden problems are brought to the surface where they may be confronted and solved;
- it may stimulate conflicting teachers to search for improved approaches that lead to better results;
- it energizes conflicting teachers to be more creative and to experiment with new ideas, and
- it may promote accountability within deputy principals.

Newstrom and Davis (2002: 265) and Robbins (2000: 386) mention the following disadvantages of conflict in a school situation:

- during conflict people focus on personal issues, and not on work,
- it leads to the deterioration of cooperation and teamwork among colleagues,
- it promotes distrust among colleagues,
- it causes stress for those involved in it, and

- it hinders competent performance.

The other problem of conflict is that some teachers, who are often the losers in a competitive situation, may feel defeated and demeaned (DoE, 2000b: 6). As the distance between conflicting teachers increases, a climate of mistrust and suspicion may arise (Mullins, 2005: 905). Individuals or a group may focus more narrowly on their own interests, preventing the development of teamwork. Performance of the school and satisfaction may decline. Frustrations and absenteeism may increase (Van der Westhuizen, 2002: 320).

The negative consequences of conflict can be devastating. The most obvious conflicts are increased turnover, decreased staff satisfaction, inefficiencies between work units, sabotage, labour grievances, strikes and physical aggression (Mullins, 2005: 907).

### **2.3 THE ROLE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

The management structure in the township schools is hierarchically arranged, with the school principal on top, the deputy principal placed immediately below the school principal and the Head of Department placed immediately below the deputy principal (Robbins & Alvy, 2003: 112). Amato, Mtumkulu, Murray, Surtees, Van der Mescht and Mngadi (2006: 114) confirm that the structure of the school is such that the distribution of authority starts from the school principal, then to the deputy principal and HODs, and then to the teachers. There is always one school principal. The number of deputy principals and Heads of department is determined by the number of learners in the school. Therefore, the bigger the school, the greater the possibility that there may be two deputy principals and a significant number of Heads of department due to higher numbers of learners and teachers in the school (DoE, 2000a: 2). The different deputy principals and Heads of Department are allocated duties in terms of areas of administration and fields of specialisation. For instance, one deputy principal may be responsible for administration and finances, and another one may be responsible for academic matters – in a

case where there are two deputy principals; and Heads of Department may be responsible for fields such as Natural Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Social Sciences, Languages and Technical subjects – depending on the nature and size of the school (DoE, 2000a: 2). A school deputy principal works directly under the principal and helps coordinate, direct and plan the academic or auxiliary activities of the school. The deputy principal manages the teachers, counsellors, staff and students on a daily basis. Along with the principal, they review and approve or recommend modifications to new or existing programs and then submit their proposals to the school board. They prepare or oversee the maintenance of attendance records, personnel reports, planning and other activities. The deputy principal coordinates or directs the use of the school facilities. (DoE, 2000a: 2). In many schools the deputy principal also deals with disciplinary issues among learners and teachers. Hence conflict among teachers is commonly handled by the deputy principal in many schools.

In many Australian schools the role of the deputy principal is to communicate openly with teachers, and to manage conflict when it arises, due to the fact that deputy principals are always available even if the school principal is out of the school premises (Cranston, 2000: 10). The deputy principals are, therefore, responsible for developing a culture of cooperation and consensus among teachers in a school (Cranston, 2000: 10). However, studies conducted by the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE, 2008: 112) found that resolving of conflict among teachers in the Australian school system have not significantly reduced conflict among teachers – although the deputy principals were readily available and have the power to deal with conflict within the school (AARE, 2008: 112). It is for this reason that many academics and organisations in Australia called for the training of deputy principals in conflict resolution – in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies for teachers in schools (Cranston, 2000: 10).

In Scotland it was found that the deputy principals were effective in handling conflict among teachers (AARE, 2008: 112), since the Scottish government equipped the deputy principals with the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake the task of managing conflict (AARE, 2008: 112). The implication is that training in conflict management is essential for the effective handling of conflict among teachers.

In Romania, most secondary schools are organised around subject area departments, and the deputy principals are responsible for the coordination of academic operations and curriculum issues in these departments, as well as for the implementation of external or national policies related to the subjects (Telem, 2001: 345). This arrangement also enables the deputy principals to compare the performance of various teachers in the various departments (Arar & Oplatka, 2011: 65). Telem (2001: 345) found that the deputy principals' relationships with heads of department and teachers were very formal. The implications for the formal relationships between the deputy principals and teachers is that conflict can only be handled in a formal and procedural manner – without allowing the various parties to engage informally and find one another (Arar & Oplatka, 2011: 165).

In Botswana the deputy principals monitor the performance of teachers, and also play a key role in formulating and implementing policies related to the teaching practice and school governance (Liu, 2010: 1014). The deputy principals are also responsible for managing conflict among educators, and for creating an environment conducive for teaching and learning in the school (Monyatsi, Steyn & Kamper, 2006: 216).

The general trend is that in many countries the deputy principal is responsible for teachers, learners and academic activities, while the school principal is responsible for mainly administrative matters of the school. The implication is that issues around relationships of teachers and learners, as well as the handling of conflicts of teachers and learners become the responsibility of the



deputy principal. It was found that gender plays an important role in the conflict resolution strategies adopted by deputy principals.

Marsella (2005: 168) found that male deputy principals rated forcing adherence to policies and regulations higher than female deputy principals. This implies that the actual causes of the conflict would be considered in terms of how they promote production and results, and not in terms of how they hurt others' feelings (Marsella, 2005: 258). Therefore, any deviation from policy would not be tolerated. However, female deputy principals consider feelings of individuals affected by the conflict, and find ways of addressing these concerns (Holt & De Vore 2005: 170). Therefore male deputy principals use more aggressive approaches than female deputy principals (Thakadi & Lemmer, 2002: 197).

The above discussion indicates the importance of the deputy principal in the school as an organisation. Therefore, the deputy principal has to be a highly qualified person, emotionally balanced and well skilled in administrative and academic matters (Monyatsi, Steyn & Kamper 2006: 216). However, Bell (2011: 1) noted that there is a growing shortage of school leaders and a declining quality of candidates for school leadership positions. The reasons for this shortage can be related continuous changes in school administration, increasing and sometimes conflicting expectations, bureaucracy (including excessive paper work), budget cuts and emphasis on administration rather than leadership (Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008: 11). These influences result in the job of school leader being seen by potential candidates as too demanding, stressful, lonely, lacking support, and only for particular groups in society (Kim, 2012:4; Masari & Petrovici, 2010:1). Due to the shortage and the declining candidate quality of school leaders, some education administrators suggest the appointment of good administrators, who may not necessarily professionally trained teachers, as school managers (Ageng'a & Simatwa, 2011; Brundrett, 2001; Gronn, 2002). The risk of appointing non-teachers to manage schools could be the loss of instructional leadership which characterises the professionally trained school managers. Gonn (2002: 123)

believes that non-teachers may only be results-oriented and work-oriented, but they may neglect the professional support required by teachers and learners.

The shortage of possible candidates for the position of deputy principal could be disastrous for the management of schools and their academic activities, and this calls for an intensive programme aimed at the professional development of school leaders.

## **2.4 SOURCES OF CONFLICT AMONG TEACHERS**

### **2.4.1 School structure as a source of conflict**

The physical structure of school buildings and the environmental comfort these buildings bring can influence the academic performance, as well as the emotional conditions of both teachers and learners (Da Graça, Kowaltowski, Petreche, 2007: 989). The report of the National Clearing House for Educational Facilities linked student and teacher performance to indoor air quality, temperature and humidity, ventilation and lighting conditions as well as acoustics (Schneider, Castillo-Salgado, Bacallao, Loyola, Mujica, Vidaurre & Roca, 2002: 88). Wall and ceiling colours are shown to affect students' and teachers' outlook on education, and thermal conditions can affect the health of building users and adverse situations can cause apathy and even stress (Da Graça, Kowaltowski, Petreche, 2007: 999).

The buildings with poor ventilation were found to promote user fatigue, and the five to ten minutes' walk to and from the bathroom was found to waste a lot of time, to reduce focus on school work and to increase short-temperedness (Mcgowen, 2007: 102). The issue of overcrowding also has a negative impact on the psychological and emotional conditions of both teachers and learners. Da Graça, Kowaltowskia and Petreche (2007: 999) state that in a school with many teachers and learners have higher levels of infighting and conflict – since the individual's feelings are not easily

accommodated. The smaller schools could provide a safer place for learners, create a more positive and challenging environment, have fewer disciplinary problems and provide greater satisfaction for teachers (Mcgowen, 2007: 133). The buildings of township schools were erected to accommodate many learners at low cost – given the problems of lack of finances for proper buildings (Yamauchi, 2005: 215). Many township schools were constructed during the *apartheid* era, and the intention of the *apartheid* government was to provide inferior education (Yamauchi, 2005: 213). Hence buildings were unstandardised and lacked relaxation and ventilation features. This is a recipe for poor academic achievement, ill-discipline and conflict.

#### **2.4.2 Personality factors as a source of conflict**

Individuals have unique personalities, which may influence their perceptions, values and interests; and in some instances the uniqueness may imply personality traits which are not easily tolerated by others. In this case, Newstorm and Davis (2002: 263) refer to it as “personality clash”. Thomson (2002:170) believes that it is normal for people to have different personalities, since not all people can think, feel and act alike; however, personalities should not be in such a way that people cannot tolerate each other. In situations that are characterised by a lack of tolerance of personalities, conflicts are more difficult to resolve (Mullins, 2005: 907). Baron (2004: 285) found that Type A personalities reported a higher frequency of conflict with others and weaker preferences for cooperation and collaboration modes of conflict resolution than Type B personalities.

Differences between employees’ and managers’ personalities may also be a source of conflict. A manager’s inherent biases and personality differences may lead to the manager’s dislike of some employees, and to biased opinions about certain people (McDowell, Coleman, Raines, Seay, & Sullivan, 2007: 121).

The influence of each of the following in personality related conflict is briefly discussed below: values, opinions, perceptions and interest.

### **2.4.3 Values**

Values are positive and negative feelings that people have about the situation – in accordance with their outlook of life and belief (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 2000: 230). Because people have different views of life, the values they attach to issues and situations may be different. In a school, a number of situations may be value-driven. For instance, teachers may differ in terms of how to handle certain learners, or what strategies to use to correct certain behaviours among learners. That difference could be a reason for conflict among teachers in the school.

### **2.4.4 Opinions**

Differences in opinions may result in conflict about the means to an end rather than the end itself (Thomson, 2002: 170). For instance, there are strongly contrasting beliefs about what the expression organisational effectiveness means. Some teachers hold that it simply means producing good results, while others stress that effectiveness involves being responsible to a much wider constituency of staff members. The issue of learner discipline, or specifically, corporal punishment, always produces different opinions as to its effectiveness, and whether it should be advocated for or not. Even those who agree on an issue, may have different opinions as to the finer details of the same issue. These differences could result in conflict.

### **2.4.5 Perceptions**

People may interpret reality in different ways. They perceive differences in the severity, causes and consequences of problems (Thomson, 2002: 172). Differing perceptions may come from self-perceptions, conflicting perceptions of situations, and perceptions of threat (Jones, 2005: 106). Teachers may

have different perceptions about certain learners, or certain types of behaviours. The different perceptions may lead to different reactions to those learners or behaviours.

#### **2.4.6 Interests**

Teachers have different interests in terms of what they want from work. To some teachers prestige and status are the most important rewards, while to others it is autonomy, job satisfaction and remuneration (Thomson, 2002: 170). Many schools are in an almost constant state of change, which upsets and stresses teachers, and threatens their interests (DoE, 2000a: 4). Therefore, conflict may emerge when teachers focus on different interests, particularly when one educator or one group of teachers feels that the interests of another educator or another group of teachers threaten their own interests (Mullins, 2005: 907).

In a school situation, efforts should be made to employ teachers with common trends of thinking, or closer personalities, and who would mutually understand and pursue the value and mission of the school. In this case, personalities may not inhibit the resolution of conflicts.

#### **2.4.7 Cultural factors as a source of conflict**

Culture plays an important role in the thinking and behaviour of individuals (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006: 579). People from different cultural backgrounds may behave differently due to the cultural influences on their personalities and socialisation strategies (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006: 580). Therefore, cultural diversity has the potential to cause conflict, since some behaviours may be offensive to others, and may be detrimental to the culture of the organisation. Culture also separates people into an in-group and out-group, based on the criterion of whether or not they share a common culture, thus creating the necessary conditions for intercultural conflict (Worchel, 2005: 743). Once such conflict exists, then culture shapes the individual's perception of conflict and

how they may respond to the conflict. Hence it is important for an organisation to have a common culture, which may influence the behaviour of employees in the organisation. Therefore, the school as an organisation with many teachers and learners; and with many activities, has to have a common culture which may dictate goals, strategies and policies (Robbins & De Cenzo, 2004: 370).

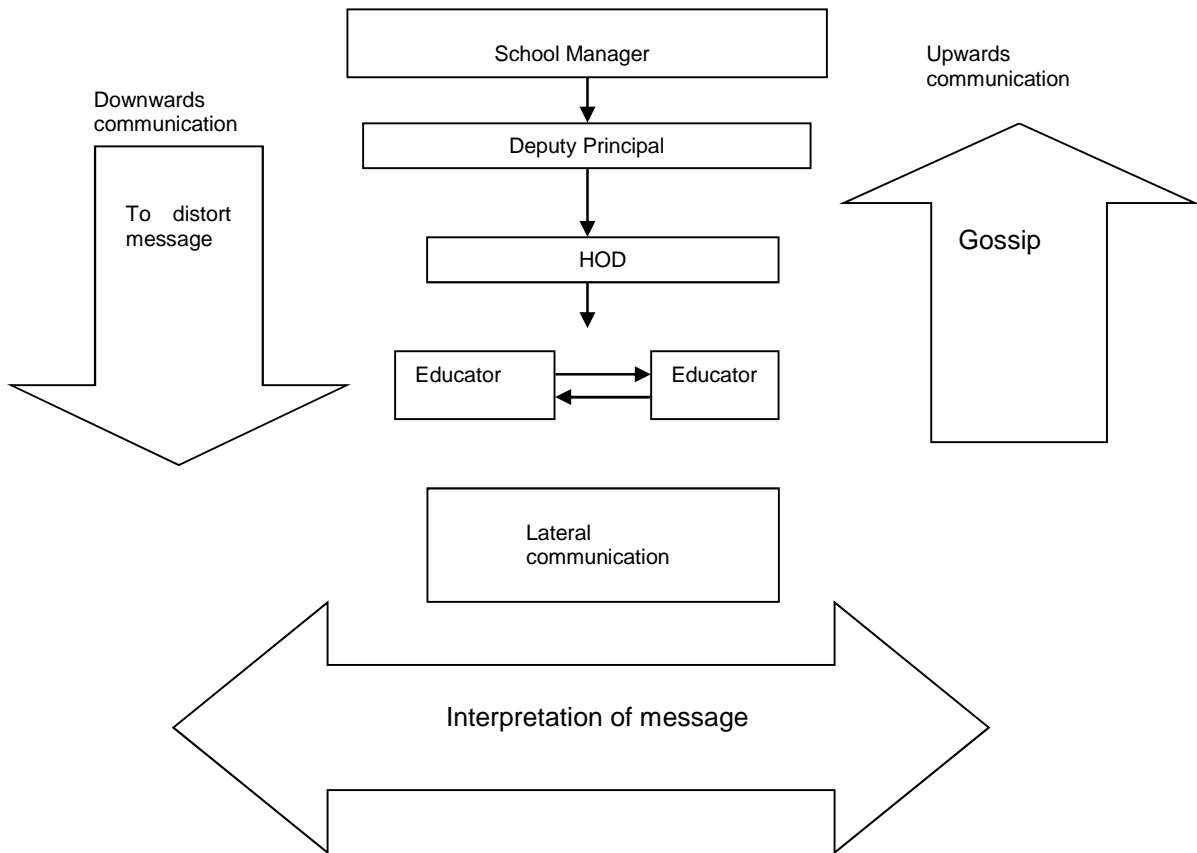
Teachers belonging to different cultures may behave differently in terms of communication, teaching styles and relationships; and they may deal with conflict and differently – despite the existence of shared principles and prescribed policies among them (Haslam, 2006: 255; Vandello, Michniewicz & Goldschmied, 2011: 1175). Hui, Au and Fock (2004: 108) found that cultural differences between the customers and employees could play an important role in determining the failure or success of a business. Mahon (2009: 47) conducted a study to determine why white learners performed academically better than black learners in the United States of America. It was found that white teachers who understood the culture of black people did not only manage to bridge the achievement gap between the black and white learners, but also managed to improve relationships between black and white parents and teachers in the school (Mahon, 2009: 47).

Therefore, the employment of teachers who share the same culture as that of learners and parents, as well as cultural tolerance among teachers, can go a long way in reducing conflict related to culture in many schools.

#### 2.4.7.1 Lack of communication as a source of conflict

Robbins (2003: 282) believes that communication in the school may be effective if it follows the following direction:

**Figure 2.3: Direction in which communication flows in schools**



(Source: Robbins, 2003: 400).

Conflict may be a result of lack of communication or inability to express oneself properly (Whetten *et al.*, 2000: 340). In a school set-up the principal conveys messages to the deputy principal. Then the deputy principal has to communicate the same message to the HOD, who has to relay it to the educator. This is vertical communication (Robbins, 2003: 401). Then teachers may distribute the message among themselves. This becomes lateral communication (Robbins, 2003: 401). The message may be distorted as it is communicated to the HOD – since it may no longer be exactly the same message as it was communicated by the principal to the deputy principal. This may also be the case as the message is communicated by the HOD to the educator. 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 (Whetten *et al.*, 2000: 339). Consequently, a communication gap may exist between teachers and management, as well as among teachers themselves (Adebayo, 2001:20; Adeyemi, 2009: 8). 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, 2005: 1; Center for Peace Education, 2002: 25). Jones (2005: 107) believes that effective communication is preceded by planning how to pass messages across. In a school situation the school management have to ensure that communication between the deputy principals and teachers and between teachers and learners is effective.

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, 2002: 7). 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.

#### **2.4.8 Lack of feedback as a source of conflict**

Individuals need feedback to determine the success or failure of their actions. Feedback is argued to be a powerful tool in shaping team learning and team performance (Gabelica; Van den Bossche, Segers & Gijsselaers, 2012: 125). According to the Department of Education (2004: 126) communication breakdown can be traced from faulty feedback or lack of feedback. Since feedback plays an important role in communication and in tasks, lack of feedback could, therefore, create communication and relationship problems among employees and their supervisors. (Gabelica *et al.*, 2012: 125) distinguish between expected feedback and observed feedback; and a discrepancy between the two could lead to negative responses and conflict. This implies that individuals attach some judgment to the feedback they receive, and the judgement thus attached determines whether the feedback



received was expected or not (Gabelicaet *al.*, 2012: 125). The manner of delivering negative feedback and the manner in which negative feedback as received and processed have a potential to cause conflict Peterson and Behfar (2003: 104). People need to know where they went wrong so as to place more focus important aspects. However, lack of proper feedback may not enable people to place focus where it is required, and this could be frustrating.

In a school situation teachers may want to know where their performance has not delivered the required results, and what is it that they need to do in order to address the problem. Failure to establish these facts could become frustrating. Peterson and Behfar (2003: 104) believe that conflict is one of the signs of frustration.

#### **2.4.9 Allocation of subjects as a source of conflict**

According to Steyn (2002: 189), the most common source of conflict in schools is allocation of subjects and duties. Le Roux (2002: 171) states that in many instances more is allocated to the individual teacher, leading to work overload. This implies that some teachers may offer too many subjects, to too many learners or classes, which may require a lot of time for preparation, assessment and controlling. These may lead to stress, exhaustion and time pressure for the individual teachers, and to conflict among teachers. There could be conflict between teachers who feel overloaded and those who are viewed as not overloaded. The perception that some teachers may be more overloaded than others may also lead to feelings of favouritisms and unfairness, whereby those teachers who are more overloaded view others as favoured by the school management (Armstrong, 2000: 156). The teacher feelings of favouritism may further lead to mistrust and cliques among teachers.

Apart from subject overload, the field of specialisation may also be a source of conflict in many schools. Armstrong (2000: 159) sees the allocation of

subjects for teachers as a source of conflict when subjects are the issue. According to the researcher's experience, an educator who did not specialise in a specific learning area would observe the problems but the one who specialised with the learning area would excel and obtain good results in the learning area. Because of the allocation of teachers in other learning areas they might not interact with their peers in the school.

#### **2.4.10 Allocation of responsibilities and duties as a source of conflict**

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, 2000: 156). 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 own duties and responsibilities (Robbins, 2003: 461). 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 intrusion (Robbins, 2003: 461). The young teachers may, therefore, not show the cooperation and support required of them. This could cause of conflict between the young and senior teachers.

The nature of duties and responsibilities also has a 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, 2002: 171; Oliver & Venter, 2003: 186). 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: 156). This practice promotes the perception that female teachers have lower status than male teachers (Telem, 2001: 345). This could cause conflict between male and female teachers, especially in cases where

male teachers are reluctant to administer corporal punishment for whatever reason.

The responsibilities related to sports and extra-mural activities also have a potential to cause conflict. The sports and extra-mural activities normally take place after school hours, and thus require teachers responsible for these activities to remain at school and supervise and train learners participating in these activities – without any additional remuneration (Robbins, 2003:461). Many teachers are, therefore, reluctant to supervise any responsibilities that may keep them at school after hours. Therefore, most of those who take extra-mural and sports responsibilities are compelled to stay longer after school, or even come to school over weekend (DoE, 2005: 3). This may cause conflict between those who stay after school to supervise learners in these activities, and those who do not do so. With the unionisation of education in South Africa, the teachers' stay after school hours has become a serious labour matter, threatening the existence of sports and extra-mural activities in many township schools.

#### **2.4.11 Limited resources as a source of conflict**

The resources ownership, use, access and control have a great influence on emotions, relationships and power (Sultana, 2011: 166). Therefore, those who control resources have the ability to influence decisions and direction of events. In situations where resources are limited, there is a greater possibility that there will be conflict, mainly due to competition for the limited resources, as well as for power and influence (George & Jones, 2003: 66; Mullins, 2005: 906). The source of conflict could result from a situation where different teachers or departments have to share funds, or determine how funds are distributed between or among departments. In one German university, the Departments of Mathematics and Natural Sciences share resources, and develop programmes which enable students to share resources, and these departments also share the costs of maintaining these resources (Shaw, Shaw & Enke, 2003: 493). Although the practice of sharing resources

provides good opportunities for increasing social interaction between the two departments, it also has a potential for causing conflict between the members of the two departments – especially if one department monopolises the use of certain equipments, or some members of one department feel that their access to some equipment is too limited (Parsloe & Wray, 2000: 35; George & Jones, 2003: 67).

Van Deventer *et al.*, (2003: 26) observed that in many organisations resources are generally limited. The schools also experience serious shortages of resources due to limited funding and lack of sponsorship. The shortage of resources in the township schools is critical: during *apartheid*, the government policy was clearly to provide inferior education to blacks by mainly depriving black schools of basic resources and facilities (Armstrong, 2000: 156). The democratic government could not adequately address this situation. The shortage of resources and facilities in the township schools may lead to conflict due to, for instance, teachers hiding resources, or refusing others access to resources and facilities (Le Roux, 2002: 168).

#### **2.4.12 Safety of teachers as a source of conflict**

Safety means to secure the health of teachers, protect them from risks that may arise and to control potentially dangerous activities or events within the school environment (DoE, 2000c: 4). Schools are expected to have a written policy on safety, which should be made available to all teachers (DoE, 2000c: 4). Such a policy could guide teachers in handling events, tours, disasters and emergencies. Conflict could arise in schools where such a policy does not exist, since different teachers may have different opinions on how to handle certain situations or circumstances.

The handling of ill-discipline, violence and physical fights among learners could also expose teachers to unsafe conditions. Meyer, Astor and Behre (2002: 501) state that a physical fight between learners may cause conflict

between male and female teachers, since male teachers may be expected to intervene and thus risk their safety.

#### **2.4.13 Reward system as a source of conflict**

Rewards also contribute to conflict in the workplace. Van Deventer *et al.*, (2003: 30) maintain that conflict is more likely to occur when the reward system is related to individual performance, rather than to group performance. The teachers may believe that good performance and good results are an effort of all or many people (interdependent), and it is, therefore, unfair for rewards or praise to be allocated to an individual (Le Roux, 2002: 171; Oliver & Venter, 2003: 186). A system of reward which recognises individual performance in a school situation may create feelings that one person is rewarded at the expense of others, or that the efforts and contribution of others in the good results are not recognised (Robbins & De Cenzo, 2004: 371). However, the disadvantage of group reward is that some less active members of the group also benefit in exactly the same way as those who put extra efforts in the good performance. A good example is the Grade 12 results in the South African schooling system. The emphasis is placed on the overall performance of Grade 12 learners, and the efforts of teachers in the previous grades, and in the different subjects are not receiving the recognition they deserve.

The reward system, could, therefore, be a source of conflict if those participating in it find it unfair and biased towards certain groups or individuals.

#### **2.4.14 Absenteeism as a source of conflict**

Organisations with high rates of absenteeism and low employee reliability issues cannot function efficiently (Le Roux, 2002: 171). The schools that have high rates of educator absenteeism may also not function effectively; there may be bad relationships among teachers, especially if those present are

forced to take over responsibilities of those who are absent (Squelch, 2001: 138). The conflict situation may become worse if the absenteeism is unauthorised and regular (Bass, 2009: 3).

The rate of absenteeism is high among township school teachers (Squelch, 2000:139). The main sources of the rate of absenteeism among township school teachers include stress and ill-health (Motseke, 2000: 128). Apart from absenteeism, many teachers are regularly on workshops, which are conducted away from school (Bass, 2009: 3). The resultant disorder and taking over of responsibilities may cause conflict among teachers.

Absenteeism represents a costly problem for all organisations. It was found that women are often absent since they are likely to stay home with sick children (Bass, 2009: 5). The higher rates of absenteeism of female workers promote a tendency among managers not to employ female teachers, especially those who are still young with small children or with a possibility of falling pregnant (Scott & Wimbus, 2000: 524). Male workers become annoyed when they have to take over the responsibilities of the absent female workers. Hence the suggestion that women workers should share more of the child-care responsibilities with their spouses (Scott & Wimbus2000: 524).

#### **2.4.15 Interdependence as source of conflict**

Interdependence consists of two forms which are called work interdependence and pooled interdependence (Steyn, 2002: 289). Work interdependence occurs when two or more parties depend on one another to complete their tasks, while pooled interdependence requires no interaction between groups because each group functions separately, but the pooled performance of all the groups determines how successful the organisation may be (Steyn, 2002: 289). Conflict arises when one group is viewed as not performing as expected.

Teachers who value independence tend to resist the need for interdependence and, to some extent, conformity within a group. Epple, Romano and Sieg (2004: 659) define conflict as a situation in which interdependent people express differences in satisfying their individual needs and interests, and they experience interference from each other in accomplishing these goals. Parties or groups are presented as inherently interdependent, either one group depending on another group or other groups, or individuals within the group depending on each other. Increased interdependence increases coordination problems, as well as increasing the potential for conflict – since groups or individuals within a group have many behavioural differences which may require some adjustment or changing for fruitful coexistence (Human, 2006: 137). Failure to effect these changes could lead to conflict.

Apart from interdependence, collective efficacy is crucial for the realisation of the objectives in any organisation. Goncalo, Polman and Maslach (2010: 15) define collective efficacy as a group's shared belief that it can execute a task successfully. Collective efficacy is fundamental to group's motivation, performance, and effectiveness, and it has an inherent characteristic of the pursuance of the same goals. However, inter-personal incompatibilities among group members threaten collective efficacy. Jehn and Mannix (2001: 124) believe that if members of the organisation differ in terms of approaches to the task, and if some members of the organisation doubt the commitment of others to the goals of the organisation, then conflict sets in as the collective efficacy is weakened. In a school situation the aims of achieving success for all learners is universal among all teachers, however, the differences may arise in the approaches or the execution of plans for achieving the required success.

#### **2.4.16 Transformation as a source of conflict**

According to Burns (2009: 1) transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and subordinates make each other to advance to a higher level of morality and motivation. The transformational style creates significant change in the life of people and organisations. It redesigns perceptions and values, and changes expectations and aspirations of teachers in a school (Burns, 2009:1). Conflict may arise because some people respond slower to change than others (Human, 2006: 137). The many changes within the education system also contribute to conflict among teachers. The South African education system has changed several times since 1994. The shift from apartheid education to a democratic education saw the curriculum changing from Outcomes-based education (OBE), to Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), to National Curriculum Statement (NCS), and currently to Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DoE, 2004:3; Thajane, 2011: 75). These changes brought about differences in teaching approaches, classroom management, assessment approaches and record keeping. This implied that teachers had to be trained and re-trained whenever a different system was introduced. Conflict may arise among teachers within the same school due to the differences in their interpretation and implementation of teaching, assessment and record-keeping approaches – mainly due to the fact that the training that was provided after every new system was haphazard, contradictory and inconsistent (Motseke, 2000: 133). Individuals, especially young teachers, may develop capacities for coping with these changes, but older teachers may not change readily and may prefer to adhere to their old practices (Human, 2006: 138). A study conducted among teachers of a few South African schools revealed that the differences in the teachers' understanding and implementation of new practices are vast (Burns, 2009: 1). This implies that younger teachers master new skills and concepts quicker than older teachers. The differences in understanding and implementation problems between older and younger teachers could lead to conflict.



Transformation related to conditions of service, retrenchments, leaner punishment and the involvement of parents in education also had a role to play in conflict among teachers. The existence of different unions for teachers implies that there could be differences in the unions' demands for salary increases and for conditions of service; and the retrenchments of teachers due to the decrease in the numbers of learners in a school could lead to tensions as to which teachers should be retrenched or retrenched first and which ones should be retained (Soudien, 2001: 35).

Teachers may also differ in terms of the measures they use to deal with ill-discipline among learners, especially after the banning of corporal punishment in schools (Soudien, 2001: 35). In general, the functioning of schools has changed completely since the advent of democracy, and these changes may bring about conflict among teachers in a school (Steyn, 2002: 189).

#### **2.4.17 The role of the school culture in conflict**

The school culture gives its teachers a guide as to how they should conduct themselves (Thomson, 2002: 70). The schools which have a positive, collegial and professional culture show productivity and good results, while those with a truly negative culture show poor productivity, teaching and relationships (Raywid, 2001: 109; Shirts, 2008: 5). Negative school cultures are associated with negative relationships and conflict (Shirts, 2008: 5). However, parts of the school often have their own cultures and where these result in an issue being reviewed in different ways cultures can give rise to conflicts (Robbins, 2003: 283). Cultural clashes also tend to surface in a merger between departments of school, or when departments have to work together on a certain project (Rollinson *et al.*, 2000: 406). Another way in which culture can establish predisposition towards conflict is in those schools where the culture emphasises competition. The teachers may believe that it is good for sub-units or departments to compete; therefore they often establish structures and processes that encourage competition (Neuman & Bennet, 2006: 430). However, competition has a potential for conflict.

#### **2.4.18 Teacher-learner relationship as a source of conflict**

Teachers who maintained close relationships with learners reported that learners were less likely to avoid school, appeared more self-directed, more cooperative, and more engaged in learning (Greenberg & Baron; 2000:1; Sava, 2002: 1009). Also these learners reported liking school more and experiencing less loneliness if they had a close relationship with their teachers (Liebenberg & Barnes, 2004: 8). 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 their teachers (Rimm-Kaufman, 2011: 2; Smith, 2001: 1).

However, conflict arises due to the different teacher-learner relationship styles maintained by teachers. The humanistic and custodial approaches are distinguished. The humanistic approach stresses the importance of learners and the creation of an atmosphere that meets learners' needs, and leads to a democratic orientation between learners and teachers (Sava, 2002: 1010). In this model, relationships with learners are personal, teachers are optimistic and maintain open channels for communication (Sava, 2002: 1010). The custodial approach is the traditional school model that provides a rigid and controlled setting by emphasising the maintenance of order (Sava, 2002: 1010). Learners are considered to be irresponsible and undisciplined, teacher-learner relationships are impersonal, and pessimism and mistrust prevail (Sava, 2002: 1011). 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.

### **2.5 MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT**

Conflict may manifest itself in the following ways:

- Change in behavior
- Lowering of performance
- Experiencing stress
- Increased rates of absenteeism

Each of the above-mentioned manifestations of conflict will be discussed.

### **2.5.1 Change in behavior**

The experiencing of conflict may impact negatively on the behaviour of an individual. People who experience conflict may become haphazard, uncooperative and unpredictable (Whetten *et al.*, 2000:353). Sava (2002: 1010) states that teachers who experience conflict have a tendency to ill-treat learners, and to display more hostile attitudes towards learners. Orange (2000: 20) believes that conflict leads to increased teacher misbehaviours, which may be characterised by negative criticism, embarrassment, humiliation, sarcasm and unfair testing.

### **2.5.2 Lowering of performance**

Many researchers believe that the nature of conflict can hamper or improve performance in an organization (Ehie, 2010; Duarte & Davies, 2002). However, dysfunctional conflict leads to lower of performance (Ehie, 2010: 146). The effective performance is characterised by focusing on the work at hand; however, people who experience conflict lack the required focus (DoE, 2000:16; Whetten *et al.*, 2000: 353). Conflict has the ability to drop efficiencies: in situations where conflict is low the efficiencies of individuals are high and performance will be high, while in situations where conflict is

high the efficiencies of individuals may fall and performance may be low (Duarte & Davies 2003: 93; Weer, Greenhaus & Linnehan, 2010: 310).

### **2.5.3 Experiencing stress**

Individuals who face conflict in workplace may feel great stress, show nervous behaviour and have less tolerant behaviour with others (Haq, 2011: 288). The existence of conflict among teachers also promote high levels of stress. Whetten *et al.*, (2000: 340) found that teachers who are involved in conflict experience negative feelings such as frustration, a negative view of life, stress and emotional interpretation of situations. Klassen, Foster, Rajani & Bowman (2009: 388) found that teachers in schools where there is good communication among staff and a strong sense of collegiality report lower levels of stress, and higher levels of commitment and job satisfaction than in schools characterised by conflict among staff. However, unsolved chronic problems with colleagues and a lack of support from principals have been reported to be positively related to stress, exhaustion and cynicism among teachers (Pyhältö, Pietarinen, Salmela-Aro, 2011: 1101). In comparison with other academic client-related professions, teachers have been found to surpass the average levels of stress. In Finland, teachers have the highest burnout levels compared with workers in all other human services and white-collar jobs (Kalimo & Hakanen, 2000: 120).

### **2.5.4 Increased rates of absenteeism**

The rate of teacher absenteeism in schools is becoming a serious problem. The main reasons for staying away from school by teachers include illness and depression (Rajbhandary & Basu 2010: 155). The absence due to conflict, although not rampant, is also experienced in some schools (DoE, 2002: 16). Carlsen (2012: 130) found that in Norway teachers who stayed away from school due to illness may not be genuinely sick, but they may be hiding the real reasons for their absence; these reasons may include conflict, stress and dislike of leadership styles. Carlsen (2012: 131) refers to this as

voluntary (non-illness related) sickness. The implication is that conflict may lead teachers experiencing it to a situation where they avoid going to school, probably because the people responsible for the conflict are at school. Although staying away from a conflict situation gives the individual some comfort or relief from conflict, it may be a temporary avoidance of conflict and it is detrimental to the functioning of the organisation or school (DoE, 2002: 16; Van der Westhuizen, 2002: 130).

### **2.5.5 General manifestations of conflict**

Stimson (2012: 2) mentions the following manifestations of conflict:

- Disputes - Grievances, disciplinary actions, complaints, lawsuits, strikes, threatened legal action, and disagreements are all signs of dissatisfaction and unresolved conflict.
- Competition - Competition, particularly within an organisation or between and among individuals within the organisation may also be a sign of emerging conflict.
- Sabotage – Inefficiency or lack of productivity in the form of slow work, deliberate delay or decreased output can be evidence of conflict.
- Low Morale - Low morale is often a reaction to hidden conflict. Often, it is the result of attempting to avoid or deny conflict.
- Withholding Knowledge - Withholding information is practiced as a form of control and a sign of distrust.

Van Tonder, Havenga & Visagie (208: 373) mention the following manifestations of conflict:

- Decline in performance,
- Hostility towards colleagues,
- Decline in cooperation,
- Experiencing of depression,
- Contemplating job change,
- Withdrawing from colleagues, and
- Developing health problems.

McDowell *et al.*, (2007: 124) state that in addition to taking a personal toll on individual employees, conflict also has adverse effects on the workplace. The following benefits of managed conflict are compared to the damage

**Table 2.1: Benefits of managed conflict**

| Managed Conflict   | Out of Control Conflict                              |
|--|--|
| Strengthens relationships and builds teamwork                    | Damages relationships and discourages cooperation    |
| Encourages open communication and cooperative problem-solving    | Results in defensiveness and hidden agendas          |
| Resolves disagreements quickly and increases productivity        | Wastes time, money and human resources               |
| Deals with real issues and concentrates on win-win resolution    | Focuses on fault-finding and blaming                 |
| Makes allies and diffuses anger                                  | Creates enemies and hard feelings                    |
| Airs all sides of an issue in a positive, supportive environment | Is frustrating, stress producing and energy draining |
| Calms and focuses toward results                                 | Is often loud, hostile and chaotic                   |

(Source: Managing Workplace Conflict:<http://www.mala.ca/>)

Conflict resolution strategies will be briefly discussed next

## 2.6 CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

### **2.6.1 Collaborating strategy**

Collaboration involves an attempt to work with the other person to find some solution which fully satisfies the concerns of both persons (Whetten, *et al*, 2000: 321). By sharing values and individual needs collaboration leads to a common goal. In a collective manner, collaboration brings new time, energy and ideas to resolve conflict meaningfully (Mitchell, 2008: 1).

In collaborative strategy, all parties in the conflict recognise the interests and abilities of each other (Robbins & De Cenzo, 2004: 370). Each individual's interests, intentions and outcomes are thoroughly explored in an effort to solve the conflict in a maximising way (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001: 376). Collaborative solutions are future-oriented and focus on problem rather than blaming (Le Roux, 2002:168). Department of Education (2005:34) emphasises collaboration as a total membership approach to conflict resolution.

Through collaborative strategy the deputy principal could play down the differences and emphasise commonalities to satisfy the concerns of others (Deutsch, 2008: 4; Le Roux, 2002: 168). In this way the one party sacrifices its position and goals, in order to satisfy the needs of the other party. In this approach the SMT needs to involve conflicting parties in communication (Valesky, 2011: 270).

### **2.6.2 Competing strategy**

Deutsch (2008: 4) say the competing strategy is used when parties need a quick decision and need to stand up for their own rights (Robbins & De Cenzo, 2004: 374). In competitive parties rely on an aggressive style of communication, low regard for future relationships and the exercise of coercive power to hold on to their position (Mullins, 2005: 904; Kenney & Watson, 2005: 4). This strategy usually results in a win-lose situation in which

the winning party does not consider the inputs and interests of the losing party (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2000: 41). George and Jones (2003: 663) believe that in the competing strategy there is actually little open conflict, since it is a win-lose situation and the losing party tends to keep away, or keep a low profile and allow the winning party to take control (Rowse, 2006: 2).

In a school situation the winning party may control when, where and how events happen; it may determine who plays which role, and it may also be responsible for the allocation of resources and the distribution of rewards (Robbins & De Cenzo, 2004: 314). Although the losing party may seem powerless and without any influence, in reality, the school may not function effectively without the contribution of all teachers including those in the losing party. The teachers in the losing party may not cooperate with those in the winning party, they may withhold crucial information, they may withdraw from efforts to improve performance in the school, and they may even thwart attempts to achieve set goals (Robbins, 2000: 537). Such a situation lowers the potential for overall school effectiveness (DoE, 2004: 41).

### **2.6.3 Compromising strategy**

According to Kenny and Watson (2005: 4), compromising involves two or more parties coming together and settling for a solution considered good for the school or project; the solution may not even be what the conflicting parties wanted. Conflicting parties attempt to resolve the conflict by identifying a solution that is partially satisfactory to both of them, but completely satisfactory to neither (Robbins, 2000: 537).

Therefore, there is no distinct winner or loser, since the resolution reached may, probably, not be ideal for either group. Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (2000: 234) believe that in the compromising strategy both parties give up their demands in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution, or try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse. Therefore, in the compromising strategy



relationships may not be strained, and the implementation of agreements may be smooth.

Compromise solutions entail 'give and take'. Compromising is used when there is a balance of power between the parties or when resources have to be shared. This strategy often achieves temporary solutions to difficult problems. In compromise solutions, the deputy principal always convinces both conflicting teachers of the necessity of reaching an agreement. It is the role of the deputy principal to explain to teachers from both conflicting parties that both parties are right. Since no side is wrong, there is really no loser. A compromise is a win-win approach because the deputy principal involved both conflicting teachers in some way in the decision. The change may also be more permanent because the focus of control is situated in each party (Jones, 2005:111). The deputy principal may be accused of preparing over obvious cracks by encouraging conflicting teachers to stay friends.

Robbins and De Cenzo (2004: 374) believe that the compromising strategy is characterised by "tradeoffs", in which each party moves away from certain positions, or sacrifices certain demands in order to accommodate the other party. Because parties know that they may have to sacrifice certain demands, in an attempt to buffer the loss, they normally commence with inflated positions (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002: 363). The deputy principal works to seek a middle-ground solution for both parties. The solution provides partial satisfaction for both conflicting teachers, but in the interest of time and a lack of commitment or effort to do better.

#### **2.6.4 Accommodating strategy**

In the accommodating strategy one party sacrifices its own demands and values in order to accommodate the other party (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002: 360). In accommodating the other group, the one group may neglect their own concerns, or give up important objectives (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002: 360; Jones, 2008: 27). The accommodating strategy is generally used

when the issue at hand is more important to the one group than to other group (Whetten, *et al.*, 2000: 343).

The maintenance of good relationships between groups is viewed as important in the accommodating strategy, hence parties are willing to allow a complete sacrifice of their own values in order to accommodate others (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002: 360). Therefore, the accommodating strategy achieves stability and harmony; in addition, the party which sacrifices their positions to accommodate the other party, hopes that the sacrifice may help them achieve their demands in future, especially on issues of particular interest to them – since the other party may consider the past sacrifices the one party did (Jones, 2008: 27).

However, teachers who sacrifice a lot may lose respect of their colleagues, and may be viewed as weak and not worth of achieving anything (Crawford & Bodine, 2004: 36).

### **2.6.5 Avoiding strategy**

Newstrom and Davis (2002:2 67) define avoidance as a technique whereby the conflicting parties withdraw from the conflict. The avoidance strategy may work as a short-term solution, since people do not address the conflict, but rather avoid or postpone handling the conflict. Bagraim, Cunningham, Potgieter and Viedge (2007: 237) state that in the avoidance strategy people pretend that conflict does not exist by not raising issues that might result in disagreements, or by refraining from giving an opinion when such issues are raised. Hellriegel *et al.*, (2001: 292), states that the avoiding strategy implies withdrawal by the one party.

In a school situation the avoiding strategy could frustrate teachers who require a quick decision to be made, or require a quick solution to a problem – since avoidance means the issue is not addressed, but the impasse is allowed to continue unabated. Avoidance may also negatively affect performance since

decisions or actions with a potential to cause conflict are not executed, even if those decisions or actions are crucial for progress in the organisation or school (Crowford & Bodine, 2004: 34). This situation may lead to dissatisfaction and feelings of failure and inefficiency.

However, the avoiding strategy may be helpful in cases where deputy principal tries to lower the levels of tension and allows conflicting teachers to calm down, as a short-term handling of the conflict (DoE, 2000b: 15; Dainow, 2002: 4).

### **2.6.6 Negotiation**

Conflict negotiation is a body of theory and a collection of skills. The theory and skills take on different forms according to the circumstances to which they are applied. Negotiation can be described as a process of interaction (communication) between parties, with the aim of establishing common grounds of agreement on issues where disagreements exist (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002: 366; Robbins, 2000:4 53; Kreitner, 2000: 501). The agreement reached through negotiations should be based on common interests, openness, and understanding or acceptance of another party's point of view (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2001: 379). It is, therefore, not based on a win-lose situation, or on some form of coercion. However, some level of compromise is necessary for effective agreements (Newstrom & Davis, 2002: 268). The most important aspect of conflict negotiation is that the individuals or groups in conflict directly participate in the resolution of their own problem. The agreement that is reached is not of successful conflict negotiation. In a school situation the negotiation strategy could be effective for decisions, and for the maintenance of good relationships among teachers. The openness with which decisions are reached promotes cooperation and support.

### **2.6.7 Mediation**

Whetten, *et al* (2000: 331) define mediation as a voluntary process in which the services of an acceptable third party are used in a conflict as a means of helping the conflicting parties to arrive at an agreed solution. Mediation is a structured method of conflict resolution in which trained individuals (the mediators) assist people in dispute by listening to their concerns and helping the parties negotiate. After receiving a referral, the coordinator (deputy principal), conducts a brief intake interview with the teachers in conflict to explain the process and to determine whether their conflict is appropriate for mediation. The coordinator would select appropriate mediator, schedules sessions and the deputy principal would be available to supervise mediation sessions if teachers in conflict choose to participate in the conflict resolution process.

Mediation sessions should be conducted in an area within the school that affords both auditory and visual privacy. Mediation sessions usually last less than an hour. When sessions are complete, conflicting teachers might return to class or they might be escorted back to the disciplinarians who initially made the referral.

According to Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (2000: 233), skilled mediators are able to obtain the trust and confidence of the conflicting groups or individuals. Mediators who listen attentively and ask probing questions are able to identify the causes of conflict, as well as obstacles hindering a possible settlement (Jones, 2005: 104). The mediator may encourage parties to put forward proposals and counter-proposals, and may begin to urge or pressurise the participants towards an acceptance of a settlement (Le Roux, 2002: 177).

In a school situation a senior person, such as the school principal or deputy principal may mediate between conflicting parties. The settlement reached through mediation may hold longer since both parties had agreed to mediation, accepted the particular person. Therefore, the outcome of such a

process should be acceptable to both parties. Such an approach may also be good for future relations among teachers.

### **2.6.8 Arbitration**

The Department of Education (DoE, 2007: 1) defines arbitration as an appointment of an independent person to act as an adjudicator or judge in a conflict, to decide on the terms of a settlement. Both parties in a conflict have to agree about who the arbitrator should be, and also agree that the decision of the arbitrator would be binding (Jones, 2005: 116). Arbitration differs from mediation and negotiation in that it does not promote the continuation of collective bargaining. The arbitrator listens to and investigates the demands and counter-demands and takes over the role of decision-maker (DoE, 2000b:4 ; Jeremy, 2007: 6). In a school situation arbitration could be disadvantageous for both parties, since the arbitrator may be an outsider who may not know the school set-up well. It may, therefore, not be in the interest of both parties and the school that such a strategy is followed.

### **2.6.9 Problem-solving**

The most important factor in problem solving is to ensure that the problem has been identified (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002: 81). Many problems are complex and ambiguous, and there is usually more than one solution available (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002: 81). Problem-solving involves an attempt to satisfy the concerns of both sides through honest discussion (McWilliam, 2010: 298). The focus of the deputy principal when using the problem-solving approach is negotiating, looking for the middle ground, trading off and searching for solutions that are satisfactory or acceptable to both conflicting teachers (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002: 81).

### **2.6.10 The role of gender in conflict resolution**

Gender plays an important role in conflict resolution, and males and females show differences in the manner they handle conflict. A study conducted among adolescents revealed that females were rated lower in withdrawal and avoidance conflict resolution strategies, but higher in communication and support-validation strategies than were males (Black, 2000: 500). This implies that females may be more comfortable in the application of conflict resolution strategies such as mediation, negotiations and compromise than males. Holt and DeVore (2005: 166) studied the application of the following conflict resolution strategies by men and women: smoothing, withdrawing, compromising, problem-solving, and forcing; and found that compromising was the most popular conflict resolution strategy among women, while forcing was the most common strategy among men. The view is confirmed by Brahnam, Margavio, Hignite, Barrier and Chin, (2005: 200), who found that when compared with their male counterparts, women are more likely to utilise a collaborative conflict resolution style and men are more likely to avoid conflict. Since collaboration is generally considered more productive and avoidance more disruptive in the conflict resolution process, the study suggests that women may possess more effective conflict resolution attributes than their male counterparts (Brahnam *et al.*, 2005: 206).

A number of studies conducted in the United States of America and Europe found that men tended to use aggressive styles of conflict resolution, while female were significantly higher on smoothing and compromise (Holt & DeVore, 2005; Marsella, 2005). While it is generally accepted that conflict resolution involves balancing the desire to meet production goals and concern for personal relationships, men were found to be more interested in meeting production goals than maintaining good personal relationships (Holt and DeVore, 2005: 170). In an African school situation the differences in conflict resolution between male and female are demonstrated in a number of ways. Female teachers may depend on males for the resolution of their conflict especially with learners and male colleagues, or they may scream or use vulgar language (De Vos, 2005: 170). The African culture affords women less

power than men, implying that the authority of women may be restricted by culture, even if the position she occupies allows her more powers (Keller, 2001:550). The implication of this situation for conflict resolution is that a female deputy principal may use less aggressive and more humble strategies to resolve conflict, than it might be the case with male deputy principal.

### **2.6.11 Conclusion of conflict resolution**

The practical resolution of conflict is different from the above compartmentalisation of conflict resolution strategies. The researchers in conflict resolution found that conflict resolution strategies are influenced by culture, gender, relationships and situations (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Cingöz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007; Galovan, Fackrell, Buswell, Jones, Hill & Carroll, 2010). Manktelow & Carlson (2012: 2) state that once the different styles of conflict resolution are known and understood, it becomes easy to consider the most appropriate approach (or a mixture of approaches) for a particular situation; and an approach which could resolve the problem, respect people's legitimate interests, and mend damaged working relationships. It is, therefore, crucial for the deputy principals to apply conflict resolution strategies which would maintain good working relationships among teachers in schools.

In the preceding paragraphs it was indicated that conflict is a reality in schools and organisations and that the causes thereof are many and varied. The different approaches of handling conflict were also discussed; and it became clear that the success of the school, the cooperation among colleagues, and the future relationships among people or teachers in a school depend on effective conflict management strategies employed by the deputy principal. It is therefore important to discuss the models for conflict resolution. These models would inform the proposed model for resolving conflict among township secondary schools.

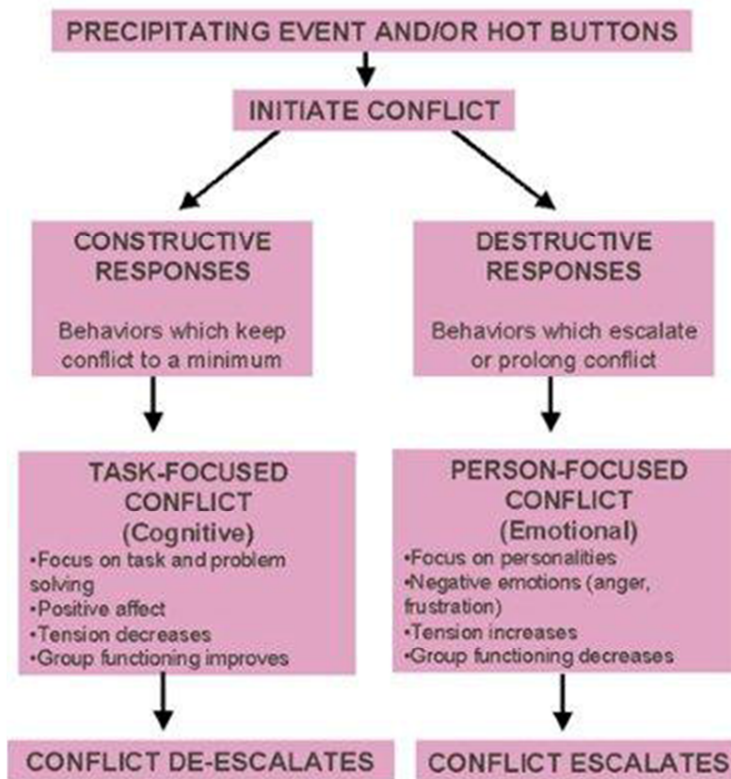
## **2.7 CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODELS**

The resolution of conflict is a complex process which has to be effectively managed. The developed conflict resolution models were found to be effective in managing conflict since these models provided consistent steps or processes which could be adapted for various situations (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Jones, Hill & Carroll, 2010). The choice of a conflict resolution model plays a great role in resolving conflict. Hence relevant models, and effective adaptations and versions thereof, are important in any conflict situation. The resolution of organisational conflict could be a choice between enhancing human relationships and maximising production processes (person-oriented or task-oriented) – especially if conflict results from the differences in the approaches to tasks and production processes. A balance between the two could be crucial – since failure to balance the two could lead to the escalation of conflict (Conflict Dynamics Profile, 2012: 1) (see figure on next page).

**Figure 2.4: Path of conflict**



# Path of Conflict



(Source: talenttools.com.au)

## 2.7.1 Pruitt's model of assertiveness and cooperativeness

Pruitt (1983: 177) worked on conflict resolution models involving groups and not individuals. The model focused on the combination of the parties' concern for their own interests (i.e. assertiveness) and their concern for the interests of others (i.e. cooperativeness). The model concluded that any emphasis on one of the two could lead to one or more of the following conflict management styles: would yield a particular conflict management style. Pruitt called these styles

- yielding (low assertiveness/high cooperativeness),
- problem solving (high assertiveness/high cooperativeness),

- inaction (low assertiveness/low cooperativeness), and
- contending (high assertiveness/low cooperativeness).

Pruitt (1983: 177) argued that problem-solving was the preferred method when seeking mutually beneficial options.

### **2.7.2 Kuhn and Poole's Model**

Kuhn and Poole (2000:1) developed the distributive and integrative conflict management models.

- Distributive - Here conflict is approached as a distribution of a fixed amount of positive outcomes or resources, where one side will end up winning and the other losing, even if they do win some concessions.
- Integrative - Groups utilising the integrative model see conflict as a chance to integrate the needs and concerns of both groups and make the best outcome possible.

Kuhn and Poole (2000: 1) found that the integrative model resulted in consistently better task related outcomes than those using the distributive model.

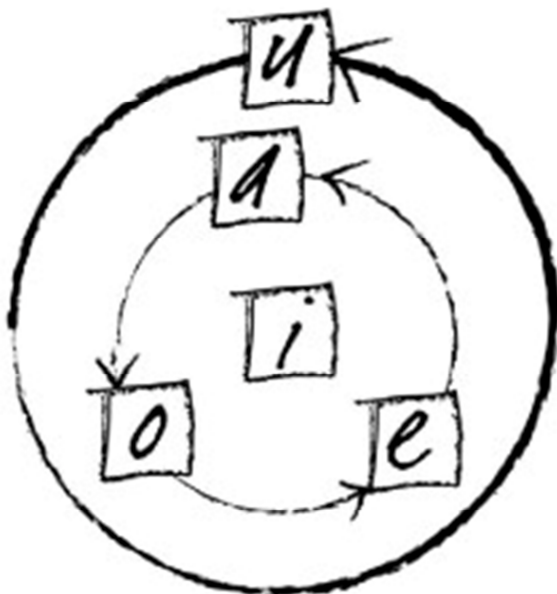
### **2.7.3 DeChurch and Marks's Meta-Taxonomy**

DeChurch and Marks (2001: 1) argued that all conflict resolution approaches have two inherent dimensions in them, namely, activeness ("the extent to which conflict behaviours make a responsive and direct rather than inert and indirect impression") and agreeableness ("the extent to which conflict behaviours make a pleasant and relaxed rather than unpleasant and strenuous impression"). High activeness is characterised by openly discussing differences of opinion while fully going after their own interest. High agreeableness is characterised by attempting to satisfy all parties involved.

The model encourages agreeableness since it was found to have a positive impact on how groups felt about the way the conflict was managed, regardless of the outcome.

#### 2.7.4 The A-E-I-O-U model of Wisinski (1993)

Wisinski (1993: 1) developed a conflict resolution model which was believed to work with any level of conflict within the organisation: employee-to-boss, peer-to-peer or boss-to-employee.



The main characteristics of the model are as follows:

##### **A – Acknowledge (Positive intention):**

The point of departure of this model is the assumption that the other person or party means well or has good or positive intentions. An attempt should be made to identify the positive intentions, and state them so that the other person or party realises and acknowledges them.

##### **E – Express (What I see, and how I see it):**

The positive intentions identified need to be affirmed by each person, and each individual is also allowed to express their opinions, concerns and problems about the positive intentions. This would ensure that any misunderstandings or misconceptions of the positive intentions are addressed and all proceed from the same understanding.

**I – Identify (I propose):**

Here each party clearly spells out their objectives (what they want to achieve), as well as their recommendations (what they would prefer). Of utmost importance at this stage is for each party to be non-defensive and to avoid insisting on a particular standpoint or position. Compromise and flexibility are crucial, and these may occur naturally. The use of words such as "I would like," as opposed to, "I want," may help to avoid inciting a defensive reaction.

**O – Outcome (Outline the benefits of the outcome):**

Here people want to know how they will benefit from the outcome. People respond much more positively if they can justify the reasons for changing their actions or behaviour: What are the advantages? Appreciation and recognition of the positive intentions could go a long way in helping people to see these advantages.

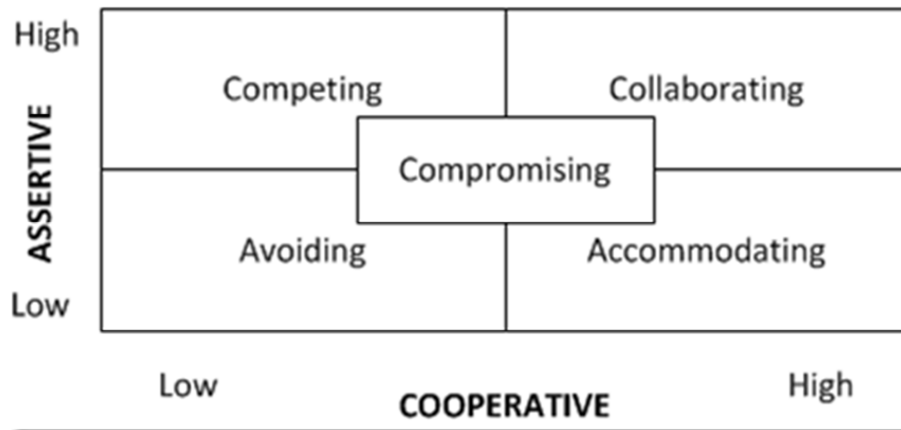
**U – Understanding (feedback on proposal):**

Once positive intentions and objectives have been accepted by both parties, it is important to agree on specific action steps. A clear understanding of the action steps and how they link to objectives is crucial – since any misunderstanding could lead to poor execution of action steps. The agreement on action steps should allow alternative actions should the initial ones not be effective. The other party should also be allowed to carefully consider the steps and their alternatives. The use of words such as "Could we agree to try this for a while and see if it works out for both of us?" is important, and gives the other party the assurance that their future views or suggestions would be accepted.

### 2.7.5 Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument

The Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument is a model for handling conflict. This model is depicted in the figure below:

**Figure 2.5: Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode**



(Source: Shell, 2001)

According to Thomas-Kilman (1977: 325) this model organises five conflict management styles based around two dimensions, namely, assertiveness and cooperativeness. The five Conflict Management Styles are explained below:

**Accommodating** – This is when one party cooperates to a high-degree with another party, and at the one party's own expense, or against the one party's own goals, objectives and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other party has expert knowledge on the matter causing the conflict, or when the other party has a better solution for the problem at hand. This style can be effective for preserving future relationships between the two parties.

**Avoiding** - This is when one party simply avoids the issue causing conflict. The avoiding party is not helping the other party to reach its goals, and it is also not assertively pursuing its own goals. This works when the issue is trivial or when the one party has no chance of winning. The style can be effective when the solution to the conflict would be very costly, or when the atmosphere is emotionally charged and there is a need to create some space or to allow

the uneasiness to settle. The avoiding party hopes that (sometimes) issues may resolve themselves. However, “hope is not a strategy”, and, in general, avoiding is not a good long term strategy.

**Collaborating** – This is where one party partners or pairs up with the other party to achieve both of their goals. This is breaking free from the “win-lose” paradigm and seeking the “win-win” paradigm. This style can be effective for complex scenarios where a novel solution is needed. This can also mean re-framing the challenge to create a bigger space and room for everybody’s ideas. The downside of this style is that it requires a high-degree of trust; and to reach a consensus can require a lot of time and effort to get everybody on board and to synthesize all the ideas.

**Competing** – This is the “win-lose” approach. One party acts in a very assertive way to achieve its goals, without seeking to cooperate with the other party, and it at the expense of the other party. This approach may be appropriate for emergencies when time is of the essence, or when quick and decisive action is needed. This style is effective if people are aware of the urgency of the matter and support the approach.

**Compromising** – This is the “lose-lose” scenario where neither party really achieves what they want. This requires a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation. It may be appropriate for scenarios where a temporary solution is needed, or where both sides have equally important goals. The trap is to fall into compromising as an easy way out, when collaborating would produce a better solution.

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it was indicated that conflict is a reality in schools and organisations and that the causes thereof are many and varied. The different approaches of handling conflict were also discussed; and it became clear that the success of the school, the cooperation among colleagues, and the future relationships among people or teachers in a school depend on effective conflict management strategies employed by the deputy principal.

The next chapter deals with the research design.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter dealt with the literature study. Among others, conflict as it occurs in schools, locally and abroad, was discussed. The different causes of conflict, the manifestations of conflict and the strategies applied in handling conflict were also discussed. In this chapter the research design will be discussed. The development of the questionnaires, as well as the rationale for the questionnaires, will also be discussed. The approaches and techniques followed during sampling, data collection and data analysis will also receive attention.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.2.1 Methodology**

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 30), the research methodology is the tool and procedure that is applied by the researcher to find answers to the questions raised. The research methodology is influenced by the researcher's general orientation to life or philosophy of life (Best & Kahn, 2003: 241).

For the purpose of this study both qualitative quantitative and approaches were used.

##### **3.2.1.1 Qualitative approach**

The qualitative approach is a process that seeks to interpret the meanings people make of their lives in their natural settings (Welman & Kruger, 2001: 178). The qualitative approach proceeds from the assumption that social interactions form an integrated set of relationships in an environment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:133). Thomas (2003: 34) describes the qualitative approach



as a process of collecting and interpreting information about some phenomenon without concern for numbers involved. The qualitative approach is subjective, value-laden and biased – because it considers the individual's feelings, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (Cresswell, 2001: 14). It is the subjective nature of the qualitative approach which makes it appropriate for research in humanities.

The qualitative approach is appropriate for this study, because of the small sample involved (6 deputy principals and 12 teachers), and because of the subject of research, viz. conflict, which mainly affects peoples' feelings, emotions and thoughts. However, some elements of the quantitative approach, such as numbers, tables and graphs were used. Nevertheless, the emphasis was on the qualitative interpretations and implications of the data. Researchers agree that simple calculations may be used in a qualitative study (Babbie, 2007; Dey, 1993; Silverman, 2001). Silverman (2001: 241) states that counting techniques can offer a means to survey a whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in an intensive, qualitative research. Therefore, numbers enhance understanding in a qualitative study.

### 3.2.1.2 Quantitative approach

Quantitative approach focuses on measurements and amounts of the characteristics displayed by the participants and events that the studies, and it uses numbers and statistical methods (Thomas, 2003: 1). Although the study will be mainly qualitative, there will be a need to use numbers, totals and percentages to properly expose the events and situations under discussion. Silverman (2001: 38) believes that simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research. The descriptive research approach will be pursued in this study, since the researcher intends to observe and report on the behaviour of participants without influencing it in anyway.

Quantitative research is often contrasted with qualitative research which is the examination, analysis and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships, including classifications of types of phenomena and entities, in a manner that does not exactly involve mathematical models (Hunter and Leahey, 2008: 43).

In this study graphs, tables, numbers and percentages were used.

### 3.2.1.3 Mixed method approach

A mixed method approach enables the researcher to extract adequate information from underlying data. The approach also offers more comprehensive analytical technique than either qualitative or quantitative alone, and allows the researcher to use the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Ouwuegbuzie & Teddie, 2003: 234). The combinations of qualitative and quantitative approaches could be for a variety of purposes, such as:

- (a) Triangulation – achieve or ensure corroboration of data
- (b) Complementarity – to clarify, explain, or otherwise more fully elaborate the results of analyses; and
- (c) Development – to guide the use of additional sampling, and data collection and analysis techniques (Sandelowski, 2000: 248).

Mixed method studies entail concrete operations at the technique level of research by which “quantitative” and “qualitative” techniques are used together and either remain distinct design components, or are explicitly integrated (Caracelli & Greene, 1997: 122). Qualitative and quantitative data sets can be linked, preserving the numbers and words in each data set; or these data can be transformed to create one data set with qualitative data converted into quantitative data or quantitative data converted into qualitative data (Caracelli & Greene, 1997: 124). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: 126) referred to the conversion of quantitative data into qualitative data as

“qualitizing.” Quantitizing refers to a process by which qualitative data are treated with quantitative techniques to transform them into quantitative data. Qualitizing refers to a process by which quantitative data are transformed into qualitative data.

Mixed-method research is a dynamic option for expanding the scope and improving the analytical power of studies.

The general procedures for the mixed methods are as follows:

- Identify the major characteristics of the mixed methods study.
- Identify your criteria for selection of a mixed methods study.
- Identify the sequence for implementing the quantitative and qualitative data collection.
- Identify the priority to be given for the quantitative and qualitative data collection.
- Identify at what steps in the research process the quantitative qualitative data will be integrated.
- Identify whether a theoretical lens will be used in the study.
- Conduct the study using appropriate qualitative and quantitative procedures (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007: 125).

### **3.2.2 Validity**

Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under discussion (Babbie, 2007: 146). This may require an agreement on definitions of concepts, since different concepts may have different meanings, especially in social science. Hence Burton (2003: 183) states that validity may not be statistically determined, but may be based on common understanding of concepts under discussion.

Validity also refers to the idea that the procedure to collect data is a good operational measure of the abstract concept (Schelling, 2000: 23). Therefore, results obtained through a good operational measure would be relevant and applicable to the population under review. Validity also determines how accurate an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Babbie, 2007: 146; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 28).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher's meaning of conflict is the same as that of teachers, since the researcher is also a teacher in the same area as the respondents. Therefore, validity implies that the items of the questionnaire and the manner of analysing data collected would be appropriate to the population under discussion.

### **3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaires**

According to Gay and Airasian (2003: 280), questionnaires are instruments which attempt to obtain comparable data from all the participants who are chosen in the sample, given that the same questions have to be answered by all participants. Thomas (2003: 66) describes a questionnaire as a word typically used in a very general sense to mean any printed set of questions that participants in a survey are asked to answer, either by checking one choice from among several possible answers listed beneath a question or by writing out an answer.

The researcher intended to obtain data whose consistency and comparability could be confirmed. The questionnaire was, therefore, found to be the most appropriate instrument for this study. Separate questionnaires for the deputy principals and teachers were developed. The reason for developing separate questionnaires for the deputy principals and teachers is that the two groups' involvement in conflict, as well as their perceptions with regard to

conflict within the schools, may not be the same. Hence separate questionnaires would clearly indicate the stance of each group with regard to conflict among teachers.

### **3.3.2 Aspects considered when the questionnaire was developed**

Babbie and Mouton (2002: 239) state that a questionnaire should be understandable, clear, user friendly and non-threatening. Bedward, (2009: 169) believes that the items of a questionnaire should not be ambiguous. In the case of the questionnaire for this study, it was considered that the exposure of township school teachers to research and questionnaires was generally limited. Therefore, the questionnaires were compiled in such a way that the language and the format were easy to understand, and the administration thereof was easy to manage.

The cooperation of township school teachers is also very difficult to solicit. The non-return and loss of questionnaires, as well as reluctance to complete questionnaires are common problems among township school teachers (Bedward, 2009: 169).

The researcher had to visit schools to persuade and motivate teachers who were selected to participate in the study to complete and return questionnaires within the specified time. This effort yielded positive results since the cooperation of the participants was secured.

The administration of the questionnaires for this study was also manageable. The responses of the participants were easy to capture and record in a simple format. The ease with which data collected was recorded enabled easier and quicker analysis and interpretation of such data.

The researcher also ensured that the questionnaires covered all aspects of the study. Since the questionnaires were the main data collection tools, the items had to cover all aspects which could have a bearing on conflict within

the school. This was a difficult task since a questionnaire with too many questions may discourage participants from responding and returning it, especially when one considers that township secondary school teachers have heavy workloads. Therefore, the questionnaires had to be fairly comprehensive, covering all aspects without being extremely long.

### **3.3.3 The structure of questionnaires**

For the purpose of this study, two sets of questionnaires were used, one for the deputy principals and the other for teachers. Both sets of questionnaires were divided into six sections. The sections were as follows:

#### **Section A:**

The section dealt with biographical data. Each participant gave their age, gender, teaching experience and qualifications.

#### **Section B:**

The section dealt with demographical data. The number of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, staffrooms and classrooms had to be provided in this section.

#### **Section C**

This section dealt with causes of conflict as viewed by each participant.

#### **Section D**

This section dealt with manifestations of conflict as viewed by each participant.

### **Section E**

This section dealt with conflict handling as viewed by each participant.

### **Section F**

In this section open-ended questions were asked. Each participant was expected to express opinions on issues related to causes of conflict and possible measures that can be taken to address conflict among teachers. The purpose with this section was that the deputy principals and teachers were provided with an opportunity to indicate factors which they viewed as important in conflict in schools or in their specific circumstances, especially if these factors were not provided for in the closed questions of the questionnaire.

## **3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION**

### **3.4.1 Population**

Population is defined as an aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of criteria (Anderson, 2000: 186). Motseke (2000: 140) views the population as referring to all members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events, or objectives, which have common characteristics and to which the researcher wishes to generalise the results of the research.

Gray (2004: 82) and Gay and Airasian (2003: 102) describe the population as a group of elements which interests the researcher and to which the results of the study will be generalised.

The population for this study consists of deputy principals and teachers from secondary schools in Nyakallong, Monyakeng and Kutlwanong townships.

### **3.4.2 Sampling**

According to Taljard (2008: 79) sampling means taking a portion of the available population and considering it to be a representation of the population. The whole group that is available is known as population, but the portion selected for use is known as a sample. Accessible sample refers to all the individuals, events or objects that may be accessible which are close enough to the researcher and which possess the same major and critical characteristics of the population (Burton, 2000: 207).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected a small number of individuals in such a way that the individuals represent 30 out of 345 group from which they were selected. The sample consisted of one deputy principal and two teachers from each of the six secondary schools selected. The total sample consisted of 18 participants made up of six deputy principals and 12 teachers.

The sample is presented in Table 3.1 below.



**Table 3.1: The sample**

| <b>Townships</b> | <b>Schools</b> | <b>Number of deputy principals</b> | <b>Number of teachers</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Nyakallong       | School A       | 1                                  | 2                         | <b>3</b>     |
|                  | School B       | 1                                  | 2                         | <b>3</b>     |
| Monyakeng        | School C       | 1                                  | 2                         | <b>3</b>     |
|                  | School D       | 1                                  | 2                         | <b>3</b>     |
| Kutlwanong       | School E       | 1                                  | 2                         | <b>3</b>     |
|                  | School F       | 1                                  | 2                         | <b>3</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>     |                | <b>6</b>                           | <b>12</b>                 | <b>18</b>    |

### **3.4.3 Sampling technique**

#### **3.4.3.1 Purposive sampling: deputy principals**

Purposive sampling helps to identify people with certain qualities or criteria as may be required by the researcher or it may help to identify certain cases which are unusual or not common (Henning, 2007: 71; Babbie, 2007: 184). The number of deputy principals in schools is fairly small, since no school from the research area has more than two deputy principals. The deputy principals are a diverse group in terms of gender, ethnic group, qualifications and teaching experience. The purposive sampling was found to be appropriate for this study, since it would allow the researcher to pick participants in such a way that they represented certain aspects or categories. The common practice in many secondary schools in South African is that the two deputy principals have separate responsibilities distinguished as administration and academic; whereby the deputy principal deals with financial and administrative matters, and the other one deal with academic and teaching-related matters. For the purpose of this study, it was important to select the deputy principal who dealt with academic matters in every school selected.

#### 3.4.3.2 Simple random sampling: teachers

Since the names of all the teachers in the schools to be surveyed were known, simple random sampling technique was used. Simple random sampling affords every member of the population an equal opportunity to be selected, and helps to minimise selection bias (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 113; Neuman, 2000: 126). All the names of the teachers were written on a piece of paper and placed in a bowl. The first six names selected from the bowl formed the sample for the school. This procedure was repeated for each of the schools which participated in the study.

### 3.5 ETHICAL ISSUES

Participants were informed that the information they provided would be treated with strict confidentiality and that they need not provide their names on the questionnaires in order to protect their identities or identities of their schools. The researcher made use of questionnaires to formulate an opinion about the role of deputy principals in managing conflict among secondary school teachers in the Lejweleputswa schools in the Free State Province. In order to follow this course, the researcher had to obtain permission to conduct research in the secondary schools from the school principals, deputy principals, teachers and the Department of Education in the Free State Province.

Teachers were informed that participation in the study was voluntary, and that the information collected through the questionnaires would not be used for any other purpose except for the study.

#### 3.5.1 Data collection

Two questionnaires were used for purposes of data collection. One questionnaire was for deputy principals, and another was for teachers. Questionnaires were delivered to the selected schools in the townships of Monyakeng, Nyakallong and Kutloanong. The questionnaires were left with the participants, and they were collected after seven days.

### **3.5.2 Data analysis**

Data which was collected by means of questionnaires was qualitatively analysed. The responses from the different questionnaires were recorded, and patterns were established. According to Laverty (2003: 234) and Silverman (2001: 136) the use of numbers in a qualitative study is permissible – since it may enhance understanding and reveal trends which may not be possible with a purely qualitative approach. However, the emphasis should be placed on the qualitative interpretation of the data (Silverman, 2001: 138). Some researchers (Babbie, 2007, Henning, 2007) views this approach as a mixed method approach, whereby the elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used to analyse data collected in a study.

In this study, columns, tables, graphs and figures were used to record information from the questionnaires.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the research design was discussed. Two questionnaires were used for data collection: one for the deputy principals and the other for teachers. It became clear that although the study was mainly qualitative, it, however, had elements of quantitative approach. Nevertheless, data analysis was mainly qualitative.

The next chapter deals with the results of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

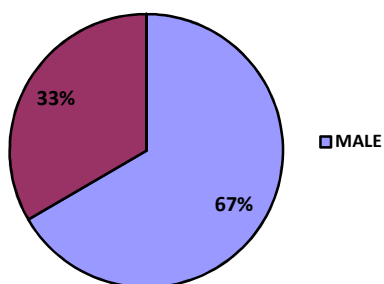
The literature study has revealed that conflict is unavoidable in situations where people work together. This study has specifically looked into conflict in the schools and how it is resolved. In this chapter the results of the empirical research are discussed. The data collected by means of the questionnaires is analysed.

There were two questionnaires which were used in this study: one was for the deputy principals, and another one for teachers. It was important to handle the teachers and deputy principals separately, due to the different roles they play in school conflict. Results from these questionnaires are discussed in this chapter.

### 4.2 RESULTS: DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

#### 4.2.1 Results of Section A

**Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of deputy principals**

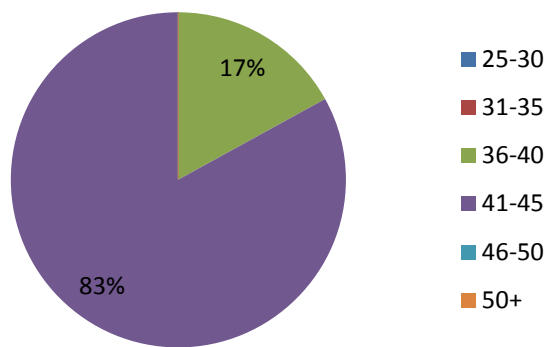


Of the six respondents, four (67%) were male and two (33%) were female. It is a common trend in the South African schools that management positions are occupied by more males than females (Goniwe, 2005: 3). The reasons for this trend could be that very few African women bothered to study further and

obtain higher qualifications as compared to men (Africa, Biddlender & Mpetsheni, 2001: 8). Consequently, men stand a better chance of being appointed to management positions because of better qualifications than women. Africa *et al.*, (2001: 12) believe that the bias towards men also plays an important role when it comes to the appointment of managers in schools, since the majority of the panel members in interviews are male.

The implication is that the majority of conflict cases are handled by deputy principals who are male, who may lack sensitivity towards and understanding of female issues.

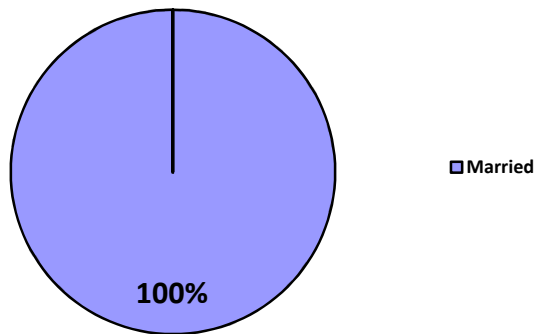
**Figure 4.2: Age distribution of deputy principals**



Out of six, the graph shows that the majority of the respondents, which are five (83%) were older than 40 years while only one (17%) was between 36 and 40 years of age.

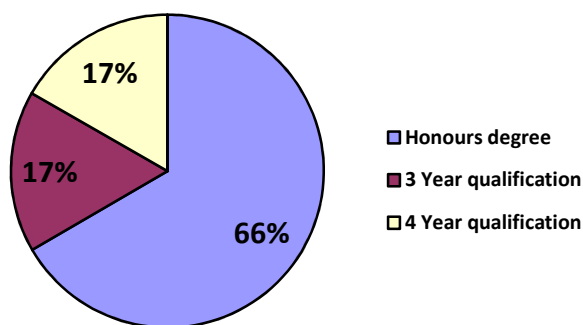
The indication is that the majority of deputy principals were matured, and had a vast experience in teaching. The high level of maturity and the experience of many years of teaching imply that the potential to effectively handle conflict may be good.

**Figure 4.3: Marital status of deputy principals**



All respondents (100%) were married. The marital status of deputy principals may have a positive influence in managing conflict among the teachers, since they have a background in family matters.

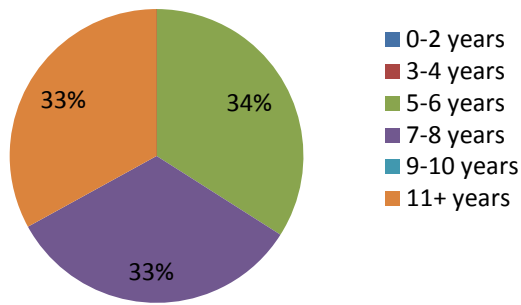
**Figure 4.4: Qualifications of deputy principals**



Out of six respondents, four (66%) had a Honoris degree as their highest qualification. Only one respondent (17%) had a three-year qualification (SED/PTD), and another one (17%) had a four-year qualification (BAEd).

The majority of the respondents had qualifications higher than expected, implying that they may have come across issues around leadership and management in their studies. Such studies may positively influence their conflict handling approaches.

**Figure 4.5: Years of experience of deputy principals**

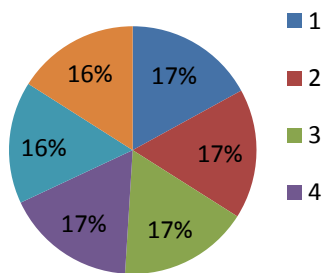


Of the six respondents, two (33%) were in management for more than 11 years; another two (33%) had 7-8 years' experience in management, and the last two (34%) respondents had less than 7 years' experience in management.

The implication is that the majority of the deputy principals had been in management for a long time, and they may have gathered adequate management experience.

#### 4.2.2 Section B – Demographic data

**Figure 4.6: Number of deputy principals in school**

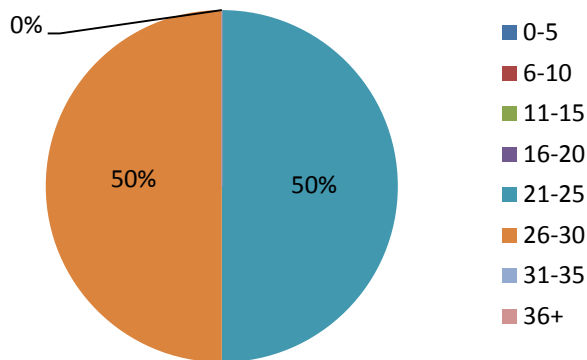


The graph shows that all of the schools surveyed (100%) had two deputy principals.

The implication is that the workload is shared. The common practice is that one deputy principal is responsible for teachers and academic matters, when another deputy principal becomes responsible for financial and administrative matters. The implication is that the management workload is shared and the

deputy principals have adequate time for people (teachers and learners) and their problems.

**Figure 4.7: Number of classrooms in the school**

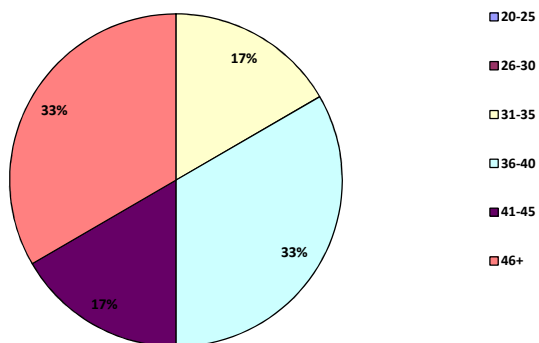


The graph shows that three (50%) of the respondents came from schools with classrooms between 21 and 25, while the other three (50%) came from schools which had between 26 and 30 classrooms.

Given the official educator-learner ratio of 1: 35 for secondary schools, schools with 25 classrooms should have a total of 875 learners; and those with 30 classrooms should not have more than 1050 learners. However, many schools have far more learners than they can accommodate, implying serious overcrowding, work overload and shortage of resources – factors which could contribute enormously towards conflict among learners, teachers and managers. Therefore, the deputy principals may have to deal with many conflict cases resulting from overcrowding.



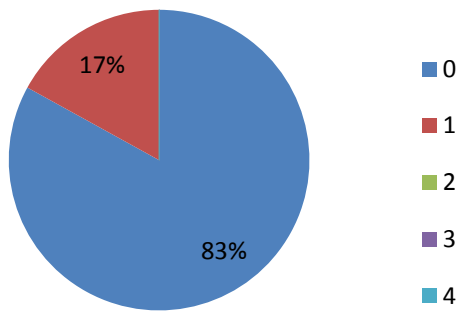
**Figure 4.8: Number of learners in the classrooms**



The responses indicated that the two (33%) of the six deputy principals came from schools which had between 36 and 40 learners in class, another two (33%) came from schools which had more than 46 learners in a classroom, one (17%) came from a school which had between 31 and 25 learners in class, and another one (17%) came from a school which had between 41 and 45 learners per classroom.

The implication is that the classes are fairly big, with many learners. This overcrowding has a potential to raise stress and conflict levels among both teachers and learners. This situation may also increase the need for the deputy principals to deal with conflict among teachers, and for teachers to deal with conflict among learners.

**Figure 4.9: Number of laboratories**

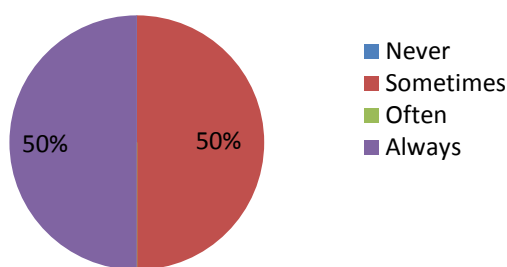


Only one (17%) deputy principal came from a school which had a laboratory. The other five (83%) deputy principals came from schools which did not have any laboratories.

The lack of laboratories may have a negative impact on the performance of teachers who need to use the laboratories. It may also imply that they cannot be evaluated fairly, and this may negatively affect their emotions and stress levels.

#### 4.2.3 Section C – Causes of conflict (as viewed by the deputy principals)

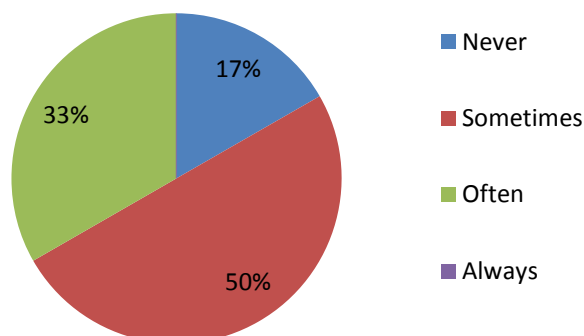
**Figure 4.10: Bad communication**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that bad communication always caused conflict, and another three (50%) believed that bad communication sometimes caused conflict among teachers.

The implication is that bad communication may cause conflict among teachers and between teachers and managers.

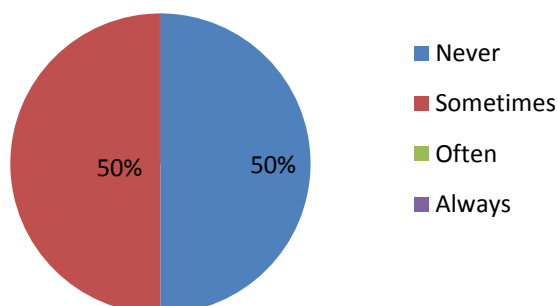
**Figure 4.11: Shortage of resources as a cause of conflict**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) believed that the shortage of resources sometimes caused conflict, and two (33%) said that this was often the case, while only one (17%) respondent did not believe that the shortage of resources caused conflict.

The township schools are characterised by a serious shortage of resources and facilities (Mampane & Boucher, 2001: 23), thus leading to competition for the scarce resources. The deputy principals may be compelled to intervene where competition for resources leads to conflict.

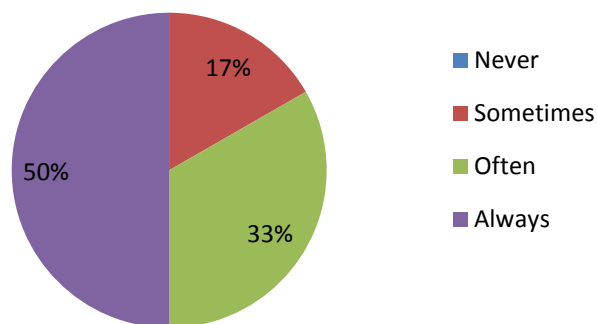
**Figure 4.12: Use of venues**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that teachers sometimes clashed over the use of venues, and the other three (50%) believed that the use of venues never caused conflict among teachers.

As indicated earlier, the shortage of resources and facilities such as laboratories, libraries, halls, computer centres and projectors is a serious problem in the township schools. This shortage of venues may cause conflict among teachers if not properly managed. The need for drawing time-tables which control the use of available space is crucial to minimise conflict among teachers – thus greatly reducing the deputy principals' responsibility of managing conflict related to competition for the scarce space available.

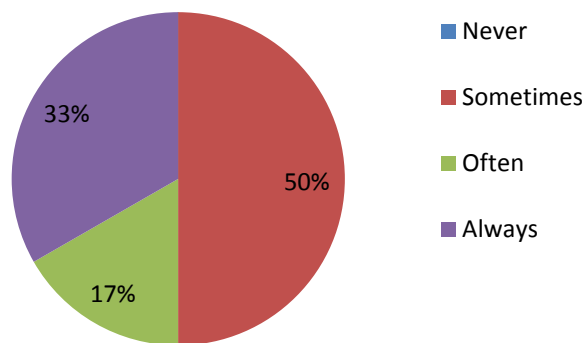
**Figure 4.13: Teaching load**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that the work division or allocation of subjects always caused conflict among teachers, two (33%) reported that this was often the case, and only one (17%) said it was sometimes a problem.

The majority of responses indicate that the teaching workload is a cause of conflict in their schools. The allocation of subjects and other duties is the responsibility of the school management, including the deputy principals. However, many teachers always oppose school management on this matter, since many teachers always feel that their workload is too heavy and it is possible for school management to reduce it (Gene & Fant, 2010: 1). This perception causes tension between teachers and school management, and to some extent, among teachers – since it is not always possible for teachers to feel satisfied about their workloads (Gene & Fant, 2010: 1). This dissatisfaction could lead to conflict which may be difficult for the deputy principals to handle.

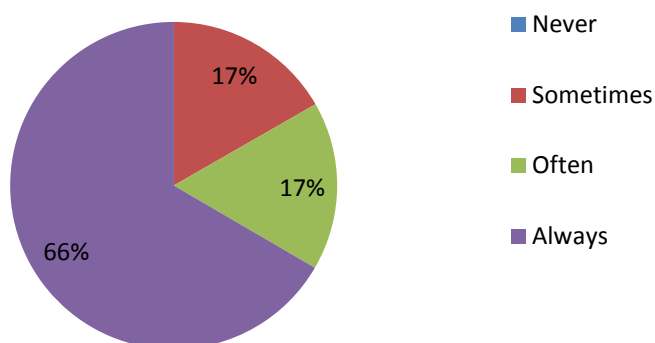
**Figure 4.14: Gossiping**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that gossip sometimes caused conflict among teachers, while two (33%) reported that gossip always caused conflict among teachers. Only one (17%) deputy principal said conflict often caused conflict.

The implication is that teachers were involved in gossip, and this caused conflict among them. The deputy principals could be expected to intervene in the conflict resulting from the gossip.

**Figure 4.15: Classes of absent colleagues**

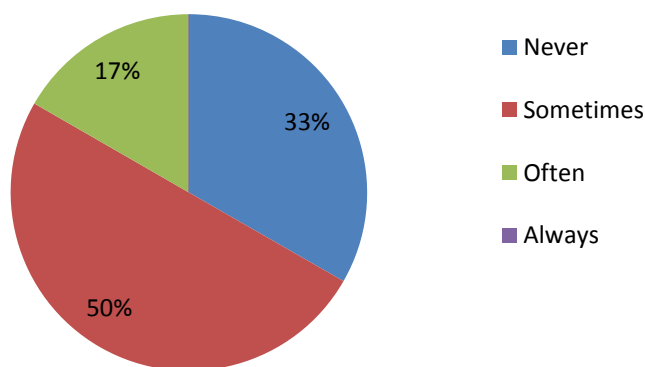


Of the six respondents, four (66%) reported that the taking of care in classes of absent colleagues always caused conflict among teachers, one (17%) said this was often the case, and another one (17%) said it was sometimes the case.

The indication is that teachers became annoyed when instructed to keep order in classes where teachers who are supposed to be in those classes were absent from school.

The rate of absenteeism is generally high among township schools teachers – due to reasons such as stress, sickness, and family matters (Dumler & Skinner, 2008: 329). The problem is further complicated by the many workshops which teachers have to attend during school hours (DoE, 2000b 23). Although some of these workshops take place after school, however, some teachers are compelled to leave during school hours because of travelling to venues of the workshops –due to transport arrangements and long distances between the schools and the venues of the workshops (Dumler & Skinner, 2008: 329). The implication is that educator absenteeism contributes enormously to conflict among teachers in the schools surveyed. The conflict resulting from the absenteeism of some teachers increases deputy principals' responsibility of managing educator conflict.

**Figure 4.16: Mentoring and monitoring of newly appointed teachers**

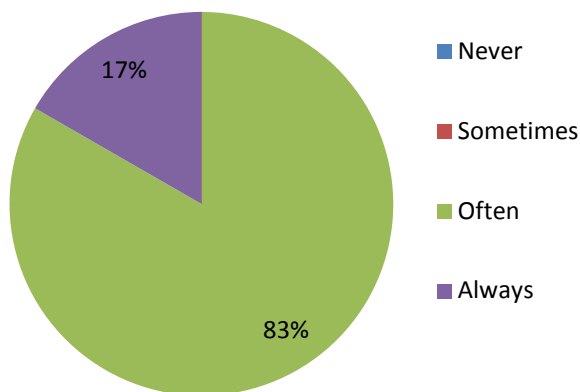


Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that the monitoring and mentoring of newly appointed teachers sometimes caused conflict; two (33%) reported that this never caused conflict, and one (17%), reported that it often caused conflict.

Newly appointed teachers normally require a lot of guidance and advice from experienced teachers, since trained teachers improve as they implement what

they learnt from college in a practical situation (Le Roux, 2002: 166). However, experienced teachers seemed to be annoyed by requests to help the newly appointed teachers. This may cause conflict between the experienced teachers and the newly appointed teachers. The deputy principals may be compelled to intervene in the conflict.

**Figure 4.17: Sharing of resources**

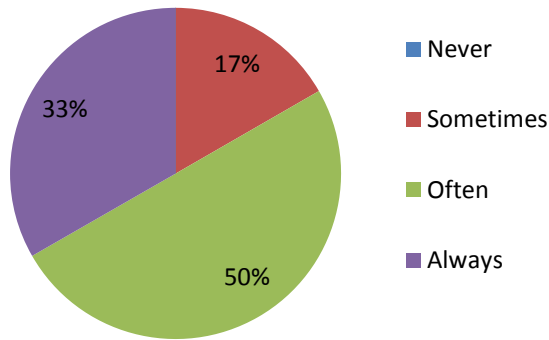


Of the six respondents, five (83%) reported that the sharing of resources often caused conflict, and one (17%) said this was always the case.

The implication is that the sharing of resources was not popular among teachers of the schools surveyed, since all six of the deputy principals who participated in this study believed that the sharing of resources was one of the sources of conflict among them.

It was not possible for township schools to provide adequate resources needed by all teachers due to serious shortage of resources in the township schools (Gylfason, 2001: 847). Since the sharing of resources caused conflict among teachers, the deputy principals had the responsibility to make teachers aware of the importance of sharing available resources.

**Figure 4.18: Teachers' poor control of classes**

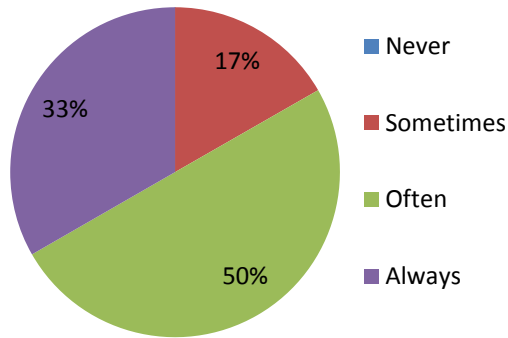


Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that the high noise levels and disorder resulting from some teachers' poor control of their classes often caused conflict, two (33%) respondents reported that this was always the case, and one (17%) said this was sometimes the problem.

It is possible that some teachers may have a problem of dealing with big groups, as it is the case in the number of township schools (Riaz, 2011: 1). It should be considered that many township school teachers received their training during the *apartheid* period, and this training may have been inferior and did not prepare them properly to handle large classes (Motseke, 2000: 51; Leas & Kittlaus, 2007: 7). The failure to control noise and disorder in class caused conflict among teachers of the surveyed schools. The deputy principals have a responsibility to intervene in the subsequent conflict.

**Figure 4.19: Poor performance**



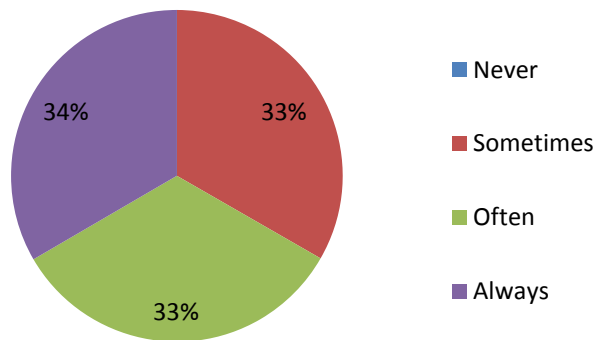


Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that poor performance in Mathematics and Physical Science by learners often caused conflict among teachers; two (33%) respondents said poor performance always caused conflict, and one (17%) said poor performance sometimes caused conflict.

In accordance with the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) teachers evaluate each other work and determine if the colleague is a hard worker or not. This could cause conflict in cases where a colleague performs poorly and deserves lower scores (DoE, 2006: 6; Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001: 68). Apart from IQMS, the school management, in their routine monitoring of teachers' work, could come across cases of poor performance. The teachers usually become angry when made aware of their poor performance (Mji & Makgato, 2006: 254), and this may cause conflict. The observation that a teacher's work is poor and the subsequent conflict it causes compelled the deputy principal to intervene and deal with the conflict.

#### 4.2.4 Section D – Manifestation of conflict (as viewed by the deputy principals)

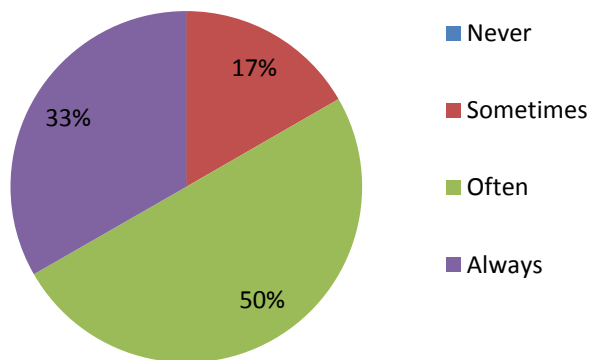
Figure 4.20: Teachers experience stress



Of the six deputy principals, two (33%) believed that teachers sometimes displayed signs of stress when in conflict, another two (33%) believed that teachers often displayed signs of stress when in conflict, and another two (34%) believed that teachers always displayed signs of stress when in conflict.

The indication is that teachers experienced stress when there was conflict. Although the level of stress experienced by these teachers was not known, nevertheless, it is known that stress is accompanied by short-temperedness, headaches and high levels of absenteeism among school teachers (Motseke, 2000: 52). Therefore, learners may be exposed to teachers who may be sick or moody, or who may regularly stay away from school. This situation may have negative implications for the teaching and learning activities, as well as for relationships with colleagues and managers. The possibility of conflict also increases when people are stressed – since stressed people are irrational and difficult to work with, and also have little tolerance (Mousani, 2007: 34). It may also be difficult for the deputy principal to handle conflict among teachers when some of them are stressed.

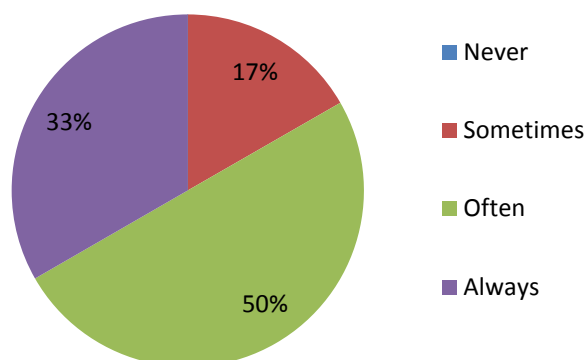
**Figure 4.21: Teachers' performance**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) stated that the teachers' performance was often negatively affected when they experienced conflict; two (33%) reported that the teachers' performance was always negative when they were involved in conflict, and only one (17%) reported that the teachers' performance was sometimes negative when they were involved in conflict.

Conflict has a negative impact on the person as a whole, as well as on the person's ability to perform (Newstrom & Davis, 2002: 373; Travis, 2009: 3). The implication is that the reputation of the school, the results of learners, and the dignity of individuals may be sacrificed due to poor performance when conflict exists. The deputy principals may have to intervene and resolve the conflict because of its detrimental effect on the school and the individual.

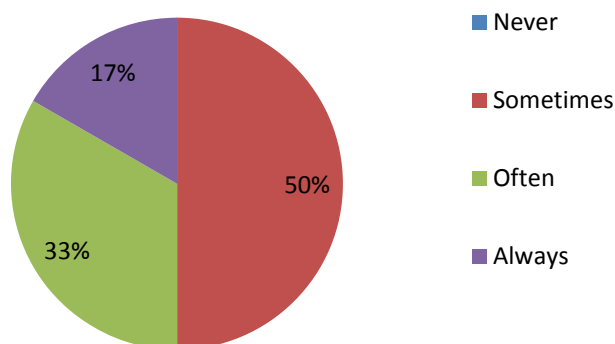
**Figure 4.22: Teachers' rate of absenteeism**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that the rate of absenteeism often increased when conflict existed; two (33%) reported that the rate of absenteeism always increased when conflict existed, and one (17%) reported that the rate of absenteeism sometimes increased when conflict existed.

The implication is that teachers in the schools surveyed viewed staying away from school as a way of managing conflict. Staying away from school may only be prolonging conflict, but not addressing the issues which led to conflict. Staying away from school by teachers who experienced conflict may have created other problems such as unattended learners, high noise levels and work schedules that were not completed. The school management may have had an increased in the number of problems to handle.

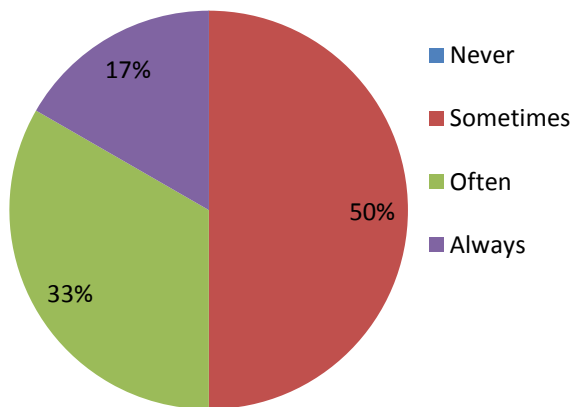
**Figure 4.23: Teachers handling of learners**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that sometimes teachers handle learners emotionally when experiencing conflict; two (33%) reported that this was always the case, and one (17%) stated that this was often the case.

The implication is that conflict has a negative impact on the teachers' feelings and emotions, and this negativity manifests itself when they deal with learners.

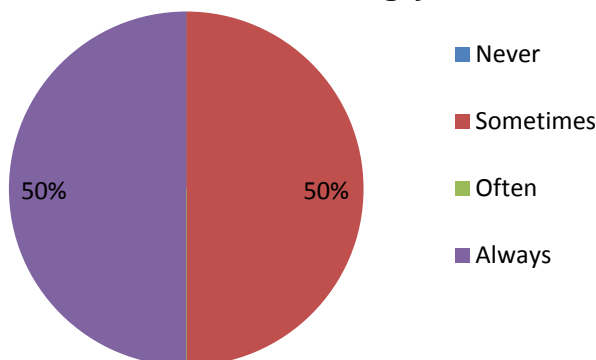
**Figure 4.24: Teachers' refusal to carry out instructions**



Three (50%) of the six respondents indicated that teachers sometimes refused to carry out instructions from the authority when they experienced conflict; two (33%) stated that teachers often refused to carry out instructions when in conflict, and one (17%) indicated that teachers always refused to carry out instructions when in conflict.

The implication of refusing to carry out instructions is that important activities or reports were not done, and this may have had a negative impact on the performance of the deputy principals and the school in general.

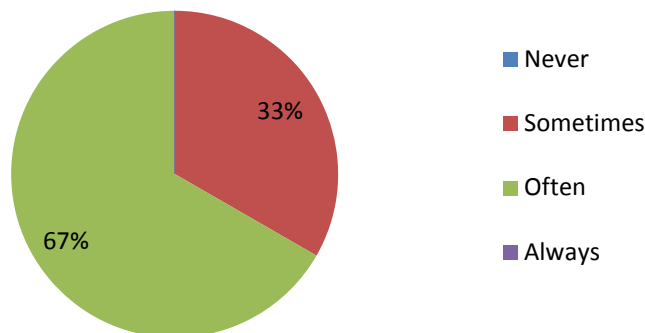
**Figure 4.25: Teachers are angry with learners**



With regard to anger, all six respondents indicated that teachers who were involved in conflict displayed signs of anger when dealing with learners: three (50%) indicating that this was always the case, and another three (50%) indicating that this was sometimes the case.

A conflict situation seems to increase anger, which has a negative impact on one's emotional and mental functioning (Van Deventer *et al.*, 2003: 29). This implies that teachers who are angry cannot handle learners with understanding, and may not perform teaching and learning activities to the best of their abilities. The deputy principals also may have a problem of managing teachers when they are angry.

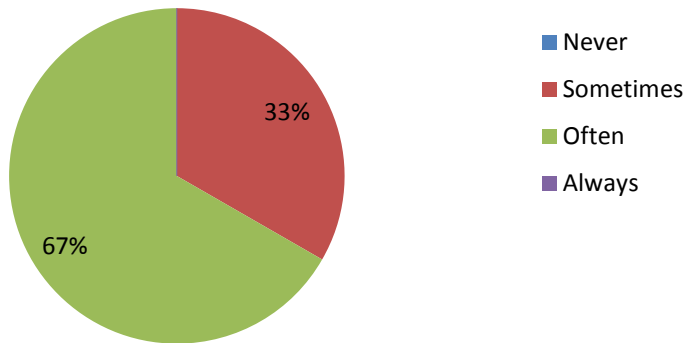
**Figure 4.26: Teachers' personality**



The majority of the respondents (67%) reported that conflict often had a negative impact on the personalities of teachers who experienced it, while two (33%) reported that this was sometimes the case.

The implication is that conflict change one's view of life, attitudes and sense of humour – with individuals becoming withdrawn, less active and less cooperative (Garcia, Kupczynski & Holland, 2011: 6). Therefore, teachers who experience conflict may display behaviour which is strange and not known to the deputy principals, making the process of communicating with them extremely difficult for the deputy principals. This may hamper any attempts by the deputy principals to resolve the existing conflict.

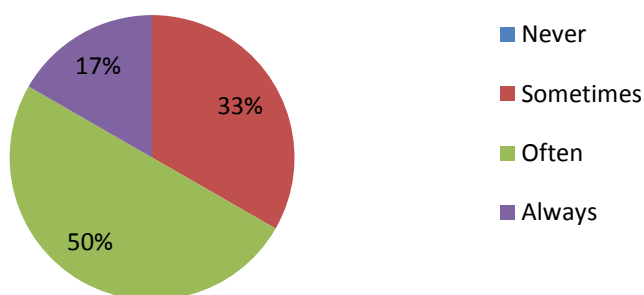
**Figure 4.27: Participation in extra-mural activities**



The majority of the respondents, (four or 67%) stated that teachers often did not participate in extra-mural activities when they were involved in conflict, and two (33%) indicated that this was sometimes the case.

The implication is that teachers who are involved in conflict may be stubborn and refuse to participate in extra-mural activities. This attitude may make it difficult for the deputy principals to handle such teachers. It could lead to a situation where the teachers are not communicated to by the deputy principals – to the detriment of learners who need to be supervised while performing extra-mural activities.

**Figure 4.28: Teachers prefer to be alone**

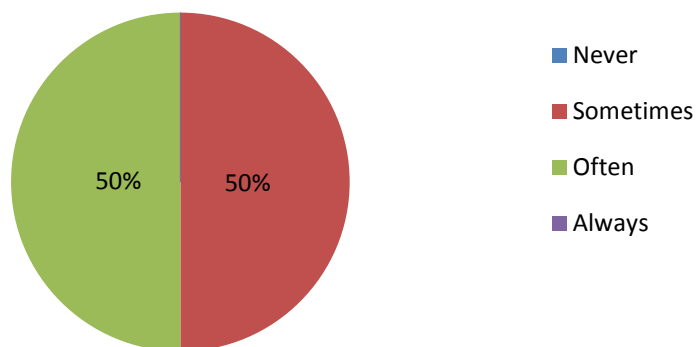


Of the six respondents, three(50%) indicated that teachers often preferred to be alone when there was conflict among them; two (33%) reported that this

was sometimes the case, and one (17%) reported that this was always the case.

The teachers' tendency of preferring to be alone when in conflict could be accompanied by unacceptable behaviours such as being cheeky and stubborn, avoidance of colleagues and authority, snapping when approached or spoken to, as well as feelings of loneliness, rejection and not belonging (Putintseva, 2006: 1). The deputy principals may have a problem communicating to such teachers on school matters and on attempts to resolve the conflict. This situation could disadvantage learners since communication among colleagues is crucial in a school situation.

**Figure 4.29: Teachers are often sick**



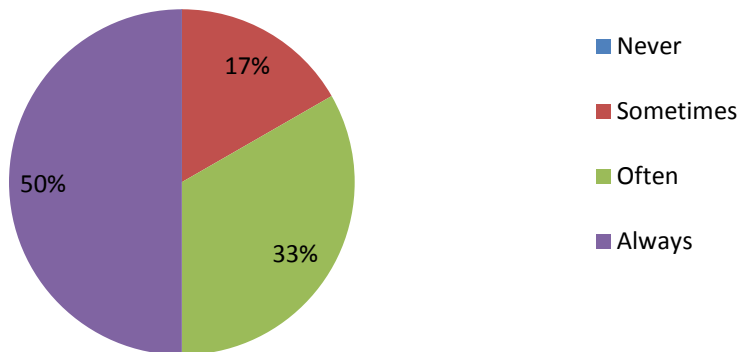
Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that teachers were often sick when there was conflict among them, and the other three (50%) reported that teachers were sometimes sick when there was conflict among them.

Conflict promotes stress, and stress results in illnesses such as headaches, back pains and stiff muscles (Motseke, 2000: 52). These illnesses may lead to increased rates of absenteeism among teachers. Teacher absenteeism implies that the deputy principals are unable to resolve conflict, and may also have an additional responsibility of managing duties and learners of absent teachers.



#### 4.2.5 Section E – conflict handling (as viewed by deputy principals)

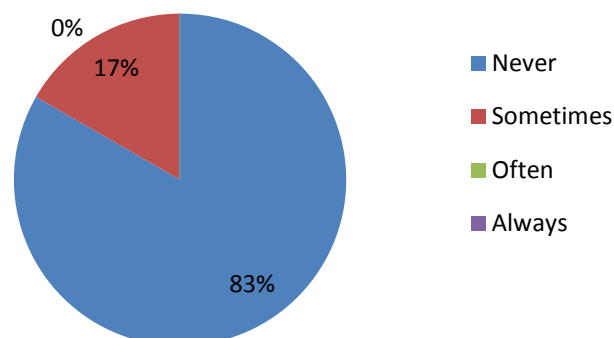
**Figure 4.30: Discussions**



Of the six deputy principals, three (50%) reported that they always brought conflicting parties together in an attempt to find an amicable solution through discussion; two (33%) stated that they often did that, and one (17%) stated that they sometimes did that.

The implication is that the deputy principals preferred to resolve conflict through discussions. This could be an effective approach since each party is afforded an opportunity to present its side for consideration. Therefore, accommodation, negotiation and collaborating may be strategies applied in this situation.

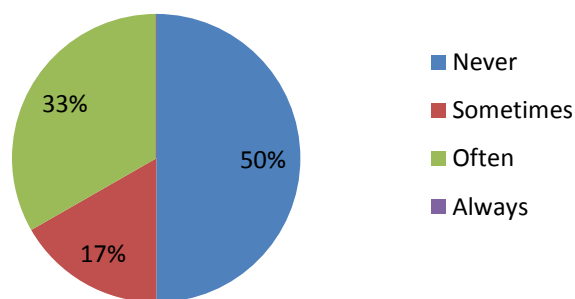
**Figure 4.31: Avoidance**



Of the six deputy principals, only one (17%) indicated that conflict among teachers was sometimes avoided, the remaining five respondents (83%) indicated that avoiding conflict was never done.

The implication is that avoidance was never applied in the conflict situation of the schools surveyed, but problems leading to conflict were addressed and solution sought. This could be important for the development of the school, and for the maintenance of good relationships among colleagues.

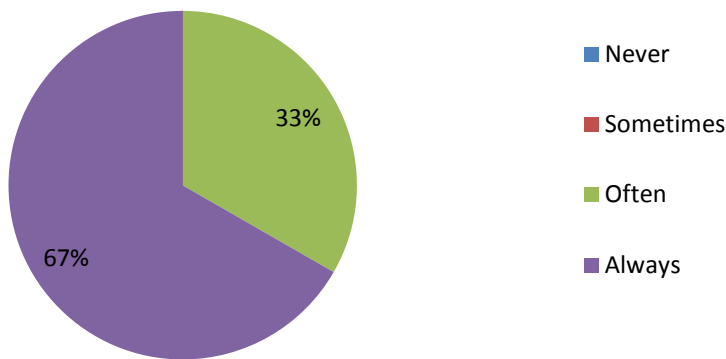
**Figure 4.32: Win-lose situation**



Of the six respondents, three (50%) reported that a win-lose situation was never allowed or promoted; two (33%) reported that it was often allowed, and one (17%) stated that it was sometimes allowed.

The indication is that there was a balance between schools which allowed a win-lose situation, and those which did not allow it. The win-lose situation means that one party received most or all of what they needed, and the other party received little or nothing of what they needed. Therefore, members of the losing party may develop negative feelings and attitudes towards the school, or the deputy principal who presided over the case – a scenario which could be detrimental to collegiality within the school.

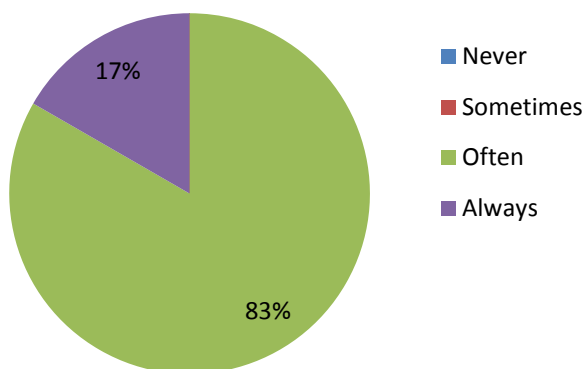
**Figure 4.33: Compromise**



Of the six respondents, four (67%) indicated that they always strove for a compromise when handling conflict, and two (33%) indicated that they often strove for a compromise when handling conflict.

The figures confirm the earlier view that the majority of deputy principals preferred to discuss problems with the conflicting parties and to come to a common agreement. The bargaining approach may have been mainly used by the deputy principals to settle the conflict. The bargaining approach is effective in eliminating feelings of winning or losing among colleagues – this could be good for positive relationships among teachers (Todd, 2007: 2).

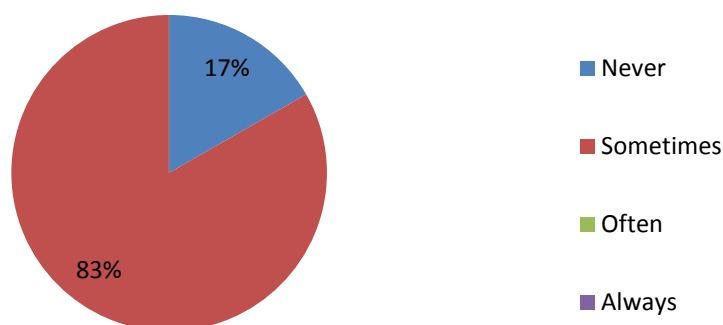
**Figure 4.34: Sacrifice**



Of the six respondents, five (83%) indicated that they often encouraged teachers to sacrificed or let go of certain demands or expectations in an attempt to address a conflict situation, and one respondent (17%) stated that this was always the case.

The implication is that the approach of the majority of deputy principals was that of encouraging understanding and collegiality among teachers.

**Figure 4.35: I always call an outside person**



Of the six deputy principals, only one (17%) would never call an outside person to help with resolving conflict, while the majority (83%) would sometimes do so. In many instances an outside person could be a member of the School Governing Body.

The implication is that sometimes the deputy principals could not handle conflict, and preferred to call an outside person.

#### **4.2.6 Section F (open-ended questions deputy principals)**

The respondents answered the open-ended questions as follows:

***Question 1: What are the common causes of conflict in your school?***

Deputy principal A: “Promotional posts, allocation of classes and favouritism at work place”.

Deputy principal B: “Shortage of resources, differences of opinion, especially in meetings”.

Deputy principal C: “Differences in performance”.

Deputy principal D: "Subject allocation, shortage of teachers, work overload".

Deputy principal E: "Lack of communication and misunderstanding among the colleagues".

Deputy principal F: "Communication problems".

According to the responses above, there were a number of causes of conflict in the surveyed schools. The main causes were poor communication and work overload. There is always a need for teachers to communicate for a number of reasons, such as discussing learner performance, best approaches and discipline. If that communication causes conflict, then the teachers' duties may suffer. The deputy principals' responsibility of ensuring that teaching and learning become effective and addressing any conflict among teachers, may also suffer. The issue of workload as a source of conflict is complex, and in many instances, beyond the control of the school and its managers. For instance, the educator: learner ratio of 1:35 is not easily observable in many schools due to shortages of teachers (Brumley, 2011: 1). Consequently, teachers are compelled to deal with big groups, to have a number of responsibilities, and to deal with a number of teachers. This could cause conflict.

The promotions and favouritism were also indicated as causes of conflict. The promotional posts pay fairly well, but are scarce. The availability of a promotional post invites many applications. Therefore, any appointment would always be viewed as unfair. This could cause conflict and may be difficult for the deputy principals to handle since it may be beyond their control.

The implication is that some of the causes of conflict may have been beyond the control of the school and its management. The role of the deputy principal was, therefore, minimal in addressing conflict resulting from such causes.

***Question 2: What do you do as a deputy principal to resolve conflict at your school?***

Deputy principal A: "I call conflicting parties, and listen to their sides of the story".

Deputy principal B: "I listen to both sides of the story, and allow the two parties to reach a solution".

Deputy principal C: "I call all the affected parties and convince them to come-up with a solution to the problem".

Deputy principal D: "I treat teachers equally and fairly, and avoid friendship or closeness to others".

Deputy principal E: "Talk to the people involved. Let them come to a solution themselves".

Deputy principal F: "Involving every party engaged in conflict to resolve it".

All the respondents indicated that they called all parties involved in conflict to discuss and resolve the problem. This confirms the view that deputy principals would prefer a negotiated settlement.

***Question 3: What can deputy principals do to eradicate conflict among teachers?***

Deputy principal A: "Find a participatory way of allocating duties".

Deputy principal B: "Plan in time. Motivate teachers. Organise resources in time. Always respect individual teachers".

Deputy principal C: “Frequent departmental meetings should be called to root out misunderstandings”.

Deputy principal D: “To let teachers stay in one staff-room which will not give room to formation of cliques. To always have social gathering and developmental workshops”.

Deputy principal E: “Where people are working there will always be a conflict, but it can be reduced by treating all teachers equally”.

Deputy principal F: “Improve communication among the teachers”.

The majority of the respondents believed that conflict could be eradicated by frequent meetings and the involvement of teachers in subject allocation; only one deputy principals believed that conflict may never be eradicated. While the above-mentioned measures may be effective in reducing conflict, it is not possible to completely eliminate conflict (Najwa, 2010: 3). However, the deputy principals need to take minimum steps in reducing conflict or eliminating its destructive effects.

#### **4.2.7 Summary of results of deputy principals’ questionnaire**

The results of the questionnaire completed by the deputy principals indicate that the majority of them were males, married and over 40 years old. Most of the deputy principals held post-graduate qualifications, and had been in management for about ten years or longer. The assumption is that the deputy principals, due to their experience and qualifications, were matured and able to handle conflict among teachers. The analysis of the deputy principals’ qualifications indicated that most of these qualifications were in teaching or humanities. The studies in teaching and humanities normally include issues on social matters such as relationships, philosophy of life, behaviour and human psychology (Gordon, 2000: 18). These qualifications adequately equip students who obtained them to understand human behaviour, society and its

norms and values, and people's feelings and emotions (Gordon, 2000: 18). Therefore, the deputy principals were expected to be adequately equipped for handling conflict among teachers.

The results of the deputy principals' questionnaire also revealed that in the schools surveyed there were only two deputy principals with an average of 35 teachers and over a thousand learners per school. The schools also had no laboratories. The implication is that with such big teacher and learner numbers, there is a greater possibility of conflict, than it would be the case if numbers were smaller (Worren, 2011: 1). The other issue is that the big learner numbers were not supported by an equivalent supply of teachers, facilities and equipment – since township schools are known for serious shortages of staff, facilities and equipment (Worren, 2011: 1). DaGraça, Cornelie, Kowaltowski and Petreche (2007: 989) found that the school size has a great influence on teacher and learner performance, and could cause conflict since each learner requires a space of, at least, a square meter in order to sit and work comfortably on school work. The lack of such a space could be stressful for both the teacher and the learner.

This situation brought to the fore complications around the management of the scarce resources, both human and material. These shortages implied that the management of these resources was difficult; and may easily create impressions that some teachers are being favoured in the distribution or allocation of resources, while others are being deliberately disadvantaged. These feelings are likely to cause conflict among teachers, and tensions between teachers and management. Therefore, the responsibility of the deputy principals was to manage these resources in such a way that any feelings of being disadvantaged were dealt with and all teachers accepted the management and distribution as fair and equitable. This could be impossible in a situation where the demand for the resources and the supply of such resources were immensely disproportionate.



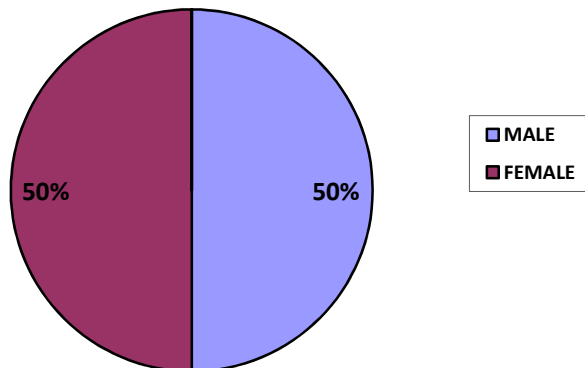
The results also revealed that a number of factors could be responsible for conflict among teachers in the surveyed schools. The factors could be grouped in terms of those that were manageable within the schools, and those that were beyond the schools' means. The shortage of resources and facilities, as well as work overload may be beyond the control of the schools' management. However, poor communication and poor time-tabling may be adequately handled by the deputy principals or schools' management teams.

### 4.3 QUESTIONNAIRE – TEACHERS

#### 4.3.1 Section A: Biographical

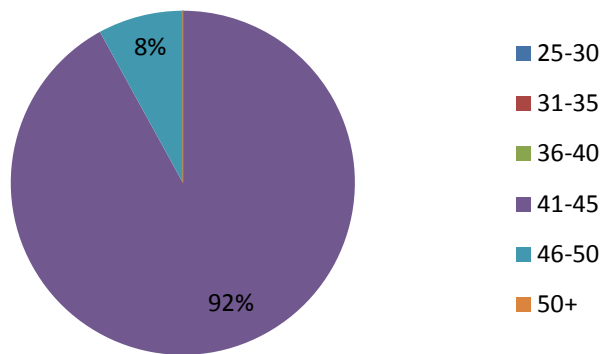
The biographical data of the teachers who participated in the study is presented below.

**Figure 4.36: Gender**



Of the twelve respondents, six (50%) were male and the other six (50%) were female. There was a balance between male and female teachers who participated in the study.

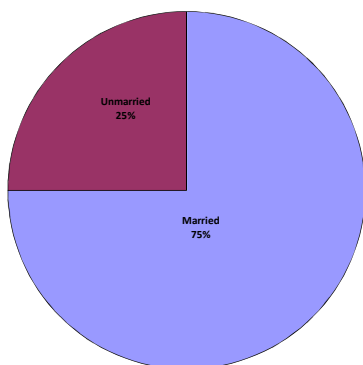
**Figure 4.37: Age**



Of the 12 respondents, 10 (92%) were between 40 and 46 years old, and two (8%) were between 46 and 50 years old.

This implies that the teachers in the schools surveyed were fairly matured. The maturity of these teachers could be an advantage for the deputy principals when handling conflict. Research indicates that older people settle disputes and conflict much easier and quicker than younger people (Davis, 2002: 1).

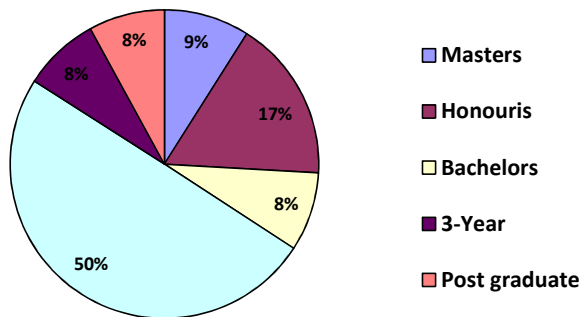
**Figure 4.38: Marital status**



The majority of the respondents, nine of the twelve (75%) were married, with only three (25%) unmarried.

Since the majority of teachers were married, it was assumed that they had experience in dealing with family matters and family differences – which could contribute positively in the deputy principals’ efforts of handling conflict.

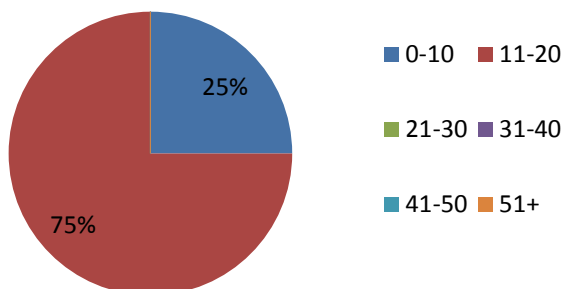
**Figure 4.39: Qualifications**



Of the 12 respondents, six (50%) had a four year degree (BAEd); one (9%) had a Master’s degree, two (17%) had a Honouris degree, one (8%) had a 3-year diploma, and one (8%) had a post-graduate degree.

The indication is that all teachers who participated in this study were properly qualified, and many had qualifications much higher than the minimum required for their positions. The higher qualifications may imply that the majority of teachers have studied, formally or informally, issues such as management of time, relationships and classroom activities, as well as managing stress and conflict. The higher qualifications could also help the deputy principals to handle conflict with much ease.

**Figure 4.40: Teaching experience**

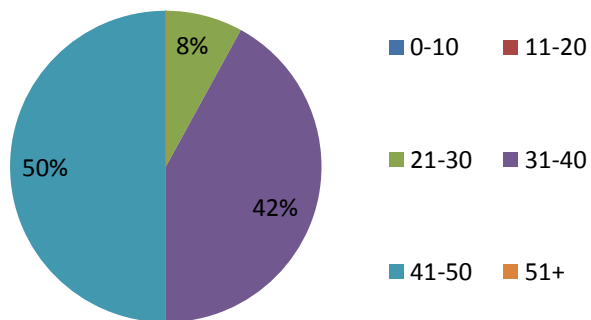


The majority of the respondents (75%) had more than 11 years' experience of teaching, while fewer (25%) were less than 11 years in teaching.

The implication is that most of the teachers who participated in this study were well-experienced. The assumption is that people with such experience have established approaches of teaching, of handling tense situations, and of dealing with colleagues. These qualities would make the deputy principals' work of handling conflict much easier.

#### 4.3.2 Section B – Demographic data

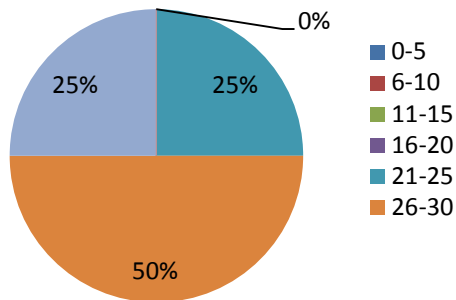
**Figure 4.41: Number of teachers in the school**



Of the 12 respondents, one (8%) came from a school with teachers between 21 and 30; five (42%) came from schools with teachers between 31 and 40, and six (50%) came from schools with between 41 and 50 teachers.

The majority of schools surveyed were fairly big, with over 40 teachers. The higher educator numbers implied a greater possibility of conflict among teachers due to issues such as inadequate communication, personality clashes and demand for scarce resources. This could make the deputy principals' work of managing conflict among teachers extremely difficult.

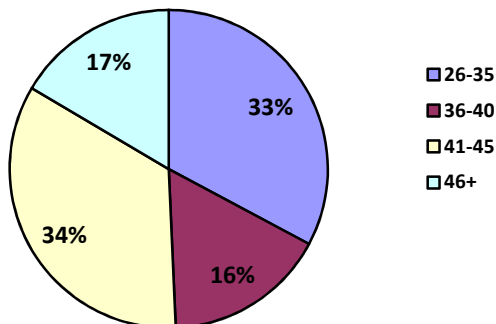
**Figure 4.42: Number of classrooms in the school**



Of the 12 respondents, six (50%) came from schools with classrooms between 26 and 30; three (25%) came from schools with classrooms between 21 and 25, while the other three (25%) came from schools with classrooms between 31 and 35.

The implication is that the majority of schools surveyed were big, with greater possibilities of overcrowding and work overload. This situation could be conducive for conflict among teachers, and could make conflict resolution difficult.

**Figure 4.43: Number of learners in the classrooms**

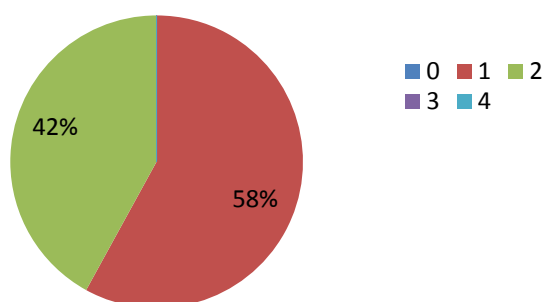


Of the 12 respondents, four (33%) came from schools with 46 or more learners in a classroom; another four (33%) came from schools with learners between 41 and 45 in the classroom, while two (17%) respondents came from schools with learners between 31 and 35 per classroom, and the last two

(17%) respondents came from schools with learners between 36 and 40 per classroom.

The implication is that the majority of the respondents handled more learners than the official teacher-learner ratio of 1:35. The higher numbers may not only impact negatively on teaching and learning activities, but could also cause conflict among teachers.

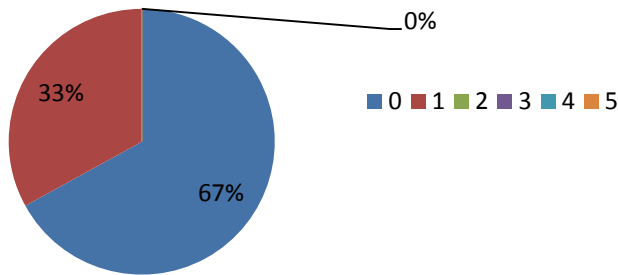
**Figure 4.44: Number of staffrooms**



Of the 12 teachers, seven (58%) came from schools with one staffroom, while only five (42%) came from schools with two staffrooms.

The majority of schools surveyed had over thirty teachers. This implies that all these teachers were crammed into one staffroom, and were compelled to share facilities such as cupboards, tables and chairs. This situation had a greater possibility of creating conflict among teachers, thus making the work of managing relationships and conflict difficult for the deputy principals.

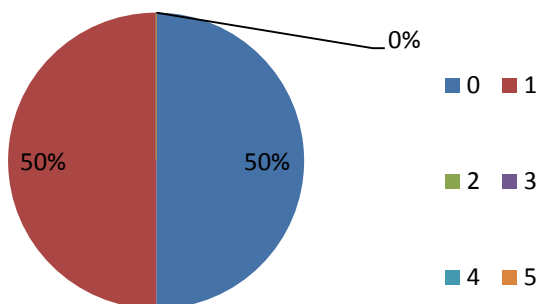
**Figure 4.45: Number of laboratories**



Of the 12 respondents, eight (67%) came from schools with no laboratories, and only four (33%) came from schools with one laboratory.

The implication is that experiments and laboratory work did not take place, or was not effectively executed in the majority of schools surveyed. Apart from failure to do laboratory work, the laboratory space may be important for relieving accommodation pressure, since many respondents indicated a shortage of classroom accommodation. The tension caused by overcrowding due to lack of extra space, as well as the inability to perform experiments may have been good recipes for tension and conflict among teachers.

**Figure 4.46: Number of libraries**

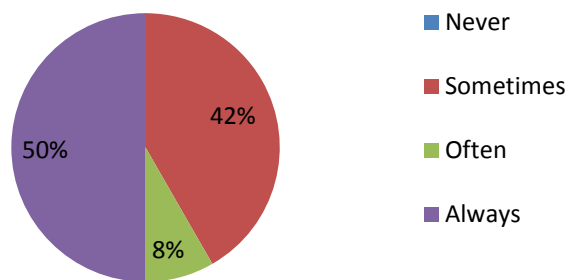


Of the 12 respondents, six (50%) indicated that they did not have any libraries, while the other six (50%) indicated that they had a library.

With no libraries, certain activities such as assignments, projects and extra reading may have been suffering in the schools surveyed, placing unnecessary pressure on teachers. The pressure or stress associated with lack of libraries may lead to conflict among teachers.

### 4.3.3 Section C– Causes of conflict (as viewed by teachers)

**Figure 4.47: Bad communication**

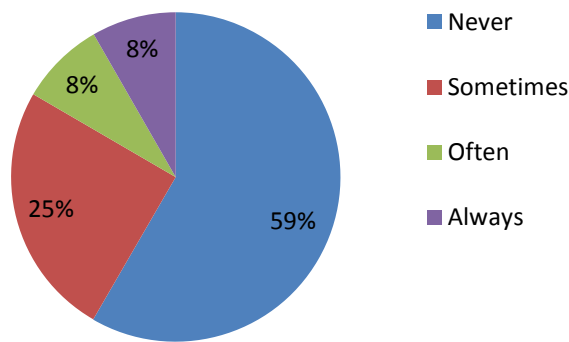


Of the 12 respondents, six (50%) reported that bad communication always caused conflict among colleagues; Five (42%) respondents reported that bad communication sometimes caused conflict among colleagues and only one (8%) respondent reported that bad communication often caused conflict among teachers.

Communication among teachers, and between teachers and the school management team is crucial for effective teaching and learning. Therefore, the lack of communication could be detrimental to teaching and learning. In the schools surveyed, communication seemed to be a serious problem.



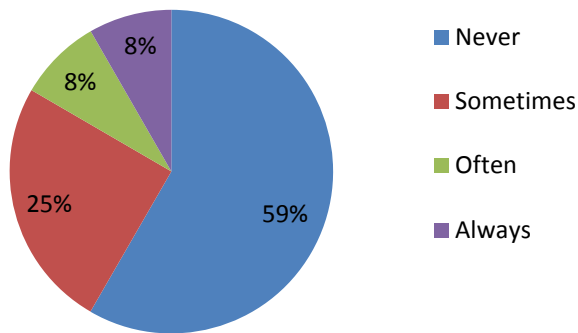
**Figure 4.48: Clash over resources**



Of the twelve respondents, seven (59%) indicated that teachers always clashed over resources; three (25%) respondents indicated that clashing over resources sometimes caused conflict; while only one (8%) respondent indicating that clashing over resources often caused conflict.

The township schools are known for serious shortages of resources due to the past policies of the Nationalist government which provided inferior education to black children (Pandor, 2006: 25). These inadequacies of the past have not been properly addressed since the advent of the democratic government, and may continue to disadvantage learners in these schools for many years to come. In addition, parents of township school learners are generally poor, and unable to provide for their children where the government fails to do so (Dieltiens & Mery-Gibert, 2008: 3). This implies that the conflict resulting from the shortages of resources may also afflict surveyed schools for many years to come.

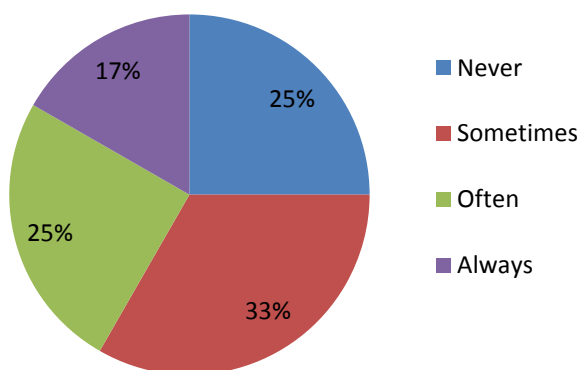
**Figure 4.49: Clash over the use of venues**



Of the 12 respondents, seven (59%) indicated that clashing over the use of venues always caused conflict among teachers; three respondents (25%) said this happened sometimes; one (8%) indicated that it often happened, while another one (8%) indicated that it never happened.

The overcrowding which is common in many township schools (Williams, 2010:14) implies that facilities may not be adequate. Therefore, clashing over the use of venues could be a serious problem among teachers of surveyed schools.

**Figure 4.50: Allocation of subjects and periods**

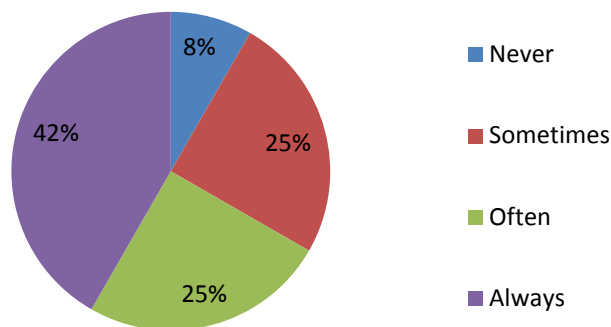


Of the 12 respondents, four (33%) indicated that the allocation of subjects and periods, or a heavy workload sometimes caused conflict among teachers; three (25%) respondents indicated that the heavy workload often caused conflict among teachers, and two (17%) respondents indicated that the heavy

workload always caused conflict among teachers. It was only three (25%) respondents who said the heavy workload never caused conflict among teachers.

Spellman (2010:1) found that overworked employees are likely to be stubborn, less cooperative and underperforming. Therefore, teachers who have too many subjects and too many teaching periods may not be cooperating with colleagues and management, and may not be effective in teaching. The overload also implies that the overloaded educator may be interacting with too many different learners and teachers. This may lead to stress and conflict among teachers.

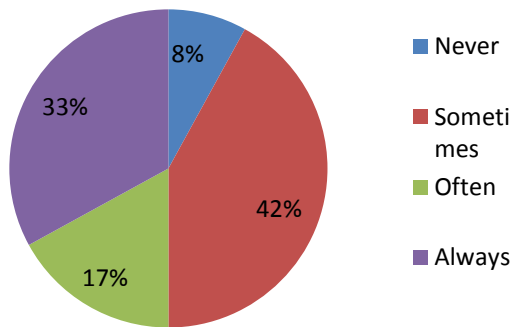
**Figure 4.51: Gossip**



Of the 12 respondents, five (42%) indicated that gossip always caused conflict among teachers; three (25%) respondents indicated that gossip sometimes caused conflict among teachers, and another three (25%) indicated that gossip often caused conflict among teachers. Only one (8%) respondent indicated that gossip never caused conflict among teachers.

The implication is that gossip is a serious problem among teachers of the surveyed schools.

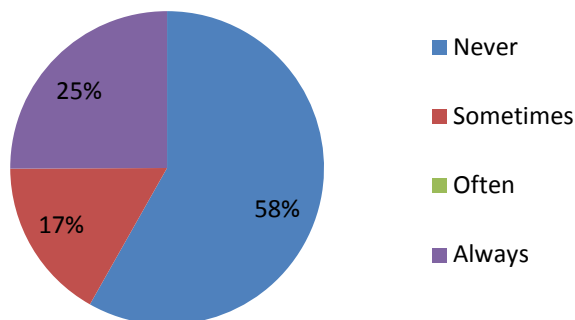
**Figure 4.52: Absenteeism**



Of the twelve respondents five (42%) indicated that absenteeism sometimes caused conflict; four (33%) respondents reported that this was always the case; two (17%) respondents indicated that this was often the case, and only one (8%) respondent said this was never the case.

The majority of the respondents confirmed that absenteeism contributed to conflict among teachers in the surveyed schools. With increased rates of absenteeism among teachers due to illness and stress, the possibility of heightened conflict always exists.

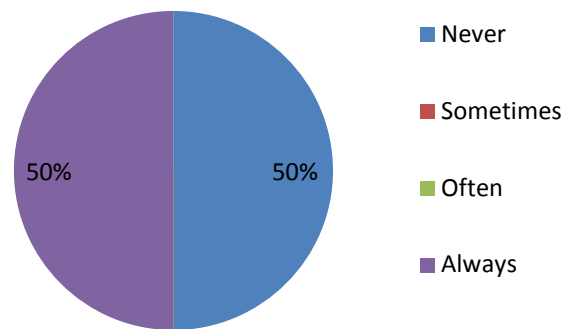
**Figure 4.53: Mentoring and monitoring of teachers**



Of the twelve respondents, seven (58%) reported that mentoring and monitoring of teachers never caused conflict; three (25%) indicated that mentoring and monitoring of teachers always caused conflict, while two (17%) said this was sometimes the case.

The implication is that mentoring and monitoring of teachers was not viewed as a major factor in the cause of conflict among teachers who participated in this study.

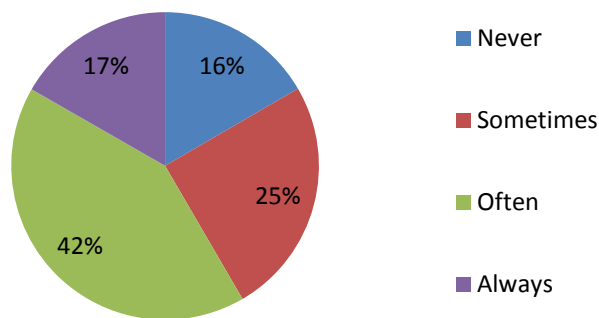
**Figure 4.54: The evaluation of teachers**



Of the twelve respondents, six (50%) stated that the evaluation of the teachers' performance always caused conflict, and another six (50%) indicated that this was the evaluation of the teachers' performance never caused conflict among teachers.

The evaluation of teachers' performance, such as the IQMS (Integrated Quality Management Science) is linked to remuneration in South African schools (DoE, 2006: 6). This evaluation is carried out by both the Head of Department and a colleague (peer review). Therefore, conflict could be created if the evaluation is negative and deprives the educator of the remuneration. Although this was not viewed as a serious factor, it, however, did contribute to conflict among teachers who participated in this study.

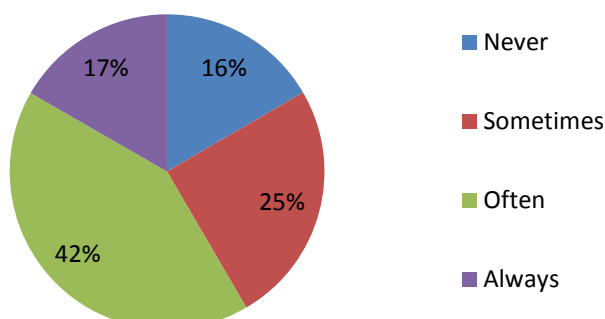
**Figure 4.55: Supervising ground duties**



Of the twelve respondents, five (42%) indicated that supervising ground duties often caused conflict; three (25%) indicated that this was sometimes the case; two (17%) reported that this was always the case and another two (16%) reported that this was never the case.

The implication here is that the majority of respondents felt that supervising ground duties was contributing towards conflict in their schools. Supervising ground duties involved duties such as supervising learners while they are busy with the cleaning of toilets and stoops (DoE, 2000b: 16). These duties could create tensions among colleagues and authorities within the schools, since some teachers may feel that the duties may not be part of their professional responsibilities.

**Figure 4.56: Poor results**

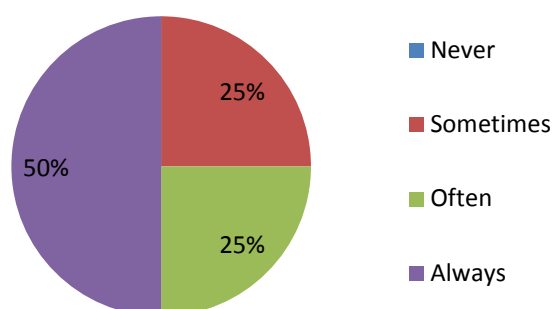


Of the twelve respondents who answered this question, five (42%) reported that poor results caused conflict among teachers; three (25%) said this was sometimes the case, and two (17%) said this was often the case. Only two (16%) respondents said this was never the case.

The implication is that the majority of respondents agreed that poor results caused conflict among colleagues. The reason could be that the whole school's image is negatively affected, including the images of hard-working teachers. This is common in schools which produce poor results in Grade 12.

#### 4.3.4 Section D: Manifestation of conflict (as viewed by teachers)

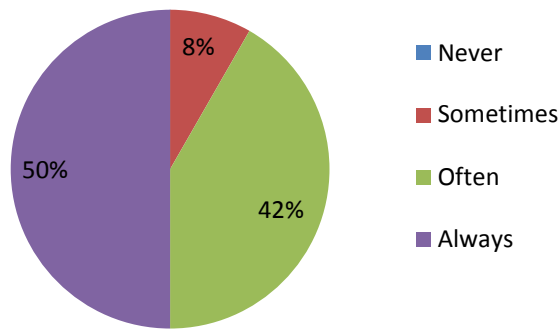
##### Question 4.57: Teachers' experience of stress



Of the twelve respondents, six (50%) stated that they always experienced stress when in a conflict situation; three (25%) respondents confirmed that this was sometimes the case, and another three (25%) indicated that this was often the case.

Therefore, all the teachers who participated in this study experienced conflict-related stress. Since conflict is common in a school situation, stress could also be a common phenomenon among teachers. The stress may have a negative impact on the teachers' ability to perform their duties. Poor performance and high rates of absenteeism among teachers could be the result of stress experienced by these teachers. Conflict could also contribute to these high levels of stress.

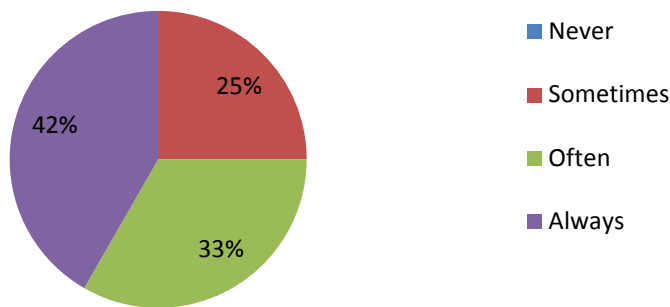
**Figure 4.58: Teachers' performance**



Of the twelve respondents, six respondents (50%) indicated that their performance was always negatively affected when they experience conflict; five (42%) said this was often the case, and one (8%) indicated that this was sometimes the case.

Therefore, all teachers surveyed reported that their performance dropped when in conflict. The implication is that frequent conflict could lead to regular performance problems among teachers, with serious implications for effective teaching and learning.

**Figure 4.59: Rate of absenteeism**

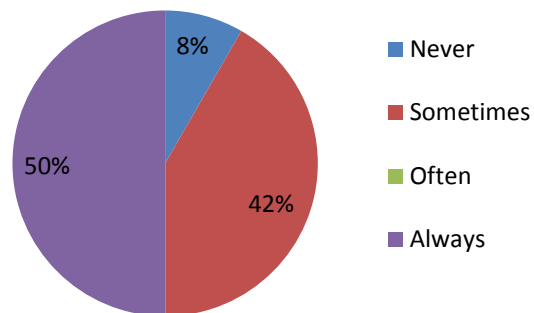


Of the twelve respondents, five (42%) stated that the rate of absenteeism always existed or increased during conflict; four (33%) indicated that this was often the case, and three (25%) indicated that this was sometimes the case.



There is a possibility that teachers of the schools surveyed could be using absenteeism as a way of escaping from conflict – since all indicated a relationship between conflict and absenteeism.

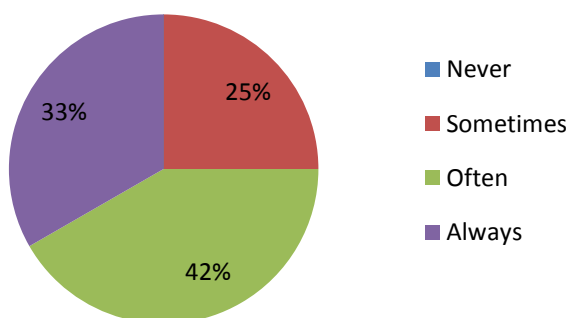
**Figure 4.60: Handling of learners angrily or emotionally during conflict**



Of the twelve respondents only one (8%) felt that teachers never handled learners angrily or emotionally when conflict existed among teachers; six (50%) indicated that learners were always handled angrily or emotionally when conflict existed among teachers, while five (42%) reported that this was sometimes the case.

Conflict has a direct impact on the individual's emotions (Newstrom & Davis, 2002: 261). Therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of teachers reported that learners were being handled emotionally or angrily during conflict among teachers.

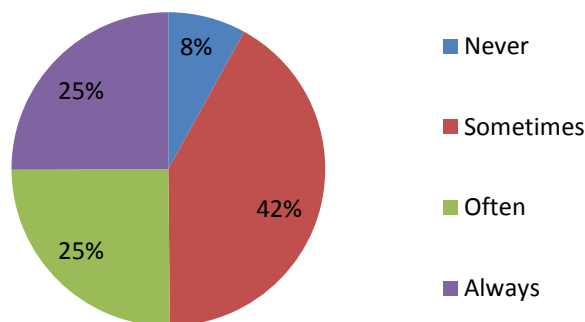
**Figure 4.61: Teachers refuse to carry out instructions**



Of the twelve respondents, five (42%) reported that they often refused to carry out instructions when experiencing conflict; four (33%) reported that they always refused to carry out instructions during conflict, and three respondents (25%) indicated that they sometimes refused to carry out instructions during conflict.

The implication is that some school activities and the authority of the school management may suffer during conflict – due to the teachers’ lack of cooperation when involved in conflict.

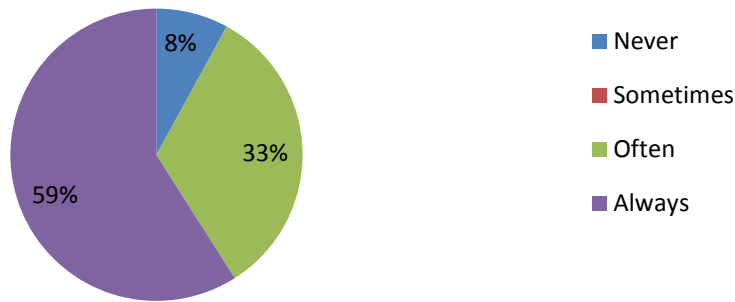
**Figure 4.62: Teachers are angry with learners**



Of the twelve respondents, five (42%) reported that teachers were sometimes angry with learners when experiencing conflict; three (25%) indicated that this was often the case, and another three (25%) said this was always the case. Only one (8%) respondents said this was never the case.

The implication is that learners experienced bad temper and anger from teachers who were involved in conflict.

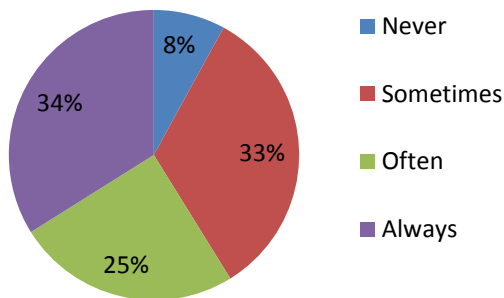
**Figure 4.63: The teachers' personality**



Of the twelve respondents, seven (59%) respondents said that teachers' personalities always changed during conflict; four (33%) respondents answered that teachers' personalities often changed during conflict, and only one (8%) respondent answered that teachers' personalities never changed during conflict.

The implication is that the teachers' personalities generally changed during conflict, with greater possibilities of unpredictability and negativity. This situation could have negative consequences for learners and classroom activities.

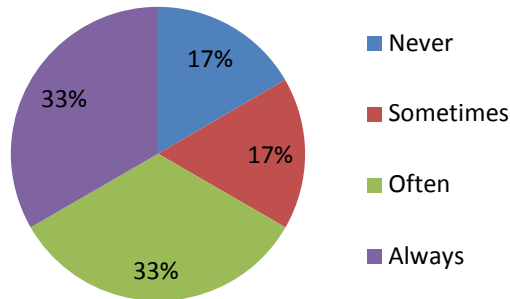
**Figure 4.64: Failure to participate in activities**



Of the twelve respondents, four (33%) respondents answered that teachers sometimes failed to participate in school activities during conflict; another four (34%) stated this was always the case; three (25%) respondents indicated that this was often the case, and only one (8%) respondent reported that teachers never failed to participate in school activities during conflict.

The implication is that school activities, some of which may be crucial for the teaching and learning process, may not have taken place during conflict. This may have had negative consequences for the development of learners.

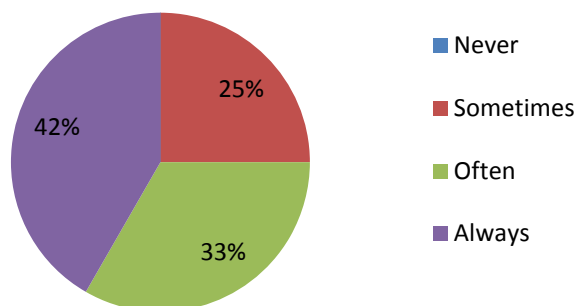
**Figure 4.65: Teachers prefer to be alone**



Of the twelve respondents, four (33%) respondents indicated that teachers always wanted to be alone during conflict; another four (33%) said that teachers often wanted to be alone when there was conflict amongst them; two (17%) stated that teachers sometimes preferred to be alone when there was conflict among them, and only two (17%) respondents said that teachers never preferred to be alone while experiencing conflict.

The implication is that communication and cooperation among teachers suffered during conflict. This could have negative consequences for teaching and learning.

**Figure 4.66: Teachers are often sick**

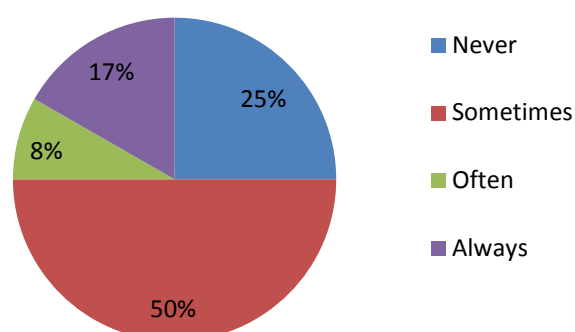


Of the twelve respondents, five (42%) reported that teachers were always sick with headaches, back pains and stiff muscles when there was conflict among them; four (33,%) respondents indicated that teachers often felt sick during conflict, and three (25%) reported that this was sometimes the case.

This implies that the majority of respondents felt sick when there was conflict among teachers. The state of being sick could lead to absenteeism, reduced performance and stress – with negative consequences for the teaching and learning activities.

#### 4.3.5 Section E – Conflict handling (as viewed by teachers)

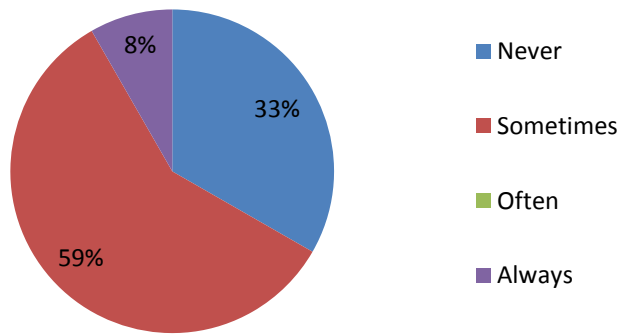
**Figure 4.67:Discussions towards a common goal**



Of the twelve respondents, six (50%) of the respondents stated that sometimes the deputy principal facilitated discussions between the warring parties until a common goal was found; three (25%) respondents stated that discussions were never facilitated between warring parties; two (17%) respondents stated that the deputy principals always facilitated discussions between warring parties, while only one (8%) respondent stated that the deputy principals often facilitated discussions between warring parties until a common goal was found.

The report indicates that the deputy principals generally handled conflict by means of common discussions. This could be good for relationships and collegiality within the school.

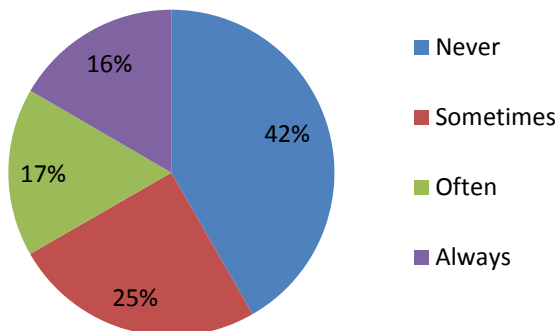
**Figure 4.68: The deputy principal bringing warring parties together**



Of the twelve respondents, seven (59%) indicated that deputy principals sometimes brought warring parties together, and only one (8%) said this was always the case; four (33%) respondents indicated that deputy principals never brought warring parties together.

The implication is that the majority of deputy principals preferred to bring conflicting parties together for a discussion.

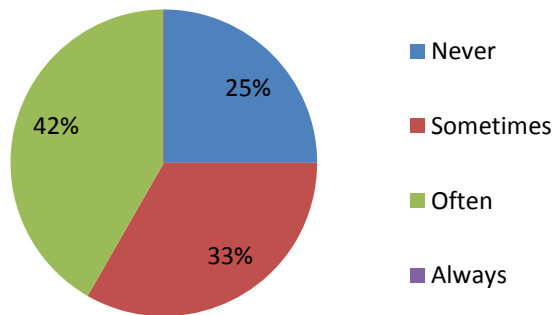
**Figure 4.69: Win-lose situation**



Of the twelve respondents, three (25%) indicated that the deputy principals sometimes allowed a win-lose situation – whereby one group would have all their demands granted, while another group's demands would not be considered; two (17%) indicated that this was often the case; another two (16%) stated that this was always the case, while five (42%) indicated that this was never the case.

Although the win-lose approach was not popular with the majority of deputy principals, it was sometimes implemented. The implication is that many teachers come out of a conflict situation as losers with bad feelings. This could have a negative impact on the future relationships among teachers.

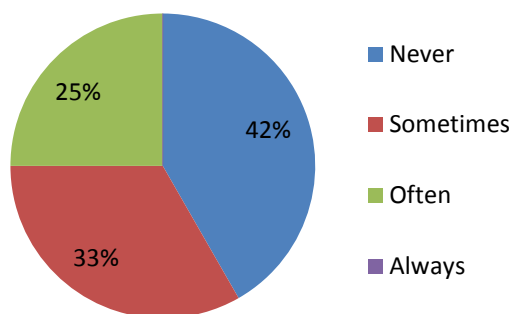
**Figure 4.70: Encouraging warring parties to reach a compromise**



Of the twelve respondents, five (42%) stated that the deputy principals often encouraged the warring parties to reach a compromise; four (33%) of the respondents indicated that this was sometimes the case, and three (25%) reported that this was never the case.

Although the majority of the respondents felt that the deputy principals were encouraging some compromise among conflicting parties, there were still those teachers who felt that the deputy principals were not encouraging or not promoting a compromise situation among conflicting parties. These feelings may make resolving conflict difficult.

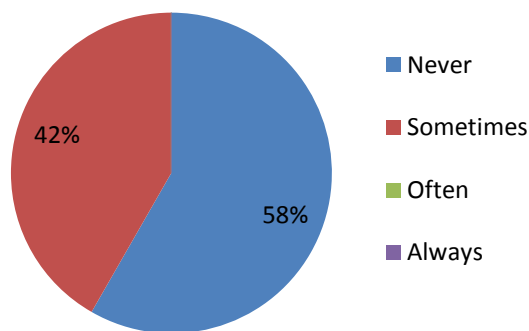
**Figure 4.71: Sacrificing relationships among teachers**



Of the twelve respondents, four (33%) indicated that the deputy principals sometimes encouraged warring parties not to sacrifice the relationships among themselves when dealing with conflict; three (25%) reported that this was the case, and five (42%) this was never the case.

The implication is that deputy principals encouraged the maintenance of good relationships among conflicting parties. It could be that the deputy principals realised the risks involved if relationships had to be sacrificed, and this was avoided at all cost.

**Figure 4.72: Calling an outside person**



Of the twelve respondents, five (42%) stated that the deputy principals sometimes called an outside person, like and SMDG or SGB member to resolve conflict among teachers, while seven (58%) respondents stated that deputy principals never called an outside person to resolve conflict among teachers.

The implication is that calling an outsider was not popular among the majority of the deputy principals of the schools surveyed.



#### 4.3.6 Section F – Open-ended questions (teachers)

The responses from open-ended questions are indicated below:

***Question 1: What are the common causes of conflict among teachers at school?***

Educator A: “Nepotism, management style (e.g. bureaucracy).Lack of information, communication. Favouritism by senior members of staff”.

Educator B: “Unfulfilled expectations, differences over goals, misunderstandings; and differences over methods”.

Educator C: “Lack of recognition or rewards for good work, unclear or overly demanding job expectations”.

Educator D: “Poor leading or management between teachers and management, disagreement among teachers”.

Educator E: “Bad communication, gossiping among teachers”.

Educator F: “Cliques that are often formed by teachers, more especially female teachers cause conflict”.

Educator G: “The unequal treatment of teachers, unfair promotions of some teachers, gossips, poor communication”.

Educator H: “In-equality of treatment from the management or SGB”.

Educator I: “When teachers are given more classes”.

Educator J: “Facilities”.

Educator K: "Misuse of power by authority, favouritism and nepotism, lack of transparency".

Educator L: "Gossips and poor communication from the SMT".

According to the responses of the teachers, bad communication, unequal or unfair treatment of teachers by management, and gossip seemed to be the main causes of conflict among teachers at schools surveyed. Other causes of conflict included disagreements among colleagues and unclear reward system.

The implication of the responses is that the SMT may have a role to play in promoting conflict, through unequal treatment of teachers and inadequate or poor management of work allocation, promotions and communication.

***Question 2: What can teachers do to avoid conflict?***

Educator A: "Communicate correctly with colleagues".

Educator B: "Cool down before one expresses an opinion, keep your feelings under control".

Educator C: "Teachers must involve SMT in school matters. SMT must do their work as honest as possible".

Educator D: "Teachers to learn self-discipline".

Educator E: "Stop gossip, control temperament".

Educator F: "Teachers must at all times practice team building".

Educator G: "Equal treatment for the same mistakes by SMT".

Educator H: “Teachers to focus on positive things only and ignore the gossips among themselves, work as a team achieve the goals, be there for one another”.

Educator I: “They must work according to the programme given and drafted by them, follow instruction given by authorities”.

Educator J: “Good communication”.

Educator K: “Improve relationships between colleagues”

Educator L: “Always be prepared for the work and come with positive thinking”.

The responses indicate a need to improve communication, to improve self and to involve and cooperate with the SMT as ways of avoiding conflict. The implication is that teachers of the surveyed schools recognised their role in addressing conflict among in the school.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

Chapter four dealt with analysis of data from questionnaires completed by the deputy principals and the teachers. There was a relationship between the comments of deputy principals and those of the teachers. The open-ended questions allowed both the deputy principals and the teachers to add issues which may not have been covered in the questionnaire. The issues included helped with a complete picture of the conflict situation in the surveyed schools.

Chapter five deal with the conclusion, findings and recommendation

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with findings of this study. This chapter will present a literature study, problem and aim, as well as the method of research and results. Conclusion is also drawn and recommendations are made.

#### 5.2 SUMMARISED FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

##### 5.2.1 Findings from literature study

From the literature study, the following emerged:

- there are different types of conflict, including interpersonal, intrapersonal and intergroup conflict (cf.2.2.4);
- conflict exists in the schools and its causes include poor communication, lack of resources and irregular work distribution (cf.2.2.6);
- conflict could manifest itself through stress, absenteeism and poor performance (cf. 2.2.2.3);
- There are different strategies for handling conflict, including, compromise, negotiation and arbitration (cf.2.4).

##### 5.2.2 Findings from empirical study

From the empirical study the following were depicted:

#### 5.2.2.1 Findings from empirical study involving deputy principals

- All the schools surveyed had positions for two deputy principal (cf. 4.2.2).
- The majority of schools surveyed were fairly big, with learners ranging between 1 000 and 1 200; and teachers ranging between 25 and 45 (cf. 4.7).
- The majority of schools surveyed had shortages of resources and facilities (cf. 4.17).
- The majority of deputy principals are well-qualified; with many having higher qualifications than required for their positions (cf. 4.4).
- Causes of conflict included, bad communication, shortage of resources, high teaching load, gossiping, high rates of absenteeism and poor performance among teachers (cf.4.2.3).
- The majority of deputy principals preferred bringing conflicting parties together in addressing conflict. This implied the use of strategies such as compromise; accommodating, negotiations, collaborating and arbitration by deputy principals (cf. 4.30).

#### 5.2.2.2 Findings from empirical study as viewed by teachers

- Causes of conflict included, large numbers of learners in the classrooms, clash over the use of venues, more subjects and periods (cf. 4.43, 4.45, 4.46 and 4.50).
- Causes of conflict included, bad communication, gossiping and result to absenteeism (cf. 4.47; 4.57).
- In most schools, conflict included mentoring and monitoring of teachers, evaluating of teachers and supervising ground duties (cf. 4.53, 4.54 and 4.55).

- In the majority of schools surveyed causes of conflict included: poor results and teachers' performance (cf. 4.56).

### **5.2.3 Manifestation of conflict**

Findings of manifestation of conflict as recommended from deputy principals.

Manifestations of conflict included: stress, high rate of absenteeism of education, bad handling of learners, refusal to carry out instructions, failure to participate in activities and poor teacher performance (cf. 4.2.4).

Findings of manifestation of conflict as recommended from teachers.

Manifestation of conflict included :teachers experienced high levels of stress, change in personality, preferred to be alone and teachers being often sick (cf.4.3.4).

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations should be taken into consideration in order to reduce conflict among the teachers.

### **5.3.1 Reduce workloads, subjects and periods**

The allocation of subjects, duties and responsibilities should be in such a way that the workload is manageable for the individual teacher. This could imply the employment of more teachers.

### **5.3.2 Provide conflict management skills**

The school managers, their deputies and teachers should be provided with the basic skills in conflict management.

### **5.3.3 Improve communication**

Communication between teachers should be improved. This could be done by holding regular staff, departmental and phase meetings; and by encouraging one-to-one contact and communication among colleagues.

### **5.3.4 Control the level of stress among teachers**

The Department of Education and School Management Team may implement the following programs to deal with educator stress:

- Redesign jobs to be more in line with teachers' capabilities and interests;
- Eliminate noxious elements of physical and mental working condition to lessen stress level.

## **5.4 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE EMPIRICAL PROCESS**

The culture of research is non-existent among township teachers. It was, therefore, difficult for them to readily volunteer to participate since they were concerned that their responses may be made public, and they may be targeted if those responses were not in line with what management expected. The researcher had to explain the idea of confidentiality especially when the researcher about conflict among teachers.

Once teachers agreed to participate, it became difficult for them to make time to complete the questionnaires. These teachers needed a few reminders to do this.

## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The handling of conflict had not been part of teacher training. How this could be incorporated in the teacher training programmed requires investigation.

## **5.6 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

- The study dealt with a very small number of teachers and deputy principals.
- The study could also not determine the role of the Principal in conflict management.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

The study indicated that conflict is a serious problem among teachers of the schools surveyed. The causes of conflict were found to be related to resources, facilities, workload and absenteeism. Most of the causes were found to result from factors beyond the control of teachers. Therefore, the school management team and the education department have an important role to play in addressing conflict in school. Specifically, the provision of adequate resources and facilities could dramatically reduce conflict among teachers in the surveyed schools.

In chapter six the model for conflict management will be proposed.



## CHAPTER SIX

### PROGRAMME AND MODELS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

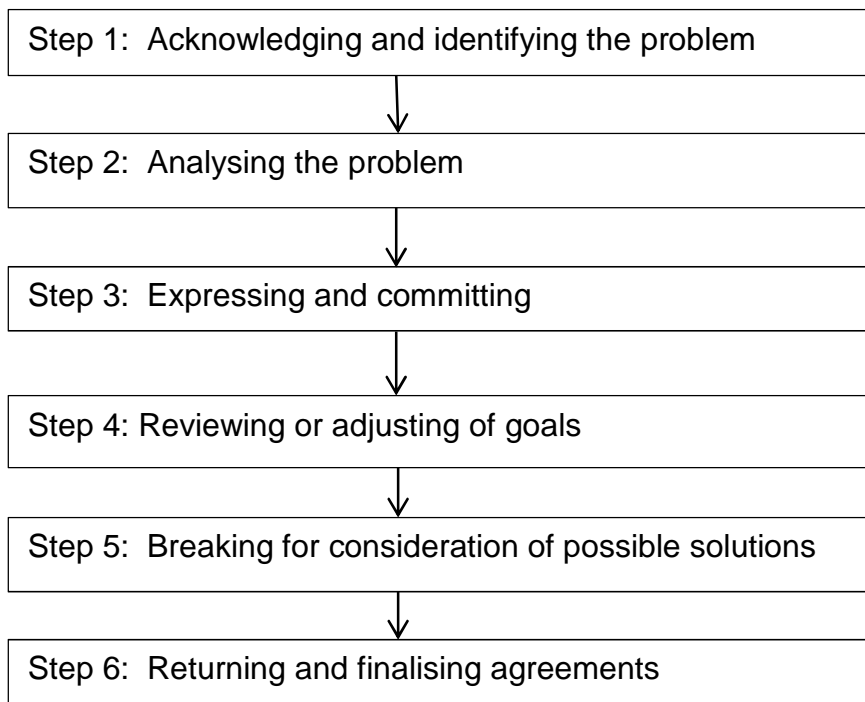
Conflict resolution involves facilitating the peaceful ending of some social conflict. Conflict resolution may be a process which occurs over a period of time, and over a number of steps.

In this chapter a model for handling conflict in the township schools is proposed.

#### 6.2 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MODEL

Conflict could be handled step-by-step. The following steps are recommended:

- Step 1: Acknowledging and identifying the problem**
- Step 2: Analysing the problem**
- Step 3: Expressing and committing**
- Step 4: Reviewing or adjusting of goals**
- Step 5: Breaking for consideration of possible solutions**
- Step 6: Returning and finalising agreements**



### **6.2.1 Step 1: Acknowledging and identifying the problem**

When conflict emerges, conflicting parties should be called to a meeting. A senior person needs to chair such a meeting. This could be the deputy principal, Head of Department or school principal. The parties involved in conflict should acknowledge that a problem exists, and that the problem needs to be identified. In this process the principle of 'Positive intentions' should dominate. 'Positive intentions' proceeds from the assumption that each party means well for the other party (Wisinski, 1993). Other positive intentions can be identified and announced.

Once the existence of a problem has been acknowledged, the next step is to identify and define the problem. The objective of the deputy principal is to obtain as much information about the problem as possible. Here each party could be allowed to present its side of the story. The purpose is to identify the problem. The basic information gathered at this step should respond to the following questions:

- Who is involved?
- What happened?

When did it happen?

Where did it happen?

What were the reasons?

What is the conflict?

How was it realised?

What were the initial responses of each party?

What were the problems with these responses?

At this stage a blame-game should be avoided at all cost. A good way to define the problem is for the deputy principal to write down a concise statement which summarises the problem. The problem may even be broken down into small incidents. Both parties should be allowed to study the statement and agree on the contents thereof.

### **6.2.2 Step 2: Analysing the problem.**

Once the problem has been identified, and agreed upon, then it has to be analysed. The deputy principal has to seriously consider all the facts gathered in the first step, and then analyse the problem. This analysis could involve breaking the problem into smaller pieces and determining roles and responsibilities of the warring parties. The analysis of the problem may include information such as:

What is the main cause of the conflict?

What may have led to the conflict?

Was the conflict avoidable?

### **6.2.3 Step 3: Expressing and committing**

In this case conflicting parties need to clearly indicate what did they do or say to cause and to aggravate the problem. This honesty could help each party to recognise actions that caused or aggravated the situation, with the hope of

resolving the conflict and avoiding such actions in future. The information to be gathered may respond to questions such as:

What is the role of each party in this conflict?

What did each party do?

What is the impact of that action on the conflict?

What is the impact of that action on another party?

What control do conflicting parties have over these causes?

In this stage parties express themselves on the problem and on the conflict at hand. Parties also confirm their willingness to resolve the conflict, affirm the positive intentions mentioned earlier, and I also express their worries and problems.

#### **6.2.4 Step 4: Reviewing or adjusting of goals**

Once the differences are known, there is the need for the conflicting parties to find each other, and work towards common goals and approaches. This could imply moving away from original goals or approaches to compromised goals or approaches. The deputy principal may use a brainstorming process to develop alternatives. In an environment of trust (usually facilitated by the neutral third party), conflicting parties can work together to develop multiple alternatives. Identification of similar issues has to be managed in resolving conflict. This gives the disputants an acknowledgement that a number of solutions exist, and this may expand their concept of possible alternatives.

Possible questions can be:

Can your goals be adjusted?

Can your strategies be adjusted?

To what extent can you accommodate the other party?

The most common conflict management strategies relevant at this stage are accommodating, collaborating and compromising. These strategies involve facing the conflict, bringing all pertinent issues and concerns out into the

open, and reaching a solution that integrates the different points of view. Strategies such as avoiding and competition should be avoided at this stage since they reflect low concern for self and others, they promote a sense of 'us and them', and they may lead to the escalation of conflict.

At this stage the conflicting parties are in a position to indicate what they actually want, and how they think it can be achieved. This stage could involve a lot of horse-trading and bargaining, whereby each party tries to maximise its gains – but with the cooperation and understanding of others. Possible questions can include the following:

What are the possible goals?

What are the possible goals?

What role can each group/individual play in the achievement of the goals?

At this stage the conflicting teachers are in a position to indicate what they actually want, and how they think it can be achieved. This stage could involve a lot of bargaining, whereby each group tries to maximise its gains with the cooperation and understanding of the other group.

This stage requires firmness on the part of the deputy principal. The deputy principal should be able to clarify statements and resolutions, or to modify statements and resolutions. This stage is crucial since any insensitive phrasing of statements could jeopardise chances of reaching consensus.

#### **6.2.5 Step 5: Breaking for consideration of possible solutions**

Once the need to move away from original goals or approaches arises, there is also a need to adjourn. The main reason for the adjournment is to allow parties to consider options available to them, and to consult with supporters or sympathisers. The adjournment could be a few hours or one day. Any time longer could be detrimental to the solution. The adjournment could also allow

the deputy principal to consult policies or to brief the school principal on developments and possible direction of events.

#### **6.2.6 Step 6: Returning and finalising agreements**

The parties return to negotiations after the specified period. The discussions are finalised. There could be a need to adjust discussions and final agreements. The agreements reached by both conflicting parties and the deputy principal are formalised, and the way forward with regard to implementation is discussed and formalised. Of importance is that no group should feel victorious, but agreements should be viewed as a result of understanding and compromise.

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

Dealing with conflict in the workplace may be the most important function that deputy principals must learn to handle. As a result, effective conflict management is the staple of good leadership. Because conflict management is quickly becoming the most critical and time-consuming aspect of management, deputy principals must be prepared. With the right understanding and the right decisions, deputy principals are equipped to channel all conflict in the workplace into constructive conflict. Addressing conflict in the workplace is no longer a task to be avoided. Instead, deputy principals can embrace conflict as the mark of a productive workplace environment.

The model may be appropriate in handling conflict among teachers in the surveyed township schools. Conflict resolution programs encourage the development of useful skills for resolving conflict peacefully that can be applied across the lifespan. When implemented comprehensively, such programs promote a positive school climate. There are a variety of approaches from which to choose. The most effective program is a comprehensive one that strives to train and support all members of the school

community. A conflict resolution program is not an instant solution – it is a long-term commitment requiring patience, training, and support at all levels of the school, and on-going evaluation to tailor the program to the needs of the school.

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## ANNEXURE A

451 Taka Street  
Monyakeng  
**WESSELSBRON**  
9480

28 October 2011

The Director : Quality Assurance  
Free State Department of Education  
Private Bag X20565  
**BLOEMFONTEIN**  
9300

Dear Sir/Madam

### **RE : PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS**

I kindly request for permission to conduct research at some township schools in your education district. The district include : Lejweleputswa.

My personal information is as follows:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Title and name  | : Mrs M F Mphatsoe  |
| Employer        | : Department of Education   |
| Degree          | : PhD   |
| Promoter        | : Dr M J Motseke  |
| Title of thesis | : The role of deputy principals in managing<br>conflict among secondary school<br>teachers in the Lejweleputswa District,<br>Free State Province. |

The research concerns among others:

- Rationale

The study operates under social identity theories. Social identity theories stress the importance of self-esteem and positive identity particularly with regard to relations between in-groups (allies) (Cunningham, 2006:4). Social theory may be regarded as something rational, constructive and socially functional or something irrational, pathological and socially dysfunctional. This has important consequences, particularly for conflict resolution.

- Population

The population for this study consists of deputy principals and teachers in Monyakeng, Nyakallong and Kutlwanong, there will be 18 participants.

- Research instruments

Questionnaires will be administered and interviews conducted. Before questionnaires are distributed and interviews conducted, permission to undertake the study will be sought from school principals. There will be no encroachment on school activities.

Please understand that the study involves no invasion of individual rights, or privacy, nor will it apply any procedures which may be found ethically objectionable. No personal information regarding those who participate in the research, will be made known.

Your attention to this matter is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

**MRS M F MPATSOE  
PhD STUDENT  
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE  
WELKOM CAMPUS**

**ANNEXURE B**  
**PERMISSION LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

## ANNEXURE C

451 Taka Street  
**MONYAKENG**  
9680

The Principal

.....

Dear Sir/Madam

### **RE : PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH STUDY IN YOUR SCHOOL**

I am a Doctoral Research student enrolled at Central University of Technology, Free State. I am involved in a research project which is attempting to research: "The role of Deputy Principals in managing conflict among secondary school teachers in the Lejweleputswa District in the Free State Province. The targeted population for the study is secondary school Deputy Principals and teachers from Nyakallong, Monyakeng and Kutlwanong townships in the Free State Province. The project is likely to provide interesting and useful information which could be of a supportive nature to both Deputy Principals and teachers regarding managing conflict.

I have received permission to undertake the study from Lejweleputswa Department of Education. Your school has been selected to participate in this study. I will be grateful if you could be of assistance with the research by giving the enclosed questionnaires to Deputy Principals and teachers.

Completion of questionnaires should be a take-home seven days exercise. I will be grateful if you could encourage the respondents not to leave any questionnaire items unanswered. The name of your school, Deputy Principals and teachers involved will remain completely anonymous. I will greatly appreciate it if you could then return the completed questionnaires to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by 28 January 2010.

Obviously, the success of the research will largely be dependent on the number of questionnaires that are returned. Your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

**MRS M F MPHATSOE**

**ANNEXURE D**

451 Taka Street  
**MONYAKENG**  
9680

.....  
.....

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE :REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY**

I am a PhD student enrolled at Central University of Technology, Free State. I am involved in a research project which is attempting to research: "The role of Deputy Principals in managing conflict among secondary school teachers in the Lejweleputswa District in the Free State Province.

I have received permission to conduct the research project from the Free State Department of Education. You have been selected to participate in this study. I will be grateful if you could be of assistance with the research by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Completion of questionnaires should be a take-home seven days exercise. I will be grateful if you could not leave any questionnaire items unanswered. The name of your school and your identity will remain completely anonymous. I

Obviously, the success of the research will largely be dependent on the number of questionnaires that are returned. Your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

**MRS M F MPHATSOE**



**ANNEXURE E**

**CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY □ WELKOM CAMPUS**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**QUESTIONNAIRE – DEPUTY PRINCIPALS**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS**

In this questionnaire you are presented with questions.

Please note that there are **no right or wrong responses** to the items or questions in this questionnaire.

Complete the questionnaire as **honestly as may be possible** (the first response that generally comes to mind is often the most valid response to a given question or item).

Also note that through your responses you will be making a valuable contribution to education.

Respondents' identities will be strictly confidential.

\*\*\*\*\*

## SECTION A

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross (X) on the relevant number.

### Biographic information/data

#### 1 GENDER

|   |   |
|---|---|
| M | 1 |
| F | 2 |

#### 2 AGE

| AGE     |   |
|---------|---|
| 25 – 30 | 1 |
| 31 – 35 | 2 |
| 36 – 40 | 3 |
| 41 – 45 | 4 |
| 46 – 50 | 5 |
| 51 +    | 6 |

#### 3 MARITAL STATUS

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Married       | 1 |
| Never married | 2 |
| Divorced      | 3 |
| Widowed       | 4 |

#### 4 QUALIFICATIONS

| QUALIFICATION                                 |   |
|---|---|
| 2 Year qualification (e.g. PTC)               | 1 |
| 3 Year qualification (e.g. SED/PTD)           | 2 |
| 4 Year qualification (e.g. BAED)              | 3 |
| Post graduate teaching degree (e.g.PSCT, HDE) | 4 |
| Bachelors degree (e.g.BA)                     | 5 |
| Honouris degree (e.g.BEDHons, BA Hons)        | 6 |
| Masters degree (e.g. MEd)                     | 7 |
| Other qualifications.                         | 8 |

**5 TOTAL YEARS EXPERIENCE AS DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

| <b>YEARS</b> |   |
|--------------|---|
| 0 – 2        | 1 |
| 3 – 4        | 2 |
| 5 – 6        | 3 |
| 7 – 8        | 4 |
| 9 – 10       | 5 |
| 11 +         | 6 |

**SECTION B –DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Indicate data applicable to your school by crossing the appropriate number.

**1 NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>NUMBER</b> |   |
|---------------|---|
| 0 – 10        | 1 |
| 11 – 20       | 2 |
| 21 – 30       | 3 |
| 31 – 40       | 4 |
| 41 – 50       | 5 |
| 51 +          | 6 |

**2 NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS IN YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>CLASSES</b> |   |
|----------------|---|
| 0 – 5          | 1 |
| 6 – 10         | 2 |
| 11 – 15        | 3 |
| 16 – 20        | 4 |
| 21 – 25        | 5 |
| 26 - 30        | 6 |
| 31 – 35        | 7 |
| 36 – 40        | 8 |
| 41             | 9 |

**3 AVERAGE NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOMS AT YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>NUMBER OF LEARNERS</b> |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 20 – 25                   | 1 |
| 26 – 30                   | 2 |
| 31 – 35                   | 3 |
| 36 – 40                   | 4 |
| 41 – 45                   | 5 |
| 46 +                      | 6 |

**4 NUMBER OF LABORATORIES AT YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>LABORATORIES</b> |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 00                  | 1 |
| 01                  | 2 |
| 02                  | 3 |
| 03                  | 4 |

**SECTION C – CAUSES OF CONFLICT**

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross (x) in the appropriate block.

| <b>STATEMENT</b>  | <b>Never<br/>1</b> | <b>Sometimes<br/>2</b> | <b>Often<br/>3</b> | <b>Always<br/>4</b> |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Bad communication among teachers causes conflict.   |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 2 Teachers clash over resources such as books, photocopier machines and staples.                              |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 3 Teachers clash over the use of venues such as the laboratory and the library.                               |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 4 Some teachers complain about having more subjects and more periods than others.                             |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 5 Some teachers gossip about their colleagues.  |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 6 Teachers hate to keep order in classes of absent colleagues.  |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 7 Monitoring and mentoring newly appointed teachers by experienced teachers cause conflict.                   |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 8 The sharing of resources due to shortages also leads to conflict among teachers.                            |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 9 Disorder and high noise levels due to some teachers' poor control of their classes may also causes conflict |                    |                        |                    |                     |
| 10 Teachers who performance poorly are indifferent towards their hardworking colleagues.                      |                    |                        |                    |                     |

**SECTION D – MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT (as viewed by the deputy principal)**

Answer the following questions by choosing one of the options provided.

| STATEMENT   | Never<br>1 | Sometimes<br>2 | Often<br>3 | Always<br>4 |
|---|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 Teachers experience stress when conflict exists.  |            |                |            |             |
| 2 Teachers' performance (e.g. teaching and assessment activities) is negatively affected when they experience conflict.   |            |                |            |             |
| 3 Teachers' rate of absenteeism increases when conflict exists.   |            |                |            |             |
| 4 Teachers handle learners angrily or emotionally when conflict among them exists.  |            |                |            |             |
| 5 When conflicts exists, teachers refuse to carry out instructions, or are not effective when carrying out instructions from authorities                          |            |                |            |             |
| 6 Teachers are always angry with learners when they experience conflict.  |            |                |            |             |
| 7 The teachers' personality is negatively affected when conflict exists: they become unpredictable, they loose a sense of humour and they display poor judgement. |            |                |            |             |
| 8 Teachers are unable to participate in extra-mural activities when they are involved in conflict.  |            |                |            |             |
| 9 Teachers prefer to be alone when there is conflict among them.  |            |                |            |             |
| 10 Teachers are often sick with headaches, back pains and stiff muscles when there is conflict among them.  |            |                |            |             |

### SECTION E – CONFLICT HANDLING (as viewed by the deputy principal)

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross (x) in the appropriate block.

| STATEMENT  | Never<br>1 | Sometimes<br>2 | Often<br>3 | Always<br>4 |
|--|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 In resolving conflict, I facilitate discussions until the warring parties see a common goal and work towards achieving it together.  |            |                |            |             |
| 2 I ignore conflict among teachers, and thus avoid bringing warring parties together (with the hope that the warring parties will resolve it themselves elsewhere)                             |            |                |            |             |
| 3 I allow a win-lose situation, since I believe that the party with a stronger viewpoint/approach will prevail over the one with a weaker and poorly structured viewpoint/approach.            |            |                |            |             |
| 4 I encourage the warring parties to reach a compromise, whereby neither party wins, but both choose a path that may achieve something (regardless how little the achievement can be).         |            |                |            |             |
| 5 I encourage warring parties not to sacrifice the relationships among colleagues, rather to sacrifice their own demands (irrespective of how beneficial those demands can be for the school). |            |                |            |             |
| 6 I always call an outside person, such as an SMDG or Learning Facilitator to resolve educator conflict.   |            |                |            |             |

### SECTION F

Answer the following questions in your own words

1 What are the common causes of conflict in your school?

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

2 What do you do as a deputy principal to resolve conflict at your school?

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

3 What can deputy principals do to eradicate conflict among teachers?

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

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE – TEACHERS

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

In this questionnaire you are presented with questions.

Please note that there are **no right or wrong responses** to the items or questions in this questionnaire.

Complete the questionnaire as **honestly as may be possible** (the first response that generally comes to mind is often the most valid response to a given question or item).

Also note that through your responses you will be making a valuable contribution to education.

Respondents' identities will be strictly confidential.



SECTION A – BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION/DATA

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross (X) on the relevant number.

**1 GENDER**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| M | 1 |
| F | 2 |

**2 AGE**

| <b>AGE</b> |   |
|------------|---|
| 25 – 30    | 1 |
| 31 – 35    | 2 |
| 36 – 40    | 3 |
| 41 – 45    | 4 |
| 46 – 50    | 5 |
| 51 +       | 6 |

**3 MARITAL STATUS**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Married       | 1 |
| Never married | 2 |
| Divorced      | 3 |
| Widowed       | 4 |

**4 QUALIFICATIONS**

| <b>QUALIFICATION</b>                          |   |
|---|---|
| 2 Year qualification (e.g. PTC)               | 1 |
| 3 Year qualification (e.g. SED/PTD)           | 2 |
| 4 Year qualification (e.g. BAED)              | 3 |
| Post graduate teaching degree (e.g.PSCT, HDE) | 4 |
| Bachelors degree (e.g.BA)                     | 5 |
| Honouris degree (e.g.BEDHons, BA Hons)        | 6 |
| Masters degree (e.g. MEd)                     | 7 |
| Other qualifications.                         | 8 |

**5 TOTAL YEARS EXPERIENCE AS AN EDUCATOR**



| <b>YEARS</b> |   |
|--------------|---|
| 0 – 2        | 1 |
| 3 – 4        | 2 |
| 5 – 6        | 3 |
| 7 – 8        | 4 |
| 9 – 10       | 5 |
| 11 +         | 6 |

## **SECTION B – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Indicate data applicable to you for your school by crossing appropriate number

### **1 NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>NUMBER</b> |   |
|---------------|---|
| 0 – 10        | 1 |
| 11 – 20       | 2 |
| 21 – 30       | 3 |
| 31 – 40       | 4 |
| 41 – 50       | 5 |
| 51 +          | 6 |

### **2 NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS IN YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>CLASSES</b> |   |
|----------------|---|
| 0 – 5          | 1 |
| 6 – 10         | 2 |
| 11 – 15        | 3 |
| 16 – 20        | 4 |
| 21 – 25        | 5 |
| 26 - 30        | 6 |
| 31 – 35        | 7 |
| 36 – 40        | 8 |
| 41 +           | 9 |

### **3 AVERAGE NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOMS AT YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>NUMBER OF LEARNERS</b> |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 20 – 25                   | 1 |
| 26 – 30                   | 2 |
| 31 – 35                   | 3 |
| 36 – 40                   | 4 |
| 41 – 45                   | 5 |
| 46 +                      | 6 |

**4 NUMBER OF LABORATORIES AT YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>LABORATORIES</b> |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 00                  | 1 |
| 01                  | 2 |
| 02                  | 3 |
| 03                  | 4 |

**5 NUMBER OF LIBRARIES AT YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>LIBRARIES</b> |   |
|------------------|---|
| 00               | 1 |
| 01               | 2 |
| 02               | 3 |
| 03               | 4 |

**4 NUMBER OF STAFF ROOMS AT YOUR SCHOOL**

| <b>STAFF ROOMS</b> |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 00                 | 1 |
| 01                 | 2 |
| 02                 | 3 |
| 03                 | 4 |
| 04                 | 5 |
| 05                 | 6 |
| 06                 | 7 |
| 07+                | 8 |

**SECTION C – CAUSES OF CONFLICT (as viewed by teachers)**

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross (x) in the appropriate block.

| STATEMENT   | Never<br>1 | Sometimes<br>2 | Often<br>3 | Always<br>4 |
|---|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 Bad communication among colleagues causes conflict.   |            |                |            |             |
| 2 My colleagues and I clash over resources such as books, photocopy machine, staples.   |            |                |            |             |
| 3 My colleagues and I clash over the use of venues e.g. laboratory and library.   |            |                |            |             |
| 4 I have more subjects and more periods than my colleagues  |            |                |            |             |
| 5 Some teachers gossip about their colleagues.  |            |                |            |             |
| 6 Keeping order in classes of absent teachers creates conflict between the absent colleague and I.  |            |                |            |             |
| 7 Mentoring and monitoring newly appointed teachers' cause conflict since the a newly appointed teachers' do not easily take advice from experienced teachers.            |            |                |            |             |
| 8 The evaluation of an educator by a fellow educator causes conflict since the one educator may not accept a lower score allocated by another educator.                   |            |                |            |             |
| 9 Supervising ground duties such as cleaning of toilets and stoops causes conflict if the same teachers are given these duties while others never get to do these duties. |            |                |            |             |
| 10 Pass rates may cause conflict if other teachers consistently produce poor results.   |            |                |            |             |

#### SECTION D – MANIFESTATIONS OF CONFLICT (as viewed by teachers)

Answer the following questions by choosing one of the options provided.

| STATEMENT   | Never<br>1 | Sometimes<br>2 | Often<br>3 | Always<br>4 |
|---|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 Teachers experience stress when conflict exists.  |            |                |            |             |
| 2 Teachers' performance (e.g. teaching and assessment activities) is negatively affected when they experience conflict.   |            |                |            |             |
| 3 Teachers' rate of absenteeism increases when conflict exists.   |            |                |            |             |
| 4 Teachers handle learners angrily or emotionally when conflict among them exists.  |            |                |            |             |
| 5 When conflicts exists, teachers refuse to carry out instructions, or are not effective when carrying out instructions from authorities                          |            |                |            |             |
| 6 Teachers are always angry with learners when they experience conflict.  |            |                |            |             |
| 7 The teachers' personality is negatively affected when conflict exists: they become unpredictable, they loose a sense of humour and they display poor judgement. |            |                |            |             |
| 8 Teachers are unable to participate in extra-mural activities when they are involved in conflict.  |            |                |            |             |
| 9 Teachers prefer to be alone when there is conflict among them.  |            |                |            |             |
| 10 Teachers are often sick with headaches, back pains and stiff muscles when there is conflict among them.  |            |                |            |             |

#### SECTION E – CONFLICT HANDLING (as viewed by teachers)

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross (x) in the appropriate block.

| STATEMENT  | Never<br>1 | Sometimes<br>2 | Often<br>3 | Always<br>4 |
|--|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 In resolving conflict, the deputy principal facilitates discussions until the warring parties see a common goal and work towards achieving it together.  |            |                |            |             |
| 2 The deputy principal ignores conflict among teachers, and thus avoid bringing warring parties together (with the hope that the warring parties will resolve it themselves elsewhere)                             |            |                |            |             |
| 3 The deputy principal allows a win-lose situation, since he/she believes that the party with a stronger viewpoint/approach will prevail over the one with a weaker and poorly structured viewpoint/approach.      |            |                |            |             |
| 4 The deputy principal encourages the warring parties to reach a compromise, whereby neither party wins, but both choose a path that may achieve something (regardless how little the achievement may be).         |            |                |            |             |
| 5 The deputy principal encourages warring parties not to sacrifice the relationships among teachers, rather to sacrifice their own demands (irrespective of how beneficial those demands could be for the school). |            |                |            |             |
| 6 The deputy principal always calls an outside person, such as an SMDG or Learning Facilitator to resolve educator conflict at school.   |            |                |            |             |

## SECTION F

Answer the following questions in your own words

1 What are the common causes of conflict among teachers at school?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2 What can teachers do to avoid conflict at school?

.....

.....

.....

.....