

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN THE NATAL REGION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND TRAINING.**

BY

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B.Paed, B.Ed, SSTD (UZ)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the department of

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

SUPERVISOR : PROFESSOR A J THEMBELA

DATE SUBMITTED : SEPTEMBER 1994

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to the following people and institutions:

Prof. A.J. Thembela, the supervisor of this dissertation for his constant guidance and positive attitude in developing this study.

The Department of Education and Training for granting me permission to conduct research in schools.

The Natal Chief Regional Director, Area Managers and Circuit Inspectors for their kind co-operation.

The Principals of schools for filling in the questionnaires and granting me interviews for the purposes of research.

Library staff at the Universities of Zululand and Natal for their kind assistance in locating valuable sources.

My friend and colleague Mr S K Ndlovu for his valuable contributions in the development of this study.

Ms S Z Champion for typing this dissertation.

(ii)

My brothers Mandla, Jabulani, Mxolisi, Mhleli and Ricky and sisters Thandi, S'thabisile and Sazise for their constant encouragement.

All my friends and colleagues at the University of Zululand for their unfailing moral support.

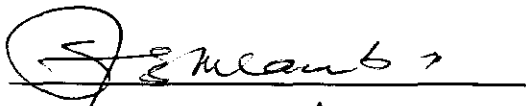
Last, but not least unto Him, without Whom I would have neither started nor finished this study.

DEDICATION

This work is proudly dedicated to my father Mboneni kaMabhedla and mother Duduzile umaNkabinde from whom I learned that a man may be destroyed but will never be defeated. It is this wisdom that has been a constant source of inspiration.

DECLARATION

I, Siphiwengesihle Thamsanqa Eustace Mlambo, declare that this dissertation is my work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.



S T E MLAMBO

KwaDlangezwa

September 1994

SUMMARY

In this dissertation conflict is accepted to refer to divergent perceptions about a situation or issue. These perceptions which are inevitable have both; (i) the potential of promoting disorderliness, ineffectiveness and inefficiency; and (ii) the potential for promoting order, effectiveness and efficiency. Conflict may have costs or benefits.

The importance of conflict management as a management function should be appreciated against the background of what conflict is capable of contributing for and/or against the school. *Conflict management in this dissertation therefore means a process of resolving excessive conflict without discouraging a reasonable sharing of different ideas for the best result. It refers to controlling the amount of conflict required for the school to perform in an orderly manner, efficiently and effectively.*

It is against this background that the researcher embarked upon this study. He had observed that in secondary schools conflict seem to be always unproductive, for example boycott of classes, vandalism, violence on school premises, etc. These instances of conflict result in poor performance, high drop-out rate, withdrawal of parents from school matters, demotivation and non effective functioning of the school.

The researcher purported to describe the secondary school principal's perception of conflict as it influences their perception of conflict management. He assumed that these principals perceived conflict negatively and they consequently perceived conflict management as conflict resolution.

Research revealed that 57% of the principals actually perceived conflict negatively, that is, as a bad element that brings about chaos in the school, and consequently 53% actually perceived conflict management as conflict resolution. The researcher conceded that the perception of conflict does not always influence the perception of conflict management, for example the number of principals that perceived conflict management as conflict resolution dropped by 4% from those that perceived conflict negatively. Factors like qualification, school enrolment and actual experiences of conflict were also found to be influential in the perception of conflict and its management.

The researcher concluded that secondary school principals in the Natal Region perceived conflict negatively and as a result they perceive conflict management as conflict resolution. He then identified a need for further education and training of school principals in the aspect of conflict management. Principals need to appreciate that conflict is not only inevitable but in fact necessary for ensuring the development of the school and improving the quality of its service. If conflict is less than moderate it should be stimulated. Excessive conflict is dangerous for the school. It promotes disorder which results in inefficiency and ineffectiveness. If it is more than moderate it should be resolved.

OPSOMMING

In hierdie verhandeling word aanvaar dat konflik na uiteenlopende standpunte rakende 'n situasie of twispunt verwys. Beide standpunte het onvermydelik; (i) die potensiaal om wanorde, ondoeltreffendheid en onbekwaamheid te bevorder; en (ii) die potensiaal om orde, doeltreffendheid en bekwaamheid te bevorder. Konflik kan dus voordele of nadele impliseer.

Die belangrikheid/waarde van konflikbestuur as 'n bestuursfunksie moet dus geraam word teen die agtergrond van watter moontlikhede die konflik vir die skool inhou t.o.v. voordele of nadele. Konflikbestuur, in hierdie verhandeling, beteken dus dat dit die proses is waarvolgens buitensporige konflik bygelê kan word, sonder om die waarde van uiteenlopende standpunte gering te skat. Dit verwys ook na kontrole van die hoeveelheid konflik wat benodig word vir die skool om ordelik, doeltreffend en effektief te funksioneer.

Met navorsing is daar waargeneem dat konflik 'n sekondêre skole altyd onproduktief skyn te wees, byvoorbeeld klasboikot, vandalisme en geweld op skoolgronde. Hierdie konflik het tot gevolg swak prestasie, 'n hoë skoolverlatingstempo, afname van ouerbelangstelling en samewerking en die ondoeltreffende funksionering van skole.

Daar word gepoog om prinsipale van sekondêre skole se siening van konflik, soos dit hulle persepsie van konflikbestuur raak, te beskryf. Daar is uitgegaan van die veronderstelling dat skoolhoofde konflik in 'n negatiewe lig sien en dat hulle konflikbestuur derhalwe as konflikoplossing aanvaar.

Navorsing het aan die lig gebring dat 57% van die skoolhoofde in werklikheid konflik negatief beskou, met ander woorde dat konflik 'n slegte toestand is wat chaos in skole veroorsaak. Gevolglik beskou 53% van die skoolhoofde konflikbestuur ook as konflikoplossing. Daar word deur die navorser toegegee dat die siening van konflik nie altyd die persepsie van konflikbestuur beïnvloed nie. Die aantal skoolhoofde wat konflikbestuur as konflikoplossing beskou, daal met 4% in vergelyking met die wat konflik as negatief ervaar. Verdere faktore wat die persepsie van konflik en die bestuur daarvan beïnvloed is kwalifikasies, skoolgetalle en werklike/persoonlike ervaring van konfliksituasies.

Daar word tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat hoofde van sekondêre skole in die Natal-streek konflik negatief waarneem en gevolglik word konflikbestuur as konflikoplossing beskou. Verder word 'n behoefte aan verdere opvoeding en opleiding t.o.v konflikbeheer by skoolhoofde geïdentifiseer. Skoolhoofde moet beseft dat konflik nie alleen onvermydelik is nie, maar noodsaaklik is vir die effektiewe funksionering van 'n skool. Gematigde konflik is nodig om die ontwikkeling van die skool en verbetering van gehalte diens te verseker.

Indien konflik minder as gematig is, moet dit gestimuleer word. Te veel / oormatige konflik is gevaarlik vir 'n skool. Dit bevorder wanorde wat lei tot ondoeltreffendheid en onbekwaamheid. Indien konflik meer as gematig is, moet dit opgelos word.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Schools, like most organisations, are structured in ways that promote orderliness, effectiveness and efficiency in attaining their objectives. The principal as an administrator and manager of the school is the chief executive officer. He is in contact with many functionaries of the school, namely the inspectorate, teachers, pupils, parents, agencies etc. These contacts may engender conflict which basically means differences of perceptions. If these conflicts are not effectively managed, they may promote disorderliness, ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the functioning of the school.

The school principal is also responsible for managing conflict that does not directly involve him but is within his school. A school as a social institution is not immune from conflict. Conflict exists wherever human interaction occurs. It is part of human existence. Conflict in school settings appears to be on the rise. There is increased vandalism, absenteeism, pupil and teacher militancy and in some instances physical confrontation. This is clear indication that in school settings the management of conflict situation is ineffective. According to Frey (1978:18) ineffective conflict management generates even more conflict and the problem grows. School principals therefore have a role to play in ensuring that a conducive climate to effective teaching and learning is created and maintained.

In this study conflict is discussed from school administration point of view. In one school there are many possibilities of conflict. There can be conflict that involves the principal with any of his superiors and sub-ordinates or members of the public. There can be conflict among teachers or pupils themselves. There can be conflict between a teacher and pupils or members of the public. This study discusses the perceptions of secondary school principals of conflict and its management.

This chapter specifically defines some concepts with a view to highlight the context in which they are used in the study. It further describes the problem of the investigation as the researcher perceives it. The motivation and the purpose of this study is also presented by this chapter. Research design and plan of study will also be described.

1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.2.1 Conflict

There are as many definitions of conflict as there are researchers in the field. Different emphasis is placed on different aspects of conflict by researchers. The present study, however, considers the following definitions:

Deutsch (1973:10) defines conflict as "the expression of incompatible actions".

According to Likert (1976:7) conflict refers to the "active striving for one's own preferred outcome, which if attained precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred outcomes, thereby producing hostility".

Du Brin (1984: 346) argues that conflict refers to the "opposition of persons or forces that give rise to some tension".

Finally Bisno (1988:13) defines conflict as "social interaction involving a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs and other preferences and desires".

In the light of the above definitions it is clear that conflict has to do with differences of perception which inevitably leads to a struggle between two or more persons.

It is also deduced that the "struggle" often leads to hostility or tension between the conflicting parties.

This study therefore accepts that conflict refers to the differences of opinion or perception which if not intelligently managed may lead to the frustration of the school objective.

1.2.2 Management

The researcher accepts the following definitions of management:

According to Britzius (1982:7) management refers to the "function of attaining objectives by establishing and maintaining a favourable environment in which subdivided tasks are performed by people organised on co-operative basis in order to secure cost effectiveness".

Paisey (1981:3) defines management as the "universal and unavoidable personal and organizational process of relating resources to objective".

From the two definitions, Britzuis (1982) and Paisey (1981) management therefore has to do with human resources and their relationship to the stated objective. To this end Newman, et al (1972:11) are of the opinion that managing is a social process because it consists of series of actions which are principally concerned with relations between people. For the purpose of the present study management will then refer to the social process at the attainment of specified school objectives by establishing and maintaining a favourable environment in which interrelated tasks can be performed. In other words management has to do with the creation and maintenance of a conducive atmosphere in which pupils are to learn and teacher to teach in order to realise the educational goal of the school.

1.2.3 Secondary School

In this study, a secondary school refers to an institution of primarily formal education which commences from standard six and proceeds to standard ten, and is controlled by the Department of Education and Training. Schools that do not have all the said standards also fall in this category. For example some secondary schools range from standard six to standard eight only.

1.2.4 Principal

In the context of this study, a principal is a teacher who has been appointed as a head of the school. He is ultimately responsible for all the teaching and administrative tasks in the school. He is regarded as both, the school administrator and the school manager. As an administrator, he is the chief executive officer as is employed by the education department, and according to Thembela and Walters (1984:49), he is expected to respect and accept all proper instructions from the inspectors of education who represent the education department.

Apart from the administrative role of executing decisions from the department of education, the principal also performs the managerial role. As a school manager, the principal, in consultation with teachers and parents makes decisions regarding the school policy. He directs and control the day-to-day activities in the school. His main responsibility is to ensure that good human relations prevail which is

essential for the effective functioning of the school.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The escalating rate of direct physical confrontation and the endemic boycott of classes in black secondary schools remain a serious problem for all the administrators of these schools. This state of affairs shows the extent to which the differences of perception in black secondary schools is obstructing the attainment of school objectives. The researcher accepts the contemporary view of conflict. According to Arnold and Feldman (1986:210) conflict has both the functional and dysfunctional aspects. Seen in this light, conflict does not necessarily have to produce negative results as it seems to be the case with the school in the area under investigation.

The secondary school principal has a role to play in preventing conflict from precluding the attainment of the school objectives, without causing the school to be stagnant. As a human resources manager, the principal is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that a conducive atmosphere to effective teaching and learning is created and maintained within his school. The researcher accepts that conflict in school life is inevitable, but also manageable. On the same point Cianfarano (1986:425) argues that whenever two or more people work together, conflict is bound to happen unless one is completely dominant and the other is totally submissive. Seen in this light, conflict then typifies the differences of perception within the school life.

As conflict is accepted as inevitable, it is therefore the principal's inescapable task to manage it. This task requires the principal's ability to appreciate and respect the different opinions of his subordinates without allowing them to prevent the attainment of the school objective. The principal's correct perception of the dynamics of conflict will assist him performing this important task.

1.4 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher has already accepted conflict as inevitable in any organisation where human beings interact in performance of interrelated tasks for the common purpose. A black secondary school is no exception. The principal should therefore possess certain skills to manage conflict intelligently. Intelligent conflict management refers to the ability of the principal to prevent conflict from obstructing the attainment of the school objectives without discouraging the differences of opinion among his subordinates. To do this successfully he will need to understand what conflict really is. His perception of conflict will inevitably influence his perception of conflict management.

If the principal perceives conflict as destructive he is likely to perceive it as a bad element that must be suppressed. This practice can mean suppression of new ideas hence innovation. The school as an organisation may then fail to improve the quality of its service. King (1981:14) argues that a frequently overlooked aspect of managing conflict is the ability to identify, seek out and utilize the functions of conflict and their outcomes.

This study therefore is an attempt to raise and answer important questions about conflict and its management. An understanding of what conflict exactly is, is necessary for its effective control. The principal should clearly understand that conflict by nature is very dynamic. Perhaps more interesting questions could be how and when can conflict become functional? What are the effects of the principal's perception of conflict on the selection of one or a combination of strategies for managing conflict.

Which is the best stage for effective control? Conflict that has fully developed is often very difficult to control. At this stage school property may be destroyed. Teaching and learning may become impossible as classes may be boycotted. These and other questions are very important in addressing conflict in schools. The principal's choice of one or a combination of techniques to manage conflict is to a large extent determined by his understanding of the nature and possible result of conflict.

The significance of this study should be viewed against the need for preventing conflict from obstructing the educational course of the school. The correct perception of the nature and sources of conflict minimises the possibility of choosing an inappropriate management technique. If conflict in schools is not urgently and intelligently managed, it may lead to serious educational problems.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to achieve the following:

- 1.5.1 Describe how secondary school principals in the Natal Region perceive conflict in their respective schools.
- 1.5.2 Describe how secondary school principals in the Natal Region perceive conflict management in their respective schools.
- 1.5.3 On the basis of the findings an effective model for conflict management in secondary schools in the Natal Region will be developed.

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN

1.6.1 The Population

The population consisted of all principals of the secondary schools in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training. These principals came from six different areas within the Region.

1.6.2 Hypothesis

- 1.6.2.1 Secondary school principals in the Natal Region perceive conflict as an undesirable element in the school that brings about chaos.
- 1.6.2.2 Secondary school principals perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution.

1.6.3 The Method

Data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire. A properly constructed questionnaire according to Behr (1988:156) is the best available instrument for obtaining data from widely spread sources.

The pilot study was conducted to measure the accuracy of the questionnaire in obtaining the required data. The draft questionnaire was administered to the secondary school principals selected from one circuit which did not form part of the final sample.

1.6.4 Analysis of data

All the respondents' responses were added against the attitudinal continuum of 1 to 5 to obtain the respondent's score. Then all the respondents scores were added to obtain the general score. The mean score was calculated by dividing the general score by the number of respondents. As a result all scores equal to and below the mean reflected a negative perception and all the scores above the mean reflected a positive perception.

1.7 PLAN OF THE STUDY

The study consists of six chapters spread out as follows:

CHAPTER ONE

This is an orientation chapter wherein some important terms are explained, problem stated, purpose and methodology discussed. The significance of the study is also highlighted.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of previous work done in this field covering especially the nature of conflict, sources and management of conflict.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter focuses on a discussion of the preparation, recruitment and functions of principals as managers in general and conflict managers in particular.

CHAPTER FOUR

The design and procedure of the empirical research is discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter presents and analyses data. Findings and evaluation of the results also form part of this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

The study is reviewed, concluded and recommendations are made in this chapter. Avenues for further research are also suggested.

1.8 CONCLUSION

In this preliminary chapter the proposed study was introduced by *inter alia*, stating and describing the problem of investigation as perceived by the researcher; defining some concepts as they are applicable to the study; motivating for the study; proposing the research design that was followed and outlining all the chapters of the study.

In the next chapter some relevant literature will be reviewed for the purpose of establishing a theoretical framework for conflict and its management.

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CHAPTER TWO

CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Conflict pervades human existence. According to Lauer (1982:202) human existence is fashioned in the matrix of social interaction. It is therefore impossible to think of human existence without thinking of social or human interaction. Conflict is evident throughout the entire gamut of human interaction. It manifests itself in a variety of shapes, sizes and even disguises. Conflict therefore exists in reality. It is part of the total human existence. Lauer (1982:202) argues that throughout history, humans have probed into the nature of reality and found conflict there. He even suggests that conflict is in essence a specific kind of social interaction.

This chapter however focuses on a specific kind of conflict. It is primarily concerned with conflict in work situation. It considers conflict that involves two or more persons or groups within one organisation, that is the school. Conflict that involves one person (intrapersonal) and conflict between schools or organisations (interorganisational) will only be of a peripheral interest to this chapter.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part emphasises understanding the intricacies and dynamics of conflict. It deals specifically with the traditional and

contemporary views of conflict, the positive and negative aspects of conflict, sources of conflicts and classification and development of conflict. The second part focuses on conflict management skills. It covers both the encouragement of necessary conflict and the discouragement of unnecessary conflict.

2.2 THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF CONFLICT

This view of conflict underlies one of the prevailing schools of thought in the management of conflict today. According to this school, (Aina (1987:4)) conflict is disruptive, dissociative and unhealthy for organisations. This implies that conflict is undesirable because it is bad for organisations. Most school principals share this view of conflict (Chapter 5, paragraph 5.2). The following is a typical example of a traditional definition of conflict.

"Conflict occurs when two or more parties in an organisation have to interact to accomplish a task, make a decision, meet an objective, or solve a problem and (a) the parties interests clash, (b) one party's action causes negative reaction in others, or (c) parties who are unable to resolve a controversy lash out at each other. Productivity suffers as long as the conflict remains unresolved. The parties in conflict influence co-workers, who begin to take sides or withdraw from the situation. In the end conflict adversely affects the productivity and working relationships of not only those directly involved but the whole work group" Newstrom (1989:62).

procedures and rigid structures. In paragraph 5.6.3.2 it is shown that there are principals that share this view. The absence of conflict is a sign of managerial effectiveness. A competent and effective principal is the one who heads a school that does not experience conflict.

The researcher formulated his hypothesis as stated in paragraph 1.6.2 on the basis of this view of conflict and hence conflict management. Having observed the endemic boycott of classes and disruptions in secondary schools in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training the researcher felt that the problem could be that the *Principals of the schools share this perception of conflict and consequently its management*. The researcher pointed out in paragraph 1.4 that the perception of conflict inevitably influences the perception of conflict management. These perceptions have an influence over the principal's performance of his task.

2.3 THE CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF CONFLICT

This view of conflict has its roots in the American sociologists who were active towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Most of them, according to King (1981:14) felt that conflict was not only an inevitable but a vital ingredient in society. This means that conflict is not only unavoidable, it is in fact necessary. It should therefore not only be accepted but also encouraged.

Conflict is naturally a human factor. Whenever there are human beings who work to the common purpose, their interaction will be characterised by disagreements on

certain issues. One of the features of their relationship will be conflict. Leslie (1972:702) stresses the fact that conflict is a universal characteristic of human associations. He continues to say that it is difficult to imagine either simple or complex relationships which are not in part defined by the nature of conflicts which test and vitalise the bonds people form with each other. According to Veninga (1976: 32) each human relationship has within it elements of potential conflict, disagreements, and opposed interests. Herman and Korenich (1988:116) therefore conclude that conflict between individuals or organisations as natural.

Having accepted conflict in organisations as inevitable, the contemporary view further suggests that some conflict is necessary for an organisation to perform well. According to Robbins (1988:447) this is an interactionist approach to understanding conflicts. He points out that the major contribution of this approach is that it encourages managers to maintain an on going minimum level of conflict to keep units viable, self critical and creative. This means that conflict may actually improve organisation performance. Anderson (1988:261) argues that in the "best" organisations, there is an optimal level of conflict that stimulates and motivates people to higher performance. There are some principals that appreciate this view (Chapter 5, Table 1).

According to the contemporary view, conflict should therefore be regarded as indispensable as the mobility of the entire school largely depends on the acceptance of the different points of view of its members. This view further accepts that conflict, though sometimes necessary, can be detrimental to the functioning of the

school. To this effect Anderson (1988: 258) contends that conflict can either facilitate or hinder the attainment of organisational goals.

On the same point Arnold and Feldman (1986:210) argue that this view sees conflict as something that has some benefits, but sometimes can be costly. This means that conflict has a potential of good value to the school and at the same time there is always a possibility of negative influence. Conflict can either contribute to or detract from organisation performance.

The purpose of managing conflict according to this view is therefore two fold. Firstly, it is to keep conflict at a minimal level; it is to resolve conflict. Secondly, it is to encourage conflict; it is to stimulate conflict. A school principal therefore has to learn the various skills of resolving disputes without discouraging the functional forms of conflict. There are some principals that appreciate this view (Chapter 5, Table 7).

2.4 THE DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICTS

From the contemporary view, conflict has two sides. It has costs as well as benefits. Destructive conflict costs the school its smooth functioning. Constructive conflict benefits the school in a number of ways. Conflict can therefore have either positive or negative effects on the school. Anderson (1988:262) argues that depending on how it is managed, conflict can either bear constructive or destructive consequences for people and organisation performance. Robbins (1988: 450) refers to the constructive

form of conflict as functional conflict because it supports the goals of the organisation. He also refers to the destructive form of conflict as dysfunctional conflict because it prevents the organisation from achieving its goals. Constructive form of conflict is therefore functional for the school and the destructive form is dysfunctional for the school.

2.4.1 The destructive conflict

Anderson (1988:262) suggests that dysfunctional conflict occurs when there is either too little or too much conflict. In concurring with Anderson, Van Fleet (1988:445) argues that both too low or too high conflicts presuppose low performance. In a school situation therefore if conflict is too low or inevident or if it is too high poor performance can be expected. Anderson (1988:262) further points out that conflict is low, if ever occurring, when people are unwilling to present divergent ideas or even to argue against ideas that go against them for fear of breaking up cohesiveness. They are always ready to accept and adopt original ideas without the examination of their costs and benefits. There is no sharing of ideas. In a school this situation can happen when teachers refuse, intentionally or unintentionally, to express their views in a staff meeting. They just accept what the principal says without questions. Low conflict can cause the school to be stagnant and be left behind of changes and progress that the broader community may experience. It is therefore very important for the school principal to encourage conflict.

Conflict, if taken too far can also have adverse consequences. According to Van

content, resources, and open debate on how the school can improve its image and service and can improve the quality of the school service.

Another important benefit of moderate conflict, according to Bisno (1988:45) is the development of a sense of solidarity among members of groups engaged in conflict. A school, for instance, that is engaged in conflict with an external force will disregard internal differences to join forces to fight an external threat. Bedian (1989:471) and King (1981:16) therefore argue that conflict can serve as a "safety valve" to hold one group together as it increases group cohesion when directed at an external force. Conflict, if moderate, therefore helps in the maintenance of identity and strength of each of the party or parties involved.

Optimal conflict also helps in the improvement of human relations. King (1981:20) points out that conflict can enhance communication. Through conflict participants learn or increase their communication skills as they put their cases and argue about them. They get to know what each is thinking and hence arrive at best decisions. Conflict thus plays a significant role in improving the quality of decisions made in the school.

Constructive conflict is therefore necessary. It should be regarded as desirable and should therefore be stimulated if the actual conflict in school is less or lower than moderate.

2.5 SOME COMMON KINDS OF CONFLICTS

2.5.1 Intrapersonal Conflict

This is conflict at an individual level as it happens within one person. According to Derr (1972:496) it rises from the needs of individuals as they conflict with the constraints in the organisation. Intrapersonal conflict in a school can exist when one teacher is expected to teach a subject he dislikes most because there is a shortage of staff. This teacher is in turmoil because he is expected to do the work that is undesirable to him for the benefit of the school.

Deutch (1971:10) argues that this conflict exists when a barrier makes it impossible for a person to attain a desired objective. Pupils, for instance, as a group may experience intragroup conflict when they are refused a well deserved place in the finals of the interschool soccer competition because of an "unfair" or biased referee. Their expectation cannot be met and may experience frustration.

Bittel (1978:561) identifies a number of ways in which people behave when they are frustrated. Firstly, the frustrated person may attack the barrier itself or aggression may be displaced onto some other person or object. In the case of "unfair" referee, the pupils may physically attack the referee or alternatively his own school. Secondly, a person may withdraw either physically or psychologically from the situation. The teacher who is expected to do the work undesirable to him may either do the work without commitment or stay away from class.

2.5.2 Interpersonal conflict

Interpersonal conflict takes place between two or more people, and according to Bittel (1978:561) it cannot be avoided. Derr (1972:496) argues that it arises because of the differences of opinion, different orientations, power struggles, role competition and other events that involve two or more persons. It can take place between a teacher and a pupil; a pupil and a pupil; a teacher and a teacher; a teacher and a parent; a principal and a teacher; etc. A science teacher, for example, may be in conflict with a music teacher who wants to rehearse for a competition during a practical period in the afternoon and some of his choristers are in the science class.

Interpersonal conflict impinges on the organisation and can create organisational conflict. It is thus essential that interpersonal conflict be controlled especially as soon there are signs that the normal carrying out of tasks may be disturbed.

2.6 SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN SCHOOLS

Although the researcher has accepted that there is a "built-in" potential in human beings for conflict, human nature alone according to Risno (1988:27) does not provide us with answers as to why conflicts do or do not develop over given issues, at specific times and with certain characteristics. It is for this reason therefore, that a further clarification of possible sources of conflict be done.

2.6.1 Unclearly defined tasks

According to Gorton (1972:323) for every position in an organisation there are specific responsibilities that are defined in a written job description or in policy statements emanating from a governing board, which embodies the formal expectations of the organisation. Any ambiguity in the statement of these tasks, which underline the organisation's expectation, can cause conflict. For example, a school principal can experience conflict with his superiors if his tasks are not well defined. He may make decisions that are in sharp contrast with the policy of the employing education department. Daft (1988:476) refers to this conflict as caused by jurisdictional ambiguities where job boundaries and responsibilities are unclear. He argues that when tasks and responsibilities are well defined and predictable, people know where they stand and are unlikely to disagree about who has the responsibility for specific tasks or who has a claim on certain resources.

2.6.2 Incompatible role expectations

Conflict can also occur when the expectations of a person who holds a specific position, for example a class teacher, are not compatible with those of the groups of people who are important to him, for example pupils, parents, principal and his own colleagues. According to Musgrove and Taylor (1971:44) a teacher forms a notion of his job, the objectives he should pursue and the priorities he should attach to them, from his professional training and experience in the school. A teacher in other

words has his own perception of his position as a teacher in that particular school. A teacher, for example, may decide, on the basis of his own experience at the school, to be autocratic, strict and uncompromising in the exercise of discipline. Conditions that may be conducive to conflict are then created as pupils may have their own unwritten and thus unexpressed expectations of their teachers role

Apart from the pupils expectations, the behaviour of the teacher may also be influenced by formal expectations. Formal expectations are those that are written down in the form of a job description. If these expectations are incompatible with one another conflict may arise. Gorton (1972:328) is of the opinion that the incompatibility of expectations does not necessarily lead to conflict nor is it synonymous with it. He argues that it depends on how the lack of agreement is perceived by the incumbent of a role. If the teacher for instance, perceives disagreement but remains certain in his own mind about which action he should take, there is no conflict as far as he is concerned. Grace (1972:61) shares the same opinion. He argues that the exposure to incompatible expectations for a role will not itself create serious personal conflict for the incumbent unless these expectations are accompanied by pressures to comply and by sanctions for non-compliance. It can thus be concluded that incompatible expectations are not synonymous with conflict but may be a recipe for some. The teacher therefore has to behave in a certain way, according to his own perception of his role. If his behaviour contradicts the expectations of those important to him, for example the pupils, principal, parents and inspectors then conflict may arise.

2.6.3 Unrealized expectations

Likert (1976:13) describes unrealised expectations as experience that does not realise or satisfy the expected. In other words expectations can be described as unrealised when the actual experience fails to fulfil the expectations. Unrealized expectations cause unfavourable attitudes and frustration. Bittel (1978:561) points out that a frustrated person may become aggressive and hence a very negative reaction may be expected. Conflict can arise between the pupils and the school management because of the failure of management to realize or fulfil their new expectations especially when these had been created by the management itself. The pupils, out of frustration, may attack the principal or their anger may be averted and displaced on to school buildings or they may decide to stay away from classes in an attempt to express themselves.

2.6.4 Defective communication

Defective communication systems is one of the major source of conflict. Britzuis (1982:80) states that a high proportion of managerial misunderstandings, frustrations and disagreements are attributed to breakdown in communication channels. Daft (1988:476) is of the same opinion. He accepts that poor communication channels result in misperception and misunderstanding that may lead to long lasting conflict.

The school communication channels may be more vulnerable to conflict. Apart from

defective channels of communication conflict can also arise because of faulty and distorted communications. According to Robbins (1980:452) some distortions may be deliberate while others may be caused by problems or faults in the communication itself. The deputy principal may for instance deliberately distort communication to his subordinates and the principal.

Communication itself may not be clear. It may be ambiguous and subject to different interpretations. Conflict then arise especially when the interpretations are not compatible with the expectations of the sender of communication.

2.6.5 Competition for scarce resources

Conflict frequently occurs as a result of competition for limited resources. These may include physical, financial and human resources. A school that experiences a shortage in one or more of these resources has more potential for conflict. Daft (1988), Bedian (1989) and Robbins (1988) all agree that the scarcity of these resources creates conflict.

Physical resources include school buildings, sport facilities, teaching aids, furniture, library and laboratory equipment. If these resources are insufficient for the school population and have to be shared, conflict may be inevitable. A standard eight Science teacher may, for instance, need to use the laboratory for an experiment with his class, while a standard ten Biology teacher needs the same laboratory to conduct his own lesson. Conditions that are favourable for conflict to develop are thus

created.

Conflict can also arise because of limited financial resource. The different sports codes may for instance compete for allocation of funds to improve their own performance. This competition can lead to serious confrontation especially, if one or more of the codes deliberately attempts to frustrate the other codes objectives to succeed in its own objectives.

2.6.6 Social change

Likert (1976:4) quotes change as a modern source of conflict in our society. A school as an organisation is inevitably affected by changes in society, otherwise it can render itself irrelevant. Different people react differently to change. Kendall (1987:43) argues that other people can resist change while others encourage it.

Conflict then arises as some members prefer to maintain the *status quo* for their own preferred reasons while others encourage it. Tension can be created as a result of this. Likert (1976:4) thus contends that change, almost always, is accompanied by tension, anxieties, resistance and conflict.

2.6.7 Differences in ideologies, attitudes and beliefs

According to Deutsch (1973:10) conflict may arise from ideological and cultural differences in beliefs and values about what is universally true and right. People differ in terms of their values, attitudes, expectations, personalities and perceptions. In a school situation therefore one may not expect that members of the community will always see the same thing in the same way. According to Robbins (1988:452) this is caused by the fact that varied backgrounds, experiences, training and education produce different perceptions of similar realities. Conflict can then be created in a school as a result of these differences. Pupils and teachers are also human beings and thus subscribe to particular ideologies, and perceptions based on their own experiences. Because of his Christian values, a sports organiser may, for example, find himself in conflict with a soccer coach over the use of herbs to charm the winning luck at the school tournament.

2.7 GORDON'S FIVE STAGES OF CONFLICT

Gordon (1987:476) identified five stages of the development of conflict, namely latent, perceived, felt, manifest and aftermath.

2.7.1 Latent Conflict

According to Gordon (1987) conflict begins when the conditions for conflict exist.

These conditions may include, among others: the scarcity of resources, for example classrooms and teachers; competing priorities; incompatible role expectations, defective communication systems; etc. These conditions provide the foundations for disagreement, competition and ultimately conflict.

2.7.2 Perceived conflict

Perceived conflict, according to Gordon (1987) refers to a situation where individuals or groups know that conflict exists yet it can be denied because no one may want anything to do with it.

2.7.3 Felt Conflict

Gordon (1987) argues that when one or more parties feel tense or anxious, conflict has moved beyond the perceived stage to the felt stage. Conflict becomes personalised to the parties involved. They feel more tense, hostile and aggressive, and the dimensions of conflict begin to take shape. According to Bittel (1978:562) at this stage battle lines are sketched out and contingency plans established.

2.7.4 Manifest Conflict

Manifest conflict is observable behaviour designed to frustrate another's attempts to pursue his or her goals and, according to Gordon (1987), it can be observed either through open aggression or complete withdrawal of support. Verbal or physical attack, boycott of classes, destruction of property are all forms of manifest conflict.

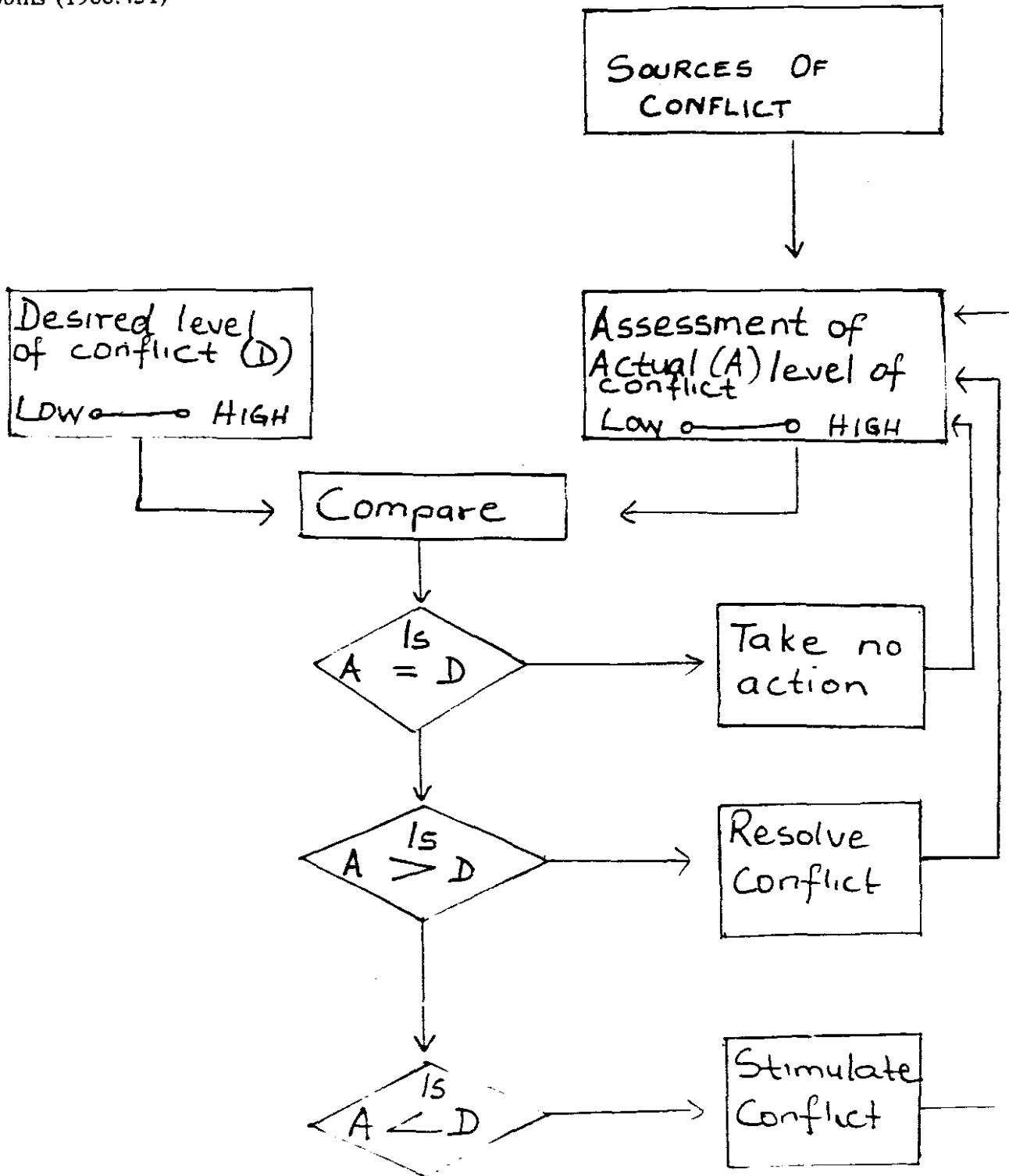
2.7.5 Conflict Aftermath

According to Gordon (1987) conflict aftermath describes the resulting relationship between parties in conflict. The relationship can either be supportive, paternalistic, or perhaps adversarial between parties involved. This condition arises after conflict has been resolved or suppressed.

2.7 MANAGING CONFLICT

According to Lewis (1976:53) managing conflict involves both resolution and stimulation. She argues that the level of conflict may be too high and require reduction or it may be too low and require stimulation. Lewis (1976) is not the only researcher who regards conflict management as a process of resolving and stimulating conflict. Vogt (1977:65) suggests that a manager may have to stimulate and resolve conflicts so as to maximise the desired outcomes for the organisation. Robbins (1988:450) also supports this perspective. He suggests that managers should stimulate conflict to gain the full benefits of its functional properties, yet reduce its level when it becomes a disruptive force. It is therefore clear that neither too little nor too much conflict is desirable. The purpose of conflict management is to keep conflict moderate thus functional to the benefit of the school as an organisation.

The following is a diagrammatic presentation of conflict management as adapted from Robbins (1988:451)



The above diagram shows that the sources of conflict create conflict which is assessed by the principal. The principal compares the actual level of conflict (A) to the desired level of conflict (D). If the actual (A) level of conflict is the same with the desired (D) level of conflict, then conflict is optimal or moderate. No action is necessary. If the actual (A) level of conflict is more than the desired (D) level of conflict, then conflict must be resolved using specific strategies for conflict resolution. If the actual (A) level of conflict is less than the desired (D) level, then conflict must be stimulated. The process is circular because the principal will always assess and reassess the actual level of conflict against the desired level. The researcher therefore accepts that managing conflict has to do with resolution of conflict as well as stimulation of conflict.

2.8.1 Conflict resolution strategies

Earlier in the chapter the researcher accepted that excessive conflict is unproductive. It is in fact dysfunctional. It is conflict that has to be resolved. According to Cianfarano (1986:426) conflict resolution is an attempt to move people from feeling of debilitation to feelings that efforts are being made to support them. Most authors and researchers agree that the first step in resolving conflict is to clearly understand the causes of the conflict. Gorton (1972:331) argues that the first step in conflict resolution is the investigation of reasons for that disagreement or dispute. Vogt (1977:65) emphasizes the awareness of sources conflict before conflict can be resolved. According to Bisno (1988:47) the understanding of sources of conflict is

of significance as conflict is centred around them and the resolution strategy should be relevant to the conflict sources. Apart from sources, the stage at which conflict is also influences the principal's choice of one or a combination of resolution strategies. While conflict at the latent stage may for instance be easier to resolve for example by avoidance whereby potential sources are removed, conflict at the manifest stage require more serious attention through confrontation.

Literature suggests a number of specific techniques that can be employed to resolve conflict. According to van der Westhuizen, et al (1991:33) these techniques are applied in combination rather than singularly considering the situation. Leslie (1972:715) suggests that the use of specific techniques need to be adjusted to the appropriate stage in the conflict episode, as well as to the issue and personalities involved.

2.8.1.1 Ignoring conflict

According to Hodgetts and Kuratko (1988:448) ignoring conflict is a natural reaction to conflict because it is easy to do. Gordon (1987:479) argues that ignoring conflict simply means withdrawing from conflict situation without paying any attention to it and hoping that it will go away.

There is consensus among authors that this technique is ideal for trivial conflict and is a temporary measure. The principal can for instance ignore minor differences of opinion among his staff that may be embedded in their different personalities.

Ignoring serious conflicts can be detrimental for the school. The principal himself may be seen as a "non-leader" as he does not want to solve problems. Conflict can develop into a crisis and the entire school can be affected.

2.8.1.2 Imposing a solution

Arnold and Feldman (1986:224) explain imposing a solution as a means of forcing the conflicting parties to accept a solution devised by a higher-level manager. Different authors use different terms to refer to this technique. Hodgetts and Kurakto (1988) refer to it as an authoritative command. Gordon (1987) refers to it as forcing. Vogt (1977) regards it as authoritarianism. Donnely, et al (1978:238) refer to it as domination technique. Authors, however, agree that this technique resolves conflict through the use of formal authority without debate. Conflict is suppressed, van der Westhuizen, et al (1991:34) reports that this technique is most popular among principals in the Vaal Triangle Area.

This technique can be useful in some instances especially where the authority is recognised and accepted by the subordinates. Authors agree that it works well in cases where quick, decisive action is needed and when unpopular decisions need to be made. Rausch (1980:286) argues that the use of authority is sometimes desirable, especially when rules are severely violated. The principal therefore may use this technique successfully to restore order and resolve conflict only if his authority is recognised and accepted by his staff and pupils.

This technique has its limitations. Conflict in fact is not resolved but temporarily reduced. Vogt (1977:65) argues that this technique may drive conflict underground as the conflicting parties have not addressed the source of conflict. Only a discord has been eliminated not the source. Hodgetts and Kuratko (1988:449) support this argument against imposing a solution. They argue that the cause of the conflict is not treated and in fact it does not necessarily bring agreement. Conflict still exists but may be suppressed.

2.8.1.3 Smoothing

Robbins (1988:454) describes smoothing as a process of playing down differences that exists between individuals or groups while emphasizing common interests. In the same breath Bittel (1978:562) points out that emphasizing positive or common aspects in the situation and avoiding sensitive area of difference usually smoothes the situation sufficiently for work to proceed. In smoothing therefore, differences are suppressed and similarities are accentuated.

Smoothing, according to Arnold and Feldman (1986:225) can be used as a stop-gap measure to let people cool down and regain perspective. The principal can for instance apply this technique to cool down two teachers who may have been involved in a very hot argument or physical attack. Smoothing can be used when conflict is over non-work issues, for example two teachers who find themselves in conflict over political issues.

Authors agree that smoothing is a temporary measure. Differences are not confronted. They remain under the surface. Walton (1987:79) argues that conflict may go underground, become less direct but most destructive, and eventually become more difficult to confront and resolve.

2.8.1.4 Appealing to superordinate goals

Superordinate goals, according to Hodgetts and Kurtko (1988:448), are common goals that two or more conflicting parties each desire and cannot be reached without co-operation of those involved. In other words a superordinate goal requires the co-operation of conflicting parties for achievement. Teachers for instance have a common goal, that is to teach pupils. Pupils also have their own common goal, that is to learn. Education is a common goal for everyone involved in the school that is teacher, pupils, parents, and the department of education. Appealing to superordinate goals then means the principal resolves conflict that threatens the attainment of the goals by highlighting the fact that teaching or learning cannot take place without the co-operation of everyone involved in conflict.

Appealing to superordinate goals can be used when there is a mutually important goal that neither party can achieve without the co-operation of the other. It can also be used when the success of the school as an organisation is in jeopardy. Hodgetts and Kuratko (1988:448) argue that when used cumulatively and reinforced this technique develops "peace-making" potential, emphasizing interdependency and co-operation.

2.8.1.5 Compromise

Vogt (1977), Lewis (1976), Daft (1988) and Arnold and Feldman (1986) refer to this strategy as bargaining. Anderson (1988:278) explains compromising as a technique that relies on getting both sides to give-and-take and to agree on a compromise. It is an attempt to resolve conflict by encouraging give-and-take between people, through negotiating on real issues. According to Feltner and Good-sell (1972:694) compromising results in an intermediate position, with the satisfaction that half is better than none. All parties in conflict therefore accept a decision which is suboptimal for all. Each party, however, must be willing to settle for something less than the original. Compromise will thus permit conflicting parties to move beyond a stalemated situation.

This strategy can be used successfully in conflict that involves two teachers that are willing to compromise to end conflict. Differences however, are not eliminated thus it is a temporary measure.

2.8.1.6 Integrative problem solving

Authors like van der Westhuizen (1991) Hodgetts and Kuratko (1988); Gordon (1987) and Anderson (1988) refer to this technique as collaboration. In literature, problem solving is explained as a technique that seeks to resolve conflict through face-to-face confrontation of conflicting parties. Thembela (1988:13) argues that

this confrontation is based on the assumption that the conflicting parties are people of worthy motives and goodwill. Gordon (1987:480) concurs with Thembela. He states that each of the conflicting party shows trust and honesty and accepts conflict as natural. Each of the conflicting parties therefore has to be honest in expressing his feelings and attitude about the existing conflict. This requirement necessitates open deliberation with a view of solving the problem. The principal aim of the discussion is to reconcile or integrate the needs of both parties. The lack of trust and openness, however, can fail this technique as van der Westhuizen (1990:34) reports. He reports that the problem solving technique is not popular with school principals as a conflict resolution technique mainly because there is no candid exchange of opinion, trust and openness.

The principal, as a conflict manager, assumes the role of a third party in conflict that does not involve him. He organises a meeting of the parties in conflict and helps creating a positive atmosphere wherein both parties will be free to express their perception without any fear of intimidation. Arnold and Feldman (1986:229) states that both parties work together to define the problem and to identify mutually satisfactory solution. Each states his or her own feelings, attitude and views about the state of affairs. The principal exercises care to differentiate between facts and their interpretations by the conflicting parties. To this effect Gorton (1972:332) warns that the facts of the problem may be the same but their interpretations differ, depending on how each party views the situation. The goal of the principals is therefore to broaden the areas of agreement and to narrow the issues of disagreement.

Finding a mutually acceptable solution is possible after possible alternative solutions have been proposed. If consensus cannot be reached, then the basis of compromise is developed. According to Robbins (1988:453) integrative problem solving technique is ideal for conflict that stems from semantic misunderstanding, especially when there is no time pressure. This means that conflict based on the different value systems cannot be alleviated. Boulding (1962:312) also warns that if conflict is about a core value reconciliation will be difficult or even impossible. Reconciliation is only possible if conflict is about a shell value and not the core value.

2.8.2 Conflict stimulation

The researcher accepted earlier in the chapter that too little conflict can be counter productive for the school as an organization. It was also accepted that conflict management has to do with the control of the actual level of conflict so that it corresponds with the desired level. Conflict should be stimulated or encouraged if it less than moderate. The researcher however acknowledges the fact that the notion of stimulating conflict is often difficult to accept and that as Robbins (1988:454) argues, the idea of purposely creating conflict seems to be an antithesis of good management. Newman (1972), Lewis (1976), Anderson (1988) and Robbins (1988) agree that encouraging competition can stimulate conflict that is essential to improve performance. They further agree that communication and organisational structure can

be used to stimulate conflict.

2.8.2.1 Use of competition

Encouraging competition among pupils, teachers and heads of departments can increase competition as individuals and groups try to out do each other. According to Robbins (1988:456) the use of bonuses, incentive pay and awards for outstanding performance is likely to stimulate competition. To increase classroom teaching performance the principal may introduce teacher evaluation and the annual best teacher be awarded a prize in recognition of his or her effort. All teachers will then be encouraged to be the best teacher and in the process their performance may improve as they try alternative methods and approaches to their work. Similarly, the best pupil can be awarded a prize and all pupils may be motivated to become the best pupil for each year.

2.8.2.2 Communication stimulators

According to Lewis (1972:56) communication stimulators include such devices as diverting information from formal channels of communication. This can be done by using the "grapevine" instead of formal authority lines or by skipping over selected authority levels when sending information. This means the principal may call a departmental meeting without informing the relevant head of department. In the case of "grapevine" the principal may "leak" some information, for example that he

intends appointing or promoting a certain staff member to another position. He then observes the reaction of all members of the school community. If the reaction is too negative the he can simply reject the information as unfounded rumour.

Another way to stimulate conflict is, according to Robbins (1988:456) ambiguous or threatening messages. Lewis (1972:56) argues that this can be done by distorting information that organisation members seek or require. This can create confusion and force members to make their own conclusions based on whatever information they may be having. Information about the possible closure of a school or a section or classes may also stimulate new ideas and reduce apathy.

2.8.2.3 Structural stimulators

According to Lewis (1972:57) dissonance can be initiated or injected into an organization by manipulation of structural factors. Leadership roles in the school can be used to stimulate conflict. This can be done by rotation of responsibilities like sports organisation, maintenance of school premises, discipline and other duties that do not require specialized training. A new incumbent of a position is likely to come with a different approach and ideas thus encouraging the subordinates to change. Lewis (1972) however, warns that it is preferable to have existing leaders to change their style rather than initiating an interchange of leaders.

According to Robbins (1988:456) increasing interdependency between units can also help to disrupt the status quo. In a school this means that the principal can bring

various departments and sections closer together so that each, to a certain extent depend on the other for its performance. This can increase interaction.

2.9 CONCLUSION

Conflict is accepted as a form of social interaction. It is therefore part and parcel of everyday school life. It is further accepted that although conflict is usually perceived as undesirable it has some benefits for the school. For conflict to be beneficial for the school it has to be kept moderate. Excessive conflict is undesirable as it is disruptive. It is therefore important that the school principal resolve this conflict to bring it down to an acceptable level using one or more of the techniques discussed. When conflict is too low the productivity of the school may also be affected as no new ideas are tried. In this situation conflict has to be encouraged.

Conflict management in conclusion therefore refers to the encouragement of conflict if it is too low and its discouragement when it is too high.

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CHAPTER 3

A FOCUS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS A CONFLICT MANAGER ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One the researcher described the principal as a professionally trained teacher who has been appointed as a head of the school. He is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the educational objective of the school is realised through a proper and effective the employment of all resources. According to Allen (1970:xiii) the whole success a school depends upon the Head than upon any other single factor. This leaves the principal with total responsibility and accountability in the school. Even the *Department of Education and Training (DET)* acknowledges this fact in its *Manual for School Organisation* (1990: 12) that the principal as the executive officer is appointed for the management or government of the school and as such he has been given necessary authority to govern the school on behalf of the Department. The principal's accountability therefore is extensive. Apart from being accountable to the Department, he is also accountable to the parents who are also taxpayers, the members of staff as well as pupils. The creation and maintenance of good working relationships among all stakeholders is his primary responsibility.

Like any other employer, the DET has specific expectations from its employees. The principal's position is defined by law and the DET delegates authority to the principal

in terms of law as defined by the Education and Training Act (90 of 1979). The purpose of this chapter therefore is to focus on the position of the principal as a conflict manager in a school as defined by the DET.

The starting point will be a discussion of the criteria and procedure for selecting and appointing a principal in a school that is controlled by the DET. The assumption is that the DET accepts that the principal as a leader will have to possess some crucial skills necessary for effective and efficient control of a school. The DET therefore has designed certain procedures to ensure that the incumbent will be the one most likely to do the work well. Having appointed the principal, the DET then conducts in-service training courses for principals to ensure that they are very well conversant with some issues and procedures involved in school management. This Chapter will also focus on these in-service training programmes with specific emphasis on the programme dealing with conflict management in schools. It is this programme that will throw some light as to the expectations of the DET in as far as conflict management in its schools is concerned.

3.2 THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

In terms of the Education and Training Act, No 90 of 1979, as amended, the power to appoint teachers, including principals is vested in the Minister. The procedure for the selection and appointment is stipulated by the DET its Manual for School Organisation. The DET has developed the selection procedure mindful of the

importance of the principal in school administration. The purpose of selection is therefore to always appoint the most competent and efficient person into this position.

3.2.1 Advertising the Post

This is the first step in the process of appointing a principal. The DET issues a Government Gazette in which all vacant posts and names of the schools in a particular region are advertised.

Apart from the Government Gazettes the DET also advertises through mass media, for example radio and newspapers. The objective is to advertise as widely as possible to ensure maximum response. The more applications are submitted, the more possible it is to get the "best" principal. In the advertisement the DET specifies the minimum qualifications and experience for the post of the secondary school principal, which is a matriculation certificate plus a four year post matriculation qualification. According to the DET this is Category D. The minimum teaching experience is seven to eight years depending on the size of the school in terms of its enrolment. The principal's post is categorized into two according to enrolment namely SII and SI. All SII schools have an enrolment of between 0-599, while SI schools have enrolment of 600 and upwards.

3.2.2 Applying for the Post

Prospective candidates for the advertised post formally apply for the post by filling

in an application form ET/262 in case of public schools, and ET/3 in case of state-aided schools. The former is filled in duplicate and the latter is triplicate, both forms emphasize the fact that they should be filled in ink by the applicants in their own handwritings. The forms require the applicants to write their full personal particulars, qualifications and experience. Form ET/262 has a provision for governing councils to make their own recommendations, while form ET/3 provides for the recommendations of the manager or owner of the state-aided school.

Applicants for the principals post in the public secondary school are short-listed by the person appointed by the Director of Provision of Education in the region for the interview. The governing council is also given a chance to select candidates for interview. This practice ensures that parents are also given a chance to participate. They are however assisted by the circuit inspector. The manager or owner of the state-aided school selects candidates most suitable for the position for the interview.

3.2.3 The Interview

The interview is conducted at the Regional Office. The Chairman of the panel is the Director: Provision of Education. He is assisted by inspector of the school in which there is a vacant post and three other members nominated him. The most important thing is that all members of the panel shall be senior to the vacant post. It may also be noted that parents are represented in the interviewing panel.

Each member of the panel is issued with an evaluation form in which candidates are

scored. The form has eighteen items or areas of importance. Conflict management is one of these. The DET wishes to satisfy itself that the candidate it appoints is best equipped to manage conflict in schools.

3.2.4 Appointment

The Director-General confirms the appointment of the principal after considering the recommendations of the circuit inspector. The Director-General writes a letter of appointment (00/ET 232) to the principal appointed informing him or her of his or her appointment. The newly appointed principal is advised of the school, his salary, incremental dates, and most important that his appointment is subject to twelve calendar months probationary period.

On the day the principal assume duties he fills in the Assumption of Duty Form (00/ET 68) in triplicate. He is immediately furnished with the Manual for School Organisation drawn by the Department of Education and Training which spells out his duties, authority and liabilities as defined by law. The principal uses this Manual as his guide in the carrying out of various activities in the school.

3.3 THE PROGRAMME FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Like any other employer, the Department of Education and Training expects the principal to perform effectively and efficiently to realize its objective. To ensure

maximum performance the DET has developed a programme of training the principals in various areas of management. The programme covers a variety of areas, for example self-management; managing subordinate output; managing buildings and physical assets; managing parent and community involvement; managing conflict in schools; managing methods and procedure; team management; nurturing student development; classroom management; decision-making and problem solving in schools; and self-renewing schools.

The researcher will concern himself with the programme for managing conflict in schools (Top Down 5) as it is his area of study. This programme spells out the department's expectations from the principals as conflict managers in their schools. It suggests ways of managing conflict and steps for handling conflict.

3.4 MANAGING CONFLICT IN SCHOOLS: TOP DOWN NO.5

This programme deals with the management of conflict through the prevention and handling of conflict which could take place within the school environment. The aims of this programme are twofold. Firstly, it aims at showing principals how effective management can prevent unnecessary conflict, and secondly to guide principals with ways of handling actual conflict wherein it occurs in the school environment.

The DET accepts that conflict is inevitable in its schools. It accepts that wherever people interact there is a potential for conflict. It further concedes that a school does not operate in a vacuum, but is part of a society which is experiencing tensions and

conflicts. The researcher therefore as stated in, Chapter two, accepts conflict as inevitable or as a natural characteristic of human interaction.

The programme defines conflict as a result of differences between individuals and or groups over facts, objectives or standards, methods or behaviour or values. This means that principals should, among other things, appreciate that teachers, pupils, parents and himself perceive things differently and react in their own way. This causes conflict and principals should always bear this in mind when dealing with conflict.

3.4.1 The Importance of Managing Conflict

The programme emphasises the fact that the principal is directly responsible and accountable for managing conflict that involves any of the key groups in his school, namely staff, parents and pupils. The principal is responsible for managing conflict that is between a parent and teachers and or pupils; conflict among staff members; conflict between staff and pupils; and conflict among pupils.

The DET in this programme highlights the perception that conflict, if not well managed, can result in poor performance. If its presence is ignored it gets worse and eventually affects the performance of the school. This is due to unproductive activities and reaction that take place such as gossiping and complaining; stress; anxiety and fear; mistrust; breakdown in communication and increase in apathy. These are detrimental to performance. The disruption of school activities inevitably

leads to failure of the school to realize its educational objective. Poor management of conflict therefore leads to poor performance.

The DET further asserts that conflict is not always unpleasant. Some conflict can be handled in a constructive way and people have the courage, understanding and skill to work through their differences with each other. If conflict is acknowledged, identified and dealt with at an early stage, some positive elements can come out of it. The DET therefore agrees with Evarard and Morris (1985:84) that the ability to handle conflict is a key factor in managerial success. Conflict management is therefore a key management skill.

3.4.2 Three Ways to Manage Conflict in Schools

3.4.2.1 Effective Management

According to Paisey (1981:92) management is human behaviour and it is effective when human needs embodied in objectives are met. In essence therefore effective management of a school refers to the process of formulating objectives, acquiring and committing the resources required to reach them and ensuring that the objective are actually reached. Accordingly DET concludes that an effective principal, as a manager, sets clear and realistic objectives, communicates standards for performance, helps his staff achieve objectives, and gives his staff feedback.

Effective management therefore reduces the chances of conflict developing as pupils

and staff as well as parents are kept informed about what is happening. Conflict over facts is reduced. There is also no ambiguity and confusion as objective and standards are well defined and communicated. Effective management also ensures that pupils and staff as well as parents follow the correct methods, thus there is less conflict in the area of methods and behaviour.

3.4.2.2 Handling Complaints and Demands

This is the second way of dealing with conflict in schools. According to DET it is imperative that principals ensure that complaints and demands are handled promptly to prevent them from developing into conflict. The DET emphasises the fact that a complaint is not conflict but an expression of dissatisfaction about somebody or something that can easily develop into conflict if not handled promptly. A demand is therefore perceived as a call for action to remedy a situation that is perceived to be unfair or unacceptable. For example a female pupil may complain to her parents about a male teacher who makes passes at her and suggests that she visits him at his home in order to obtain higher marks. The parents may then come to the school demanding that the teacher be confronted and expelled, or otherwise threaten to approach the circuit inspector. Serious conflict can develop if this threat is carried out.

3.4.2.3 Handling an Actual Conflict Situation

Actual conflict occurs either through failure to prevent conflict through effective

management, or through failure to handle complaints or demands. The DET identifies two phases in managing conflict namely identifying conflict and managing conflict.

3.4.2.3.1 Identifying Conflict

This is the first phase of managing conflict and the DET describes it as recognising the "red light". The principal's attention is drawn to the fact that conflict exists. If he does not see conflict at this stage it is likely that the principal won't see it until it is too late.

The DET identifies the following indicators of conflict: failure to meet objectives; teacher dissatisfaction; absenteeism or late coming of pupils and teachers; spreading or rumours; complaints; high occurrence of corporal punishment; formation of small groups; exceptionally poor results and parents' refusal to become involved with the school.

The identification of conflict involves the identification of parties in conflict. The principal determines whether conflict involves teachers, pupils or parents or a combination of all three. It can also happen that the principal is himself involved in conflict. Once conflict and the involved parties have been identified the principal can then decide who will handle the situation and in what capacity. The principal cannot objectively manage conflict to which he is a party. He may act as a mediator or arbitrator to ensure neutrality. The principal himself can assume any of the two

positions if he is satisfied that he is not directly involved in the conflict situation.

3.4.2.3.2 Handling of Conflict

The DET has developed specific guidelines and steps for handling actual conflict. These are spelt out in the Programme for Management Development and Performance improvement, Top Down Number 5.

The key guiding rules are regarded as a corner-stone for the effective resolution of a conflict situation. First it is necessary for the conflict manager to allow people to express their points of view. This calls for open and honest communication of perceptions. This principle is echoed by most authors. For example Weider-Hartfield (1981:265) suggests that open communication is a useful skill in building and maintaining satisfying relationships. On the same note Feltner and Goodsell (1972:695) maintain that the success of resolving a conflict situation largely depends on trust and confidence each party has, and that these are only possible by open and honest communication. Principals should however control communication such that focus is on the issue and not the person. Each party is encouraged to state its position clearly and to listen actively.

Second the DET recommends that the principal as a conflict manager should work within his authority. Reference here is made to the position of the principal as spelt in the Principal's guide or Handbook, Regulations, Circular and School Policy. In other words the principal should act within his premise or scope of operation. There

are some decisions he cannot make and has to be referred to his superiors. This could be a problem to the principal, especially in situations that require quick decisions. On the other hand it is understandable for the DET to emphasize this guideline as the principal may be protected from unfair criticisms.

Thirdly according to the DET the principal must keep a written record of any conflict that occurs. The logbook wherein the principal records the people involved, the date and time as well as the action taken to resolve such conflict is suggested.

In dealing with conflict the principal must therefore observe these guidelines. The DET has suggested seven steps for dealing with conflict.

Step 1: Explain why the conflict needs to be handled.

It is important that conflicting parties know and understand the impact that conflict has on performance. For instance conflict may prevent teachers from performing their tasks, or affect pupils' learning or even affect parent involvement. All these negative consequences of conflict should be explained to the parties bearing in mind the communication guidelines. This step is necessary to prepare the parties for a constructive and meaningful participation in the discussion to defuse the situation.

Step 2: State the rules of behaviour for the discussion.

It is imperative that during the deliberations parties should show respect without being rude or shouting. It should therefore be explained to the parties that they must give each other a chance to state their cases and that while one party is talking the other

party listens actively without disturbing the other. The principle of focusing on the issue should be explained. This will help to draw focus on the issue rather than on personal differences.

Step 3: Get conflicting parties to express their points of view.

The principal should give each party an equal opportunity to state its position without interference. Parties should be open and honest.

Step 4: Define the actual problem.

The principal should establish whether the conflict stems from the differences about facts, objectives, methods or values. If the conflict is about facts, then sources of information of each party should be checked and facts verified. If it is about the difference on objectives the actual difference should be established and the common objective should be sought. If it is about methods, the actual difference should be identified and an alternative method should be sought. Finally, if conflict is about values, these should be identified as they apply to that particular situation.

Step 5: Obtain suggestions for resolving the conflict.

Parties in conflict should be encouraged to give their own suggestions on how to resolve conflict.

Step 6: Agree on a plan of action.

The action plan should be agreed upon. If no agreement can be reached then it is up to the principal to decide upon the specific plan of action. The plan of action may

be designed to reduce conflict if it cannot be totally removed.

Step 7: Set a review date if appropriate.

If necessary, depending on the nature and cause of conflict, a review date must be set to review progress made in resolving conflict.

3.5 AN EVALUATION OF THE MANAGING CONFLICT IN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME (TOP DOWN 5)

The researcher notes that the Department of Education and Training has attempted to assist school principals to perform effectively as administrators in general, and as conflict managers in particular. The Programme for Management Development and Performance Improvement has been designed for this purpose. One of these programmes, Top Down Number 5, entitled *Managing Conflict in Schools* addresses itself to a very important aspect of school management. *Conflict, if not effectively managed, can be very destructive in a school. It is therefore essential that all managers learn to manage conflict. This programme is an attempt to equip them with necessary skills for managing conflict.*

The programme clearly defines conflict as an expression of differences between individuals and or groups over certain issues including facts, objectives, methods and or values. This definition is in line with other definitions by a number of authors including Likert (1976), Du Brin (1984), Frey and Young (1978) and others. The programme has therefore succeeded in presenting a neutral perspective of conflict that

conflict is not necessarily bad for the school it depends on the effectiveness of its management.

The programme further explains how various stakeholders in the school can find themselves in conflict situations. It however excludes the broader social and political conflict outside the school. This conflict is of significance and the principal should also be prepared to handle this conflict as it cannot be neglected. The school does not exist in a vacuum but it is rather a social institution and the various stakeholders are members of the surrounding social environment. The principal should therefore be equipped with skills of preventing this conflict from infiltrating the school. It is unfortunate that the programme pays no attention to this type of conflict.

The programme then suggests three ways of dealing with conflict in schools. First is the prevention of conflict through effective management. Effective management is described as a situation where objectives, behavioural standards, duties and communication channels are clearly stated. Donnelly, et al (1978:237) is of the opinion that the management of conflict involves determining strategies to minimise the possibilities of conflict. It is therefore true that the effective management minimises the potential for disruptive conflict.

Second, is managing conflict by handling complaints and demands. According to the programme a complaint is not conflict. It is a mere expression of dissatisfaction about something or someone. It can lead to conflict if not attended to. The programme further indicates that a demand is also not necessarily conflict but a mere

call for an action to remedy a situation perceived as unfair or unacceptable. Conflict can therefore be avoided when complaints and or demands are handled promptly. The programme unfortunately fails to guide the principal in as far as the handling of these complaints and demands.

Third is the handling of actual conflict in schools. According to the programme conflict arises as a result of the failure to handle complaints and demands. The programme then identifies two phases of managing actual conflict. The first phase comprises of the identification of conflict. The principal should be sensitive and able to recognise the indicators of conflict. Early identification of conflict is important. The second phase deals with steps in managing conflict. Seven steps are suggested for this purpose. Although it is not stated in the programme, the researcher notes that these steps actually describe only one method or technique for resolving conflict, the confrontation or problem solving technique as other researchers call it. This technique is probably the best technique. This view is supported by a number of researchers including Feltner and Goodsell (1972), Likert and Likert (1976). Evarard and Morris (1985) and others. The Department of Education and Training also possibly shares this view and that probably is a rationale for discussing this technique.

There is an agreement on most of the steps of the technique between the programme and various researchers. The first step is possibly the most important one because the parties are prepared to participate in a discussion with a view of ending the conflict. The principal is less likely to get the seriousness of parties involved, unless the implications of the conflict are explained. The success of resolving conflict

through confrontation largely depends of the willingness of the parties to reach a compromise if consensus cannot be reached. The success of the other six steps therefore will depend of how well was the first step handled.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion the researcher noted that the Department of Education and Training has attempted to ensure that the schools are managed by competent and efficient principals. The procedure of the selection and the appointment of the school principal is a clear attempt to get the most competent principal. The post is widely advertised to ensure maximum response and the interview covers a wide area of managerial responsibilities including the candidates knowledge of conflict management.

The DET further attempts to ensure that the principal is effective by providing some in-service training. The in-service programme also covers a wide area of management tools including conflict management. It is unfortunate however that the programme dealing with conflict management has concerned itself with resolution of conflict and neglected another important aspect of conflict management, that of stimulation. In Chapters one and two the researcher clearly indicated that conflict management is two fold. First, it has to do with resolution of unnecessary conflict and second with the stimulation of necessary conflict. The programme has not addressed the stimulation aspect although it mentions that conflict can in fact be necessary.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE DESIGN AND PROCEDURE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is basically to explain the design and procedure followed in the collection and analysis of research data for the purposes of testing the hypotheses mentioned in chapter one of the study.

Firstly, this chapter will describe Natal as a region of the Department of Education and Training. This description is essential as it will provide the justification for the *type of the research instrument used to collect research data, as well as the scientific method used to interpret data.*

Secondly, this chapter will examine the questionnaire as an instrument used to collect research data. This examination is necessary to explain the suitability of the questionnaire. Its construction and implementation will also form part of this section.

Thirdly, the scientific method used to interpret research data will be explained. Concentration will be on the statistical instrument used.

4.2 A FOCUS ON THE AREA UNDER INVESTIGATION

The Department of Education and Training was established in terms of the Education and Training Act, Act Number 90 of 1979 as a replacement of the Department of Bantu Education. In terms of the Act, the Department of Education and Training is

entrusted with the responsibility of providing education for black people outside the independent and self-governing states.

The Natal region is one of the seven regions of the Department of Education and Training, with the Regional Chief Director as the head of the Region. The Region serves black residential areas that are outside the jurisdiction of the KwaZulu Government. These areas are served by the KwaZulu's Department of Education and Culture. The Regional office is in Pietermaritzburg and controls six area offices. All but one of the area offices are located within the geographical boundaries of Natal as a province. Ermelo is the only area located in the Transvaal province but falls under the Natal region. Other areas are Durban, Glencoe, Ixopo, Pietermaritzburg and Vryheid. Area managers are responsible for the six area offices.

Each of the areas has a number of circuit offices for further decentralization purposes. These are distributed according to the following order:-

- * Durban area : Empangeni; Inanda; Itheku; Pinetown and Uthongathi.
- * Ermelo area : Armsterdam; Breyten; Carolina; Emerlo; Piet Retief and Volkrust.
- * Glencoe area : Berg-besters, Escourt, Dundee, Glencoe, Ladysmith
- * Ixopo area : Bulwer; Mount Currie; Richmond and South Coast.

- * Piertermaritzburg
area : Edendale; Lions River; Mooi River; Mshwati;
Umkungundlovu and Umvoti.
- * Vryheid area : Filidi; Melmoth; Ngotshe; Paul Pietersburg;
Ubombo and Utrecht

These are the areas in which research was conducted. According to the list of all schools in these areas, there is a total number of one hundred and eighteen (118) secondary schools. The principals of these schools formed the population for the study.

4.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS A RESEARCH TOOL USED TO COLLECT DATA

The nature of the study under investigation is descriptive. Lovell and Lowson in Behr (1983:90) define descriptive research as an inquiry that is concerned with conditions that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs and attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, and trends that are developing. According to Gay (1976:123) descriptive research involves collecting data to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. Accordingly this study represents an attempt to describe the perceptions of secondary school principals of conflict management in the region under investigation.

Because of the nature of this study, a descriptive method was used to collect research data. A survey was used as a type of a descriptive technique. Behr (1983:91) acknowledges that the survey is one of the most widely used types of descriptive research in behavioral sciences. Helmstadter (1970:75) has the following to say about the survey:

"As with other approaches to research, there are some kinds of information which are virtually impossible to obtain by any other means Also, where the intent is to study perceptions or stated attitudes per se, then asking persons to describe what they see and how they feel is the only way to obtain the information."

The questionnaire was used as a research data-collection tool. Forcese and Richer (1973:160) define the questionnaire simply as a form of securing answers to questions. The researcher asks the respondent in writing about himself, his behaviour, or his attitudes and the latter responds in writing. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1984:128) regard the questionnaire as a useful instrument for gathering data in a natural setting. The researcher was further encouraged by the fact that the questionnaire is widely accepted as a best form of survey in carrying out an educational enquiry.

4.3.1 The suitability of the questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to assess the perception of conflict management by secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and

Training. Such an assessment can be obtained best by soliciting the perceptions of principals themselves. As already indicated in paragraph 4.2. the population to be studied, that is the principals, is spread all over the Natal province and in some areas of the Transvaal. The questionnaire, as Behr (1988:156) puts it, is the best available tool for collecting data from widespread sources. When sent by mail the questionnaires can reach the respondents irrespective of the distances involved. The questionnaires then automatically eliminates the cost of travel and travel time. To this end Mkhize (1992:161) contends that the use of questionnaires can be justified by their ability to allow wide coverage with minimum effort, financial expenditure and time consumption.

The nature of this study, as pointed out in paragraph 4.3, is basically descriptive. The questionnaire, according to Cohen and Mansion (1989:109), has often proved to be the best form of survey in carrying out an educational research. The respondents, who are in this case school principals, describe their own perceptions of conflict management based on their own experiences.

4.3.2 Questionnaire design

In developing the questionnaire the researcher was guided by suggestions of a number of authors. These include Anderson (1990), Verma and Beard (1981), Eichelberger (1989), Behr (1983) and Tuckman (1978). These authors concede that a well constructed questionnaire permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data relatively simply, cheaply and in a short space of time.

The objectives of this study as mentioned in chapter one necessitated the subdivision of the questionnaire schedule into four sections with a total number of thirty items. The items vary from factual questions to opinion questions. Section A of the questionnaire purported to elicit information to measure some important independent variables and the extent to which these influence the respondent's perception of conflict and its management. There are five factual close-ended questions in this section.

Section B aimed at eliciting information from the respondents to test the first hypotheses. The respondents were expected to express their own perceptions of the nature of conflict, that is, the nature of conflict as they understand it. This section consists of twelve sets of statements in a Lickert-type scale. Section C purported to elicit information from the respondents to test the second hypotheses. The respondents were expected to express their perceptions of conflict management. *There is a total number of eight sets of statements on conflict management also in a Likert -type scale.*

Finally, Section D of the questionnaire consists of five items. One of these is a factual close-ended question and four of them are open ended items, some of them being questions and others statements. The purpose of this section was to afford the respondents an opportunity to describe their actual experiences of conflict in their respective schools.

4.3.3 The pilot study

Anderson (1990:11) refers to the pilot study as a small scale study conducted prior to the actual research whose purpose is to test the procedures and techniques of the research. Accordingly the researcher felt there was a need to test the questionnaire on a small sample drawn from the population to be studied.

The purpose of conducting a pilot study was firstly, to specifically test the suitability of the questionnaire as a method of collecting research data. Although the descriptive nature of the study necessitated the use of the survey method of investigation, the researcher felt it was necessary to determine whether the questionnaire was the best suitable instrument for the collection of research data.

The second purpose of the pilot study was to test the adequacy of the questionnaire. Anderson (1990:49) argues that this is probably the most valuable function of the pilot study. Among other things the researcher considered the efficiency of the questionnaire; the wording of the questions themselves; the language itself; as well as the ability of the questionnaire to address the objectives of the study.

Lastly, the pilot study was conducted to determine the non-response rate. It was hoped that the probable number of refusals and non-contacts would be roughly estimated.

The sample for the pilot study was drawn from one area which was not going to form part of the final sample. The researcher decided to choose the Ermelo area mainly because this area is not within the geographical boundaries of Natal but falls within the Region of the Department of Education and Training. The sample frame listed sixteen secondary schools from Ermelo area. Sixteen questionnaires were accordingly mailed to the various principals of these schools with a covering letter indicating the purpose of research and requesting their assistance.

All questionnaires were returned with only one uncompleted. The principal of the school which returned the uncompleted questionnaire explained in a covering letter that the principal was White and since the research was on Black principals the response would be of no value to the researcher. The researcher then made one major change in the topic. The topic was changed to **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE NATAL REGION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING** to accommodate all principals in the region.

There was also a typing error in item number 31, that read "strongly agree" was corrected to read as "strongly disagree".

4.4. THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.4.1 The population

The population consisted of one hundred and eighteen (118) secondary school principals. These are spread all over Natal as well as some parts of the Transvaal

according to areas as described in paragraph 4.2. Having left out one area, that is Ermelo, which was used for the pilot study, the researcher was then left with five areas, accounting for one hundred and two secondary schools. The researcher decided to administer the questionnaires to all principals of these schools. This was done to ensure maximum coverage, as Anderson (1990:198) argues that the greater the coverage permitted by the survey, the more valid the results will be.

4.4.2 Administration of the questionnaire

4.4.2.1 Self administered questionnaires

The researcher felt it was necessary to administer some of the questionnaires personally. This was done in the Pietermaritzburg area as the researcher is familiar with the secondary schools in this area. This exercise helped to increase the response rate and the researcher was available whenever the respondents needed further clarity.

4.4.2.2 Mailed questionnaires

Questionnaires to the respondents in Durban, Glencoe, Ixopo and Vryheid areas were mailed. The researcher felt that it was not possible for him to personally administer these as he is not familiar with the schools in these areas, also it would have been too costly in terms of time and financial resources. These questionnaires were accompanied by self-addressed and postage paid envelopes for the convenience of the respondents. The covering letter (Appendix 5) clearly stated the purpose of the study and requested the respondents to assist the researcher by completing them. Proof that

permission had been obtained from the Regional Director was also enclosed (Appendix 6).

4.4.3 The final sample

It has already been mentioned in paragraph 4.4.1 that the questionnaires were administered to all remaining one hundred and two secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training. At first the response rate was not satisfactory as only thirty of the questionnaires were returned from those that were mailed. The researcher then wrote a follow-up (Appendix 7) letter reminding the principals about his request. As a result a total of sixty-eight questionnaires were received, including the self-administered questionnaires. The researcher felt that there these were enough, as they counted for 67% of the total questionnaires administered, to continue with the research. These then constituted the sample of the research.

4.5 THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE USED TO ANALYSE DATA

4.5.1 Presentation of data

Data is presented in the form of tables. There are twelve tables, six for each hypothesis. The first table for each hypothesis, that is table 1 and table 7 present data for analysis to test the two hypothesis as stated in paragraph 1.6.2. The other ten tables, that is tables 2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11 and 12 present data to establish whether or not some of the factors or independent variables influence the principals' perception

of conflict for the first hypothesis, and conflict management for the second hypothesis as indicated in paragraph 1.6.2.

The tables show the responses of the principals according to their distribution, that is how they perceive conflict in one instance and conflict management in the other. Out of the total sample of sixty-eight principals, the tables show the observed frequencies, which represent the actual count of principals who responded either positively or negatively.

4.5.2 The processing of data for analysis and testing.

4.5.2.1 Editing of the questionnaires

The researcher checked all the questionnaires to ensure that the questionnaires were completed to the researcher's expectation, that is all items of the schedule have been responded to. The researcher also wanted to ensure that there was consistency in the responses of the principals. The purpose was that of checking the questionnaires that have been spoiled either by some items not being responded to or by inconsistent responses. The researcher was satisfied that the questionnaires had been correctly completed and that there was no reason to discard any of the questionnaires from the sample.

4.5.2.2 Coding of the questionnaires

The researcher allocated numbers from one to sixty-eight to the questionnaires for the

purposes of the computer. The respondents' responses in sections A,B and C of the schedule were also coded. In Section A, for the independent variables, numbers from one to two or three or four, depending on the categories of each item, were allocated in an ascending order.

In Section B, and C the Likert-scale was used. In positive statements the following order was used:-

Strongly disagree	=	1
Disagree	=	2
Not sure	=	3
Agree	=	4
Strongly agree	=	5

In the negative statements the following order was used:-

Strongly disagree	=	5
Disagree	=	4
Not sure	=	3
Agree	=	2
Strongly agree	=	1

4.5.3 The procedure for the analysis of data

A computer was used to analyse data with use of statsgraphics. For the factors one and two, that is Sections B and C, a computer was used to add all the respondents' responses against the attitudinal continuum of 1 to 5 to obtain the respondents' score.

Then all the respondents' scores were added to calculate the general score. The mean score, symbolized by \bar{x} , was calculated to measure the central tendency most frequently used, by dividing the general score by the number of the respondents. For factor one, that is Section B of the questionnaire to measure the respondents' perception of conflict, the researcher obtained the $\bar{x} = 35$. This meant all the respondents who obtained the respondents' score of equal to or less than the \bar{x} (that is 35) would be considered as perceiving conflict negatively. All respondents who obtained a score which is above 35 were taken to be perceiving conflict positively. For factor two, that is Section C of the questionnaire to measure the respondents' perception of conflict management, a $\bar{x} = 25$ was obtained. As in factor one, all responses equal to or below \bar{x} (that is 25) were considered to be perceiving conflict management negatively, while all those who scored above 25 were considered to be perceiving conflict management positively.

4.5.4 The statistical test used

To test the hypothesis a chi-square test, symbolized by χ^2 test, was used. The researcher felt that the χ^2 test was the most appropriate one for the study of this nature. The researcher was interested in comparing the differences in the observed (or actual) frequencies (or counts) with the expected frequencies (or counts) in respect of the perception of conflict and conflict management by secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training.

For factors one and two if the obtained χ^2 value is greater than the chosen level of significance which is 0.05 the χ^2 was found not to be significant. Similarly if the χ^2 value obtained is less than the chosen level of significance (0.05) the χ^2 was found to be significant.

4.5.5. The interpretation of open-ended items of the questionnaire.

As indicated in paragraph 4.3.2 the last section, Section D, of the questionnaire consisted of four open-ended items to allow principals who had experienced the disruption of normal school activities due to conflict an opportunity to explain the nature of the disturbance; the sources or causes of such disturbances; the restoration of order; and the effect of such a disturbance. The principal's responses were summarized according to this order. The responses that were similar were counted and the generalizations were drawn on the basis of the popularity of each response per item.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the questionnaire was used to collect research data. The use of the questionnaire was necessitated by the descriptive nature of the study as well as the spread of the population studied. The Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training consists of six areas, five of which were used for research. These areas are spread all over the Natal Province.

Furthermore this chapter has shown how the research data was processed in preparation for analysis and hypothesis testing. It has also shown how research data is presented, analyzed and interpreted in Chapter five. Chapter five therefore will present the analysis and interpretation of data.

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CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis and interpretation research data. Firstly, the data on the principals' perception of conflict will be presented, analysed and interpreted. Some of the variables that can possibly influence the principal's perception of conflict will also be dealt with.

Secondly, the data on the principal's perception of conflict management will be presented, analyzed and interpreted. Some of the variables that can possibly influence the principals' perception of conflict management will also be dealt with.

Thirdly, the actual experiences of conflict particularly that had disrupted the normal school activities will be discussed. These will be categorised into four, namely: the nature of the disruption; the causes of such disruptions; and explanation of how order was restored and finally the effects of such a disruption.

Fourthly, the findings will be evaluated to come to some conclusion on the basis of the various results.

5.2 THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT

The research findings with regard to the perception of conflict by secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training is illustrated by Table 1 below:-

TABLE: 1 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT.

\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
39	29
34	34

Table 1 shows that thirty nine principals accounting for 57% of the total sample were found to be below the \bar{x} . Only twenty nine respondents, accounting for 43% of the sample, were found to be above \bar{x} . All respondents found to be equal to and below the \bar{x} were considered to perceive conflict negatively while all respondents found to be above the \bar{x} were considered to perceive conflict positively.

To test the hypothesis that secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict as an undesirable element in the school that brings about chaos, a χ^2 test was used. For Table 1 a χ^2 value of 1.47 at $df=1$ was obtained. The χ^2 value was found not to be significant at the chosen level of significance which is 0.05. The obtained level of significance was 0.2.

Since χ^2 is larger than the previously set of level of significance, the researcher upholds the null hypothesis and concludes that secondary school principals in the Natal Region of Department of Education and Training are perceive conflict negatively.

Hypothesis number one has been confirmed. Secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict as an

undesirable element in the school that brings about chaos.

5.3 THE INFLUENCE OF SOME INDEPENDENT VARIABLES ON THE PRINCIPAL'S PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT

5.3.1 The influence of gender on the perception of conflict

The study found that of the total sample there were sixty one males, accounting for 90% and only seven females accounting of 10%. This can be seen in table 2.

TABLE : 2 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO GENDER AND PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT.

GENDER	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
Male	32	29
Female	04	03

As table 2 shows, this variable is clearly unrepresentative. The number of female principals compares unfavourably with that of male teachers. To draw a fair and valid comparison between the female and male principal's perception of conflict the researcher felt that at least the number of female and male subjects should have been the same. This variable was therefore discarded.

5.3.2 The influence of qualification on perception of conflict

The researcher was interested in establishing whether or not the principal's perception of conflict is influenced by the principal's qualification. Table 2 shows how the principals responded.

TABLE : 3 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THEIR QUALIFICATION AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT.

QUALIFICATION	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
Standard 10	07	01
Bachelor's degree	19	12
Honour's degree	11	11
Master's degree	03	03
Doctorate	00	01

Table 3 shows that eight principals do not have a degree. that is, they only have a standard ten. They constitute 12% of the sample. Seven of these were below the \bar{x} . The table also shows that thirty-one principals have a Bachelor's degree. These constitute 46% of the total sample. Nineteen of these principals were found to be below the \bar{x} . It is further suggested by the table that twenty two of the principals have an Honours degree. These constitute 32% of the total sample. Half of these were

found to be below the \bar{x} while the other half was above the \bar{x} . The table also indicates that six of principals have a Master's degree. These constitute 09% of the sample. Half of these principals were found to be above the \bar{x} while the other half is below \bar{x} . Finally table 3 shows that one principal has a Doctorate, accounting for 01% of the sample. This principal was found to be above the \bar{x} . It is clear from table 3 that the majority of principals have either a Bachelor's degree or Honours degree. These constitute 78% of the sample.

To ascertain whether the variable of qualification does or does not influence the principals perception of conflict a χ^2 test was used. For table 3 a χ^2 value of 24.14 was obtained at $df = 4$. The obtained level of significance was found to be 0.00007. The chosen level of significance which is 0.05 was found to be larger than the χ^2 value. The χ^2 value was found to be significant as it was found to be less than the chosen level of significance.

It is then concluded that the qualification of the principal does influence their perception of conflict. This conclusion is also supported by table 3 where of the eight principals without a degree seven of them perceive conflict negatively. This constitutes 87.5% of these principals. The table also shows of the thirty one principals who have a Bachelors degree, nineteen, which is 61% of them, perceive conflict negatively and twelve or 39% perceive conflict positively. There were twenty two principals with an Honours degree. Eleven of these accounting for 50% perceive conflict negatively and the other eleven which is 50% perceive it positively. The percentage is the same with regard to the principals with a Masters degree. The

only principal with Doctor's degree perceive conflict positively. It should be noted that there is a consistent increase in percentages of the principals perception of conflict according to their qualification. The least qualified principals were represented by 12.5%. This figure grew to 39% with regard to principals with a Bachelor's degree. It further grew to 50% with regard to Honours and Master graduates. It is therefore clear that the more qualified is the principal the more likely he is to perceive conflict positively.

5.3.3 The influence of experience on the perception of conflict

The researcher was also interested in establishing the extent to which experience influences the principal's perception of conflict. Table 4 shows how the principals responded.

TABLE: 4 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THEIR EXPERIENCE AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT.

EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	\bar{x} and below	Above \bar{x}
00-1	11	09
01-05	19	14
05-10	06	02
over 10	03	04

Table 4 shows that twenty respondents out of the total sample had been principals in their respective school for only a year or less. They account for 29% of the sample. Eleven of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and nine were above the \bar{x} . Thirty three respondents, accounting for 49% of the sample, had been principals for between one and five years. Nineteen of these were found to be above the \bar{x} and fourteen were above the \bar{x} . Eight of the respondents had occupied their positions for between five and ten years. They account for 12% of the sample. Six of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and two were above the \bar{x} . Finally seven respondents indicated that they had occupied their positions for more than ten years. They account for 10% of the sample. Three of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and four above the \bar{x} .

To establish the extent to which experience influences the principal's perception of conflict a χ^2 test was used. For table 4 a χ^2 value of 2.7 was obtained at $df=3$. The χ^2 value was found not to be significant at the chosen level of significance of 0.05. The obtained level of significance was 0.4.

It is then concluded that experience does not influence the principal's perception of conflict. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that in the first three categories more respondents were found to be below the \bar{x} than those who were found to be above the \bar{x} . In the fourth category there were only seven respondents, accounting for only 10% of the sample. They therefore do not affect the conclusion that experience does not influence the principal's perception of conflict.

5.3.4 The influence of enrolment on the Principal's perception of conflict

The researcher further wanted to establish the extent to which the school enrolment affected the way in which principals perceive conflict.

The results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE : 5 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THE ENROLMENT IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT.

NUMBER OF PUPILS	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
00-500	10	14
501-1000	22	13
above 1000	07	02

Table 5 shows that twenty-four respondents out of the sample are principals of schools with the enrolment of 500 or less. They account for 35% of the sample. Ten of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and fourteen were above the \bar{x} . It also shows that thirty five respondents are principals of schools with the enrolment of between 501 and 1000. These account for 52% of the sample. Twenty two of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and thirteen were above the \bar{x} . Finally the table shows that nine respondents, accounting for 13% of the sample, are principals of schools with the enrolment of more than 1000 pupils. Seven of these were found to be below the

\bar{x} and two were above the \bar{x} .

To establish whether the enrolment of the school influences the principal's perception of a conflict a χ^2 test was used. For table 5 a χ^2 value of 12,47 was obtained at $df=2$. The χ^2 value of table 5 was found to be less than the chosen level of significance which is 0.05. The obtained level of significance was 0,001. The χ^2 value was therefore found to be significant.

It is therefore concluded that school enrolment influences the principal's perception of conflict. Even the table itself (Table 5) clearly shows that in the first category that is, enrolment of 500 or less, out of twenty four principals fourteen were found to be above the \bar{x} , which means they perceive conflict positively. These represent 58% of this group. Ten of this group, accounting for 52% were found to be below the \bar{x} . This means they perceive conflict negatively. In the second category it is shown that out of thirty-five principals thirteen accounting for 37%, were found to be above the \bar{x} . These perceive conflict positively. Twenty-two respondents, accounting for 63% were found to be below the \bar{x} . This means that in the second category 63% of the sample perceive conflict negatively. Table 5 also shows that in the third category out of nine respondents only two, accounting for 22% were found to be above the \bar{x} and seven (78%) were below the \bar{x} . It is clear therefore, that as the enrolment of the school increases principals change their attitudes towards conflict. It is clear from table 5 that in a school with at least 500 pupils more principals perceive conflict positively than in the schools with more than 500 pupils.

5.3.5 The influence of the type of school on the principals' perception of conflict.

The researcher was further interested in establishing whether the principal's perception of conflict was influenced by the type of school in which they serve.

Table 6 shows how they responded:

TABLE : 6 DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF SCHOOL THEY CONTROL AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT.

TYPE OF SCHOOL	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
Public	30	18
Government	08	10
State-Aided/Farm	01	01

Table 6 shows that out of the sample forty-eight principals came from public schools. These account for 71% of the sample. Thirty of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and eighteen were above the \bar{x} . It also shows that eighteen principals came from government schools, accounting for 26% of the sample. Eight of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and ten were above the \bar{x} . Lastly, it shows there were two principals from the State-aided or Farm schools. These represented only 03% of the sample. One of these was found to be below the \bar{x} and the other was above the \bar{x} .

To establish whether the principal's perception of conflict differed among the principals' according to their types of school a χ^2 test was used. For table 6 a χ^2 value of 3.7 was obtained at $df=2$. The χ^2 value was found not to be significant as its level of significance was greater than the chosen level of significance which is 0.05. The obtained level of significance was 0.1. It is concluded that the type of school does not influence the principal's perception of conflict.

5.4 THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

The research findings with regard to the perception of conflict management by secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training are illustrated by Table 7 below:-

TABLE: 7 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

x and below	above x
36	32

Table 7 shows that thirty-six principals of the total sample, accounting for 53% were observed as below the \bar{x} . This means they perceive conflict management negatively. It also shows that thirty-two of the principals, accounting for 47% were observed as

above the \bar{x} . These were seen to perceive conflict management positively.

To test the hypothesis that secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution a χ^2 test was used. For table 7 a χ^2 value of 0.23 was obtained at $df=1$. The level of significance was found to be 0.6. Since the obtained significance level is greater than the chosen level i.e. 0.05 the χ^2 value was found not to be significant.

The researcher therefore upholds the null hypothesis and concludes that secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution. Hypothesis number two has been confirmed.

5.5 THE INFLUENCE OF SOME VARIABLES ON THE PRINCIPAL'S PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

5.5.1 The influence of gender on the perception of conflict management

The study found that of the total sample there were 61 males, accounting for 90% of the sample and only seven females, accounting for 10% of the sample.

This is reflected in table 8.

TABLE : 8 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO GENDER AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

GENDER	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
Male	32	29
Female	04	03

This variable was discarded as it is clearly unrepresentative. The sample of the female teachers compares unfavourably with that of male principals. For the sample to compare favourably the number of female subjects should have at least been the same with that of male principals.

5.5.2 The influence of qualification on the perception of conflict management.

The researcher was then interested in establishing whether or not the principals perception of conflict management is influenced by the principals qualification. Table 9 shows how they responded.

TABLE : 9 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THEIR QUALIFICATION AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

QUALIFICATION	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
Standard 10	03	05
Bachelor's degree	19	12
Honour's degree	12	10
Master's degree	02	04
Doctorate degree	00	01

Table 9 shows that eight principals accounting for 12% did not have a degree. Five of these principals were found to be above the \bar{x} while three were below the \bar{x} . It also shows that thirty one principals out of the sample held a Bachelor's degree, accounting for 46% of the sample. Nineteen of these (61%) were found to be below the \bar{x} while twelve (39%) of them were found to be above \bar{x} . The table also shows that twenty-two principals held an Honours degree. These account for (32%) of the sample. Twelve of these (55%) were found to be below the \bar{x} , while ten (45%) were found to be above \bar{x} . Table 9 also shows that six principals had a Master's degree. They represented 9% of the total sample. Two of these (33%) were found to be below the \bar{x} while four (67%) were found to be above the \bar{x} . Only one principal

indicated that he had a Doctors degree. This principal was found to be above the \bar{x} .

To establish whether the principal's perception of conflict management was influenced by their qualification a χ^2 test was used. For table 9 a χ^2 value of 25.5 at $df=4$ was obtained. The obtained level of significance was 0.00003. The chosen level of significance which is 0.05 was found to be larger than the χ^2 value. The χ^2 value was therefore found to be significant.

It is therefore concluded that the principal's qualifications does influence their perception of conflict management. Table 9 clearly shows a steady increase of principals found to be above the \bar{x} from those that held a Bachelor's degree. The researcher noted that five out of eight principals in the first category, that is those with standard ten, representing 63% of them, were found to be above the \bar{x} , that is they perceive conflict management positively. Apart from this there is a steady increase of principals found to be above the \bar{x} . The study revealed that out of thirty one principals with a Bachelors degree nineteen of them (61%) were found to be below the \bar{x} and twelve (39%) were found to be above. It further revealed that out of twenty two principals with a Honours degree twelve (55%) were found to be below the \bar{x} and that ten (45%) were found to be above the \bar{x} . This situation changes when it comes to principals with Masters and Doctors degrees. In the last but one category more principals that is four out of six (67%) were found to be above the \bar{x} while two (33%) were found to be below the \bar{x} . The only respondent with a Doctorate degree was found to be above the \bar{x} . These figures suggest that the more qualifications principals have, the more positive they perceive conflict management. It is conceded

that the sample is rather too small to arrive at a really valid conclusion.

5.5.3 The influence of experience on the perception of conflict management.

The researcher wanted to establish the extent to which the variable of experience influenced the perception of conflict management by secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training. Table 10 shows how the principals responded.

TABLE : 10 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THEIR EXPERIENCE AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
00-01	09	11
01-05	19	14
05-10	05	03
over 10	02	05

Table 10 shows that there were twenty principal with an experience of one year or less. They accounted for 29% of the sample. Nine of these were found to be below the \bar{x} , while eleven were above the \bar{x} . Table 10 also shows that there were thirty-

three principals with an experience of between one and five years. They accounted for 49% of the sample. Nineteen of these were found to be below the \bar{x} , while fourteen were above the \bar{x} . The table further shows that eight of the principals had an experience of between five and ten years. They accounted for 12% of the sample. Five of these were found to be below the \bar{x} , while three were found to be above the \bar{x} . Finally the table shows that there were seven principals with an experience of more than ten years. They accounted for 10% of the sample. Two of these principals were found to be below the \bar{x} , while five were found to be above the \bar{x} .

To establish the extent to which the variable of experience influences the perception of conflict management by principals in the Natal Region of Department of Education and Training a χ^2 test was used. For table 10 a χ^2 value of 3.6 was obtained at $df=3$. The obtained significance level was 0.3. Since the chosen level of significance i.e 0.05 is less than the obtained value, the χ^2 value was found not to be significant.

It is concluded that the variable of experience has no influence on how the principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict management.

5.5.4 The influence of the enrolment on the principals' perception of conflict management.

The researcher further wanted to establish the extent, if any, to which school

enrolment influences the principal's perception of conflict management. Table 11 shows how the principals responded.

TABLE: 11 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THE ENROLMENT IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

NUMBER OF PUPILS	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
00-500	12	12
501-1000	18	17
above 1000	06	03

Table 11 shows that there were twenty-four principals whose schools had an enrolment of 500 or less pupils. They accounted for 35% of the sample. One half of these were found to be below the \bar{x} and the other half was found to be above the \bar{x} . The table also shows that thirty-five principals had schools with an enrolment of between 501 and 1000 pupils. They accounted for 52% of the sample. Eighteen of these principals were found to be below the \bar{x} while seventeen were found to be above the \bar{x} .

Lastly, the table shows that there were nine principals whose schools had an enrolment of above 1000 pupils. They accounted for 13% of the sample. Six of these principals were found to be below the \bar{x} , while three were found to be above the \bar{x} .

To establish the extent which the enrolment of the school influences the principal's perception of conflict management a χ^2 test was used. For table 11 a χ^2 value of 10.38 was obtained at $df=2$. The obtained significance level was 0.005. Since the chosen level of significance that is 0.05, is larger than the χ^2 value, the χ^2 was found to be significant.

It is then concluded that the enrolment of the school does affect the principals perception of conflict management. Table 11 shows that as the enrolment of the school increase so does the number of principals who were found to be below the \bar{x} . For instance in the first category that is the schools with 500 or less pupils, out of twenty-four principals twelve were found to be below the \bar{x} . This is 50% of this sample. In the second category, that is the schools with between 501 and 1000 pupils, out of thirty-five principals eighteen were found to be below the \bar{x} . This is 51% of this sample. In the last category, that is schools with an enrolment of over 1000 pupils, out of nine principals six were found to be below the \bar{x} . This is 67% of this sample.

5.5.5. The influence of the type of school on the principals' perception on conflict management

The researcher was finally interested to establish if the type of school influences the principal's perception of conflict management. Table 12 shows how the principals responded:

TABLE: 12 DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THE TYPES OF SCHOOLS THEY CONTROL AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT.

TYPE OF SCHOOL	\bar{x} and below	above \bar{x}
Public School	30	18
Government	05	13
State-Aided/Farm	00	02

Table 12 shows that forty-eight respondents were principals of public schools. These accounted for 71% of the sample. Thirty of these were found to be below the \bar{x} , while eighteen were found to be above \bar{x} .

It is also shown that eighteen of the respondents were principals of government schools. These account for 26% of the sample. It was found that five of these were below the \bar{x} , while thirteen were above the \bar{x} . The table further shows that two of the respondents were principals of state-aided or farm schools. They account for 3% of the sample. It was found that they were both above the \bar{x} .

To establish if the type of school influences the principal's perception of conflict management a χ^2 test was used. For table 12 a χ^2 value of 6.9 at $df=2$ was obtained. The obtained significance level was 0.03. Since the chosen level of significance, that is 0.05, was found to be larger than the χ^2 value, the χ^2 value was found to be

significant.

It is then concluded that the type of school does influence the principal's perception of conflict management. It is noted that out of forty eight public school principals thirty, which is 62.5% of the sample, were found to be below the \bar{x} and only eighteen (37.5%) were above the \bar{x} . This situation changes with regard to government and state-aided schools. Out of eighteen government school principals only five (28%) were found to be below the \bar{x} while thirteen (72%) were above the \bar{x} . The only two state-aided or farms schools principals were both found to be above the \bar{x} .

5.6 THE EXPERIENCES OF PRINCIPALS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

As explained in Chapter 4 the questionnaire consisted of a section, Section D, which requested the secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training to narrate their experiences of conflict particularly conflict that manifested itself in a form of class boycotts either by teachers or pupils or any other form of disturbance that ultimately resulted in the disturbance of the normal functioning of their schools. The principals were expected to first describe the nature of the disturbance; second to explain, in their opinions the causes of such disturbances; third to explain how order was restored; and fourth to explain the aftermath of the disturbance. The purpose of this section was to determine how the principals handled a conflict situation in relation to their perception of conflict management.

Out of the total sample of sixty eight principals, forty principals indicated that they had actually experienced conflict in which the normal functioning of the school was disturbed. These constitute 59% of the sample. Twenty-eight principals, constituting 41% of the sample, indicated that they had not experienced this type of conflict.

5.6.1 The type of conflict experienced by the principals

The responses of the principals to this item varied, with some indicating more than one instance of disturbance they had experienced. On the whole four types of conflict emerged as common.

5.6.1.1. Pupil - Authority Conflict

All respondents indicated that they had experienced a disturbance that directly involved the pupils and the school authorities. In most cases pupils stayed away from classes demanding an audience with the principal on a number of issues but most commonly the demand of school fees refunds and establishment of Student Representative Councils. The duration of these stay aways varied from one day to three weeks.

5.6.1.2 Pupil - Teacher Conflict

Some principals also indicated that they had to manage conflicts that occurred

between pupils and teachers. Out of the sample at least 50% had to resolve disputes that involved teachers and pupils.

5.6.1.3 Pupil - Pupil Conflict

Normal functioning of 50% of the secondary schools had been disrupted by conflict among pupils. Pupils were reported to have been involved in stabbings and shootings that resulted in some cases in fatal injuries and deaths.

5.6.1.4 Teachers - Authority Conflict

55% of the schools were disrupted due to stay aways or "sit-ins" by teachers themselves. Teachers are reported to have either absented themselves from school or did not attend to their classes while at school.

5.6.1.5 Teacher - Teacher Conflict

Ten principals (25%) reported that they had experienced the disruption of normal school activities due to teachers quarrelling among themselves. They reported that teachers divided themselves into two groups each not wanting to teach certain classes.

5.6.1.6 General stay away

All principals reported that they had also experienced a total disturbance of school functioning when neither teachers nor pupils reported to schools on certain days. For eight principals (20%) this is the only form of disturbance they had experienced

5.6.2 The causes of conflict experienced by the principals

5.6.2.1 The causes of pupil - authority conflict

There was a general consensus that the main cause of pupil-authority conflict was the influence from the community within which the schools were operating. The principals cited the political developments in the country in general and the increasing level of participation of the youth in community structures as eye opening for the pupils, hence the demands of Student Representative Councils, refund of school fees, and other related demands.

Thirty principals (75%) also cited poor communication within the school as a common source of conflict. They argued that pupils are not informed about school policy, rules and regulations of the school and the powers of teachers and the school principal. This result in pupils making unrealistic demands due to unrealistic expectations. In paragraph 2.6.4 it was indicated that poor communication can cause serious conflict in the school. Other principals, particularly those that are new to their schools indicated that the previous principal had been too lenient with the pupils.

There were no rules and consequently pupils did as they pleased. They blamed their predecessors for failing to control pupils. Pupils were therefore unruly and undisciplined.

5.6.2.2 The causes of pupil - teacher conflict

Principals reported that pupils demanded the resignation or expulsion of certain teachers whom, they alleged, were either irresponsible or inefficient. Normal functioning of the schools had been stopped as pupils refused to go to their classes. Some principals conceded that some teachers are really irresponsible and or inefficient. They reported that some teachers had intimate personal relationships with pupils and often consumed intoxicating substances in schools. Other principals felt this type of conflict also was as result of the infiltration of the schools by some members of the communities using pupils to attain their personal objectives.

Other principals felt that pupils either boycotted or assaulted some teachers because of political reasons. Some of these principals reported that they themselves at one stage or another had been victims of this ordeal. These principals also blamed the political circumstances of their communities.

5.6.2.3 The causes of pupil - pupil conflict

The principals generally agreed that the stabbings and/or shootings among pupils, that subsequently disrupted the normal activities of the schools, was as a result of the

growing political rivalry and intolerance in the neighbouring communities. The use of drugs in the school premises and general hooliganism was also cited as a cause of this conflict.

5.6.2.4 The causes of teacher - authority conflict

The principals indicated that the disruption of normal school activities caused by teachers was directed at the Department itself. Teachers either refused to teach or simply stayed away from schools. The principals reported the main cause as the dissatisfaction of the teachers about salaries, conditions of their employment, shortages of materials, overcrowding of classrooms and the high pupil - teacher ratios. Some principals blamed the formation of the South African Democratic Teachers Union as the source of conflict. These principals reported that teachers started to stay away from school and classes after the formation of the S.A.D.T.U.

Other principals cited the increasing political awareness of the teachers as a cause of the growing dissatisfaction among teachers.

5.6.2.5 The cause of teacher - teacher conflict

The principal who have experienced this conflict reported that it was caused by competition among the graduate and non-graduate teachers. Graduate teachers did not want to teach junior classes, while some non-graduate but senior teachers also did not want to teach these classes. All teachers eventually wanted to teach senior

classes.

5.6.2.6 The cause of general stay aways

All principals who had experienced the disruption of normal school activities attributed this to the general stay aways in the communities. They mentioned particularly the stay aways by trade unions, commemoration of days like March 21 (Sharpville Massacre), September 12 (Biko Day) and other politically motivated commemorations. The general impression is that teachers and pupils identify themselves with these events as members of the larger community.

5.6.3 The principals' responses to conflict situations

The principals responded to the disturbances in different ways, depending on who has caused the disturbance and why was the disturbance caused. Most of the principals cited one or more of the following strategies, most of which were discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

5.6.3.1 Confrontation

Most principals indicated that once there had been a disturbance they usually invited those involved to a discussion. They emphasized that communication is usually open and each party states its own case and suggestions. In paragraph 2.8.1 it was shown that this strategy is the best, especially when there is no time pressure. Most

principals indicated that they use this strategy mainly when pupils make unrealistic demands. This is probably due to the fact that the principals have to be honest with the pupils and explain what they can and cannot do. Some reported that they used this strategy to resolve disputes involving pupils and teachers.

5.6.3.2 Use of authority

Some principals reported that they usually exercise their authority to normalise the situation in their schools. They reported that they simply enforced rules and discipline to "force" pupils to go back to classes. These are the principals who thought the rules were too relaxed as a result pupils were unruly. In paragraph 2.8.1.2 it was shown that this strategy does not eliminate points of difference but it sometimes work to normalise the situation especially when young pupils are involved.

5.6.3.3 Appeal to superordinate goals

When teachers stay away from classes principals reported that they prefer to call teachers and plead with them emphasizing the fact that they have a common purpose to come to work, that is, to teach. They find this strategy to be effective when conflict is between teachers. They however, agree that there is little they can do when faced with teacher - authority conflict.

5.6.3.4 Ignoring Conflict

With regard to the disturbance that are due to general stay aways and those that are clearly politically motivated principals concede that they simply do not do anything. Some principals actually reported that they accommodated this problem.

5.6.4 Conflict aftermath

Asked what the principals thought were the effects of the disturbances in their schools, principals responded with two or more of the following:-

5.6.4.1 Loss of Teaching time

All principals accepted the fact that these disturbances resulted in the loss of teaching time. As a result they find it almost impossible to finish the syllabi. This leads to an increased failure rate, especially with regard to the matriculants. There is general consensus that a stay away, whether by teachers or pupils, for whatever reason has harmful effects especially with regard to short term objectives of the school.

5.6.4.2 Drop-outs and teacher resignations

Another common effect of the recurring disturbances is the increasing number of

drop-outs. Pupils simply leave school as they feel they waste their time by going to school only to find that there is no teaching and learning. Other principals mentioned the fact that during the disturbances pupils get extra-time to idle. The result is that boys turn into hooligans, girls get pregnant and all other sorts of mischief. Many principals reported that they have lost committed and responsible teachers who simply cannot work in the given circumstances. Teachers resign and seek employment in other schools.

5.6.4.3 Demotivation

Another common effect of the disturbances is general demotivation and the lowering of the morale. Principals reported that even when the disturbances are over and everybody is back to his post there is usually low morale especially when conflict had resulted in loss of lives or injuries.

Stress was also mentioned by some principals. They reported that these disturbances strained interpersonal relationships resulting in withdrawal and low commitment to the objectives of the school. This increases tension and possibilities of failure, drop-outs and teacher resignations.

5.6.4.4 Improved relationships

A few principals felt the disturbances they experienced brought positive consequences. They reported that interpersonal relationships improved as there was an increase in

understanding one another. Most of these principals are the principals who reported that they prefer an open and honest discussion with their pupils when the disturbance occurred. They further reported that the level of co-operation and confidence increased after their discussions. This confirms that conflict is not always dysfunctional. It can be useful in improving human relationships (Chapter 2 paragraph 2.4.2).

5.7. CONFLICT AND ITS MANAGEMENT AS PERCEIVED AND EXPERIENCED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: AN EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS

In paragraph 5.2 it was shown that secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict as an undesirable element in the school that brings about chaos. The confirmation of the first hypothesis, (Chapter 1, paragraph 1.6.2.1) is as result of the principals' responses which are shown in Table 1 of the same paragraph, according to which, thirty-nine principals, accounting for 57% of the sample perceive conflict negatively. There are some possible reasons that make most principals perceive conflict as undesirable because it brings about chaos. One of these is the qualification of most of these principals. Table 3 showed that most of them, that is thirty-nine or 57%, had a qualification of a Bachelor's degree or standard ten.

Most of these principals were found to be below the \bar{x} which means they were the ones who mostly perceive conflict negatively. There were seven among those with a standard ten and nineteen among those with a Bachelor's degree.

Another possible reason is that of high enrolment of the schools. Table 5 showed that in secondary schools with less enrolment figures most principals perceived conflict positively. For example in schools with an enrolment of 500 pupils or less more principals were found to be above the \bar{x} which means they perceive conflict negatively.

The experience that principals had of conflict that actually disrupted the normal functioning of the school seem to have contributed to the overall perception of conflict as undesirable. Most principals reported that they experienced negative consequences of conflict. They mentioned the increased failure rate, increased drop-out rate, loss of lives, destruction of personal and school property, loss of teaching time, demotivation, strained relations and resignations of teachers as consequences seem to have made them develop a totally negative view of conflict. It is clear that the principals have experienced destructive or dysfunctional conflict which has more costs than benefits (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.4.1).

In paragraph 5.4. it was shown that secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution. The confirmation of hypothesis two was as result of the principal's responses as shown in table 7 of the same paragraph according to which thirty-six principals, accounting for 53%, were found to be below the \bar{x} . This means that the majority of principals perceive conflict management negatively. These principals view as the function of managing conflict the sole purpose of discouraging

it.

The principals' perception of conflict management is obviously based on their perception of conflict itself. The principals' perception of conflict influences his perception of conflict management (Chapter 1, paragraph 1.4). Research has found that the majority of the principals perceive conflict negatively, that is, as an undesirable element that brings about chaos to the school and consequently the function of conflict management is to eliminate conflict. If a school principal has a negative perception of conflict he or she is most likely to react negatively. As a result conflict management may simply mean conflict resolution. In chapter 2 it was revealed that conflict management is not just about conflict resolution. It is in fact more than that. It is about both conflict resolution and stimulation (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.8).

The study found that most principals have experienced conflict between the pupils and the school authorities. This conflict has led to the disruption of school activities as pupils either stayed away from classes or the general atmosphere on the school premises had been un conducive to effective teaching and learning. It was also established that the most common cause of this disruption is the influence of the outside community. The ongoing socio-political conflict in the community directly influences the pupils, who are also part of the community. The pupils are increasingly becoming aware of the weakness of the present system of education and consequently they make unrealistic demands to the school authorities. The principals further blame the continuing political intolerance in their communities. Pupils also

become involved in these struggles for power and this situation is brought to the school premises by the pupils. They agree that there is not much they can do about this apart from trying to address the pupils and using whatever authority they have to ensure that normal functioning of the school is not disrupted.

From what the principal reported in trying to restore order, it is clear that they cannot generally be blamed for the consequences they narrated. They have reported that they normally try to solve the problem through direct means. They even consult with the stakeholders in schools. Their perception of conflict management seem to have been influenced by the experiences they have had with conflict in their schools. None seem to realize that conflict is not only unavoidable but may be necessary (Chapter 2, paragraph 2.3)

5.8 CONCLUSION

Both hypothesis one and two were confirmed. Secondary school principals in the Natal Region perceive conflict as an undesirable element in the school that brings about chaos. Consequently, they perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution.

The secondary school principals who have had their schools disrupted due to conflict seem to have tried to restore order by applying different strategies. The loss of teaching time, increased failure rate, resignation of teachers, tension, demonstration, and loss of lives seem to have been a common effect of the disruptions. This fact

seem to have influence over how principals perceive conflict and conflict management. In fact their experiences of disruptions justify the principals' perceptions of conflict and consequently conflict management.

On the basis of these findings chapter six will summarise the discussion and provide recommendations to assist in the development of a more unbiased approach to conflict and conflict management.

CHAPTER SIX

REVIEW OF THE PROJECT, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this final chapter is to recapitulate on the whole study, draw conclusions and make recommendations. This chapter will therefore first of all review the study by *inter alia* restating the problem researched, restating the purposes of the study and the methodology used. Secondly conclusions will be drawn on the basis of findings discussed in Chapter five of the study. Finally recommendations that may provide a framework for dealing with conflict in schools will be made. Focus will be on the reduction of negative forms of conflict.

6.2 REVIEW OF THE PROJECT

6.2.1 The restatement of the problem

In Chapter one, paragraph 1.3 the problem to be researched was stated. It referred to the escalating rate of direct physical confrontation and the endemic boycott of classes by either pupils or teachers in secondary schools in the Natal region of the Department of Education and Training. This situation was regarded as unacceptable as it frustrates the performance of the school. The primary objective of the school remains unmet as no teaching and learning takes place when such situations arise.

The principal's perception of conflict was regarded as of cardinal importance because it influences the principal's perception of conflict management and of his own position as a conflict manager.

6.2.2 The restatement of the purposes of the study

In paragraph 1.5 above the purposes of the study were stated as to describe the secondary principal's perception of conflict as well as its management. It was also stated that, on the basis of the findings, recommendations will be made for an effective model of conflict management.

6.2.3 The restatement of research methodology

6.2.3.1 The hypothesis restated

In paragraph 1.6.2 the researcher assumed that secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training had a negative perception of conflict and consequently they perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution.

6.2.3.2 The method used

Research data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire with predominantly close-ended items in a Likert-type scale. These questionnaires were

administered to the secondary principals in the area under investigation.

The collected data was analysed by use of a computer and the hypothesis were tested by means of a chi-square test.

6.3 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

6.3.1 Principals' perception of conflict

In paragraph 5.4 it was found that the secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the Department of Education and Training perceive conflict as an undesirable element in the school that brings about chaos. Out of the total sample 57% of the principals were found to be below the mean. This negative perception emanates from the traditional view of conflict. As studies in Chapter two revealed, conflict is not necessarily undesirable and does not necessarily have to produce chaos. The contemporary view of conflict argues that conflict is in fact desirable. The functions of conflict were discussed in Chapter two. The principal's perception of conflict may be attributed to three reasons, namely their experiences of conflict; their qualifications and the enrolment of the schools.

6.3.1.1. The principals' experience of conflict

In paragraph 5.6.4 the principals cited loss of teaching time, increased drop-out and teacher resignation rate, demotivation, loss of lives, injuries to persons, damage to

school property increased antagonism as experiences they went through as result of conflict that had reached manifest stage. These experiences clearly show negative results of conflict. The researcher then concludes that negative experiences of conflict influenced principal's perception of conflict.

6.3.1.2 The qualification factor and the principals' perception of conflict

In paragraph 5.3.2 it was established that the principal's educational qualification influences their perception of conflict. It was found that 67% of the principals who perceive conflict negatively held either standard ten or a Bachelor's degree as their highest educational qualification. This state of affairs show clearly that principals, in their capacities as managers, lack in their understanding of conflict. They lack further education on conflict management as an aspect of school management.

6.3.1.3 The enrolment factor and the principals' perception of conflict

In paragraph 5.3.4 it was established that the enrolment of the school influences the principal's perception of conflict. It was found that as the enrolment figures in the school increase more principals tend to perceive conflict negatively. The majority (74%) of the principals who perceive conflict negatively manage schools with the enrolment of more than five hundred pupils. Incidentally these are mostly the principals who had experienced conflict that had disrupted the normal functioning of the schools. This shows therefore that as the enrolment increases the possibilities of dysfunctional conflict increase as schools become more difficult to control. It was

noted in Chapter two that a potential for conflict is inherent in human beings and as a result the more people are in an organisation the more chances are for conflict.

6.3.2 The principals' perception of conflict management

In paragraph 5.4 it was established that the secondary school principals in the Natal Region perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution. Out of the sample 53% was found to be below the mean. This is a negative perception of conflict management emanating from the negative perception of conflict itself. In paragraph 1.4 an assertion was made that the principal's perception of conflict is likely to influence his/her perception of conflict management. If the principal's perception of conflict is negative, the principal is likely to view conflict management as synonymous resolution. The researcher concedes that there is a difference of 4% between the principals who perceive conflict negatively and the principals who perceive conflict management as conflict resolution. However, this difference is too small to be of any significance. The researcher therefore still maintains that the principals' negative perception of conflict result in their perception of conflict management as conflict resolution. Studies in Chapter two revealed that conflict management embraces both the stimulation and the resolution of conflict. This view of conflict management is based on the fact that a certain amount of conflict is necessary for the school to perform its functions effectively but excessive conflict may be detrimental to the school's functioning. The correct perception of conflict is thus of cardinal importance as it influences the principal's perception of conflict management. If the principal perceives conflict as undesirable and chaotic he is more

likely to view its management as an attempt to resolve or get rid of it indiscriminately.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.4.1 Education and training of school principals.

It is recommended that serving teachers who have been earmarked for principalship be subjected to a programme of formal education and training for such position. The purpose of such programme should be to equip the prospective principals with necessary theory and practice of school management. It is conceded that all principals are trained teachers and some have obtained degrees. This training is, however, insufficient to prepare school principals as managers, leaders and administrators. In teacher training a course in school management is one of many other courses that are offered and consequently it does not receive adequate attention to effectively prepare the teacher to assume the comprehensive task of principalship.

This programme should be directed at specifically preparing the prospective principals for their roles as school managers. The content of this programme should therefore cover all areas and aspects of management. For this purpose internship may be suggested for prospective principals as a way of preparing them for this position. This training will alleviate the problem of assuming that anyone who has been trained as a teacher can become a principal.

The aspect of conflict management in the training programme should emphasize both the benefits and costs of conflict, and therefore both its stimulation and resolution. The researcher appreciates the present programme for in-service training of principals as discussed in paragraph 3.4. This programme, however, fails to emphasize that conflict stimulation is part of conflict management (Chapter 3, par 3.6). Although in paragraph 3.4.1 it asserted that conflict is not always unpleasant, it only addresses itself to conflict resolution.

6.4.2 Effective conflict management

It is recommended that serving principal should accept that conflict is not only inevitable but also manageable. They should further accept that if well managed conflict can benefit the school in various ways as explained in paragraph 2.4.2. They should appreciate both the value and costs of conflict.

Effective management can help the principal to maintain necessary amount of conflict to keep the school functioning effectively and efficiently. The school policy, rules and regulations should be clearly communicated to both the teachers and the pupils. They should be written down and made available for everyone. It may be important that they are interpreted to assist everyone to know exactly what is expected of each member of the school and what the school has for each member.

The principal should also clearly define the tasks and responsibilities of each member

of staff. This will help prevent unnecessary conflict that emanates from unclearly defined roles. The principal should further ensure that the school intake is commensurate with the available resources. This may minimise conflict over limited resources.

The principal should in consultation with stakeholders of the school draw a code of conduct for his subordinates and pupils. Everybody should know what is expected of them in terms of general behaviour thus the possibility unnecessary conflict is minimised. It is important however that everybody accepts the code of conduct as legitimate. This can be achieved through the participation of all stakeholders in its formulation.

The principal should also be realistic, honest and frank. Unrealised objectives and therefore expectations often lead to frustration as these cannot be achieved. The principal should therefore be honest and frank about his position and powers to each member of the school. Unnecessary conflict can arise when pupils demand a refund of their school fees if the principal had been dishonest and/or had not explained the use of school funds in the normal functioning of the school. Pupils should not only be told why they must pay school fees but also how will their fees be spent.

The principal can therefore control the amount of conflict in his school by being sensitive to the possible sources of unnecessary conflict. The principal should identify conflict that maybe harmful to the school functioning as early as possible. The principal should therefore be sensitive to the issues and events in his school.

Although overcrowding and limited resources are not conflict *per se* but the existence of these factors is an indication that conflict may arise as many people compete for scarce resources. A high rate of anxiety and general restlessness are also signs that all is not well in the school. These and other issues should be closely monitored. Continued monitoring is necessary to identify conflict at the earliest stage.

6.4.3 Conflict resolution in secondary schools

It is conceded by the researcher that it is very difficult to suggest and recommend any specific technique or step-by-step guide to resolve conflict in schools. Any choice by the principal of an appropriate or a combination of appropriate techniques for resolving conflict should be influenced by the source, the type and personalities involved in conflict to be resolved. Any of the techniques referred to in paragraphs 2.8.1 and 3.4.2.3.2 may be employed to deal with conflict. It should nevertheless be emphasized that once conflict has been identified as requiring resolution, the principal should monitor the developments very closely irrespective of whatever technique has been used to resolve such conflict.

It should further be emphasized that the aim of resolving conflict is to reduce it to a functional level. Conflict is inevitable, therefore no principal should expect it to be non-existent in his school. In fact the non-existent of conflict is also a sign that all is not well in the school. It should be borne in mind that conflict is not only inevitable but also necessary for the development and improvement of the school.

6.5 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher, submits that this study exposed the secondary school principals' perception of conflict management, and that is concentrated on the Natal Region of Department of Education and Training. Further research may be conducted in respect of other regions with a view of comparing the perception of all principals in the country.

It is conceded that conflict management is one of the many related areas of management in schools. Further research may therefore be conducted to establish how principals perceive their other equally important functions in school management. These areas include supervision, communication, motivation and discipline in schools.

Although school principals are ultimately responsible for their schools, they work with other teachers. Research may also be conducted among teachers, particularly class teachers, to establish their understanding of themselves as managers in their own areas of operation.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has recapitulated the whole study by *inter alia* restating the problem and purpose of the study, the hypothesis and research methodology used to conduct empirical research. The conclusions of the study were drawn and reasons for the

principals' perception of conflict management were advanced. Recommendations were also stated.

The researcher hopes that this study will throw more light to secondary school principals in respect of conflict management. Their perception of this crucial area of management is of cardinal importance to their success as school managers. The success of the school as an organisation depends to a large extent on the creation and maintenance of a conducive atmosphere that will enhance the spirit of co-operation and healthy sharing of ideas for the common purpose of the school.

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APPENDIX 1QUESTIONNAIRE TO SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALSConflict management as perceived by secondary school principals in the Natal Region
of the Department of Education and TrainingSECTION A

Please indicate your response with a cross (X) in the relevant box.

1. What is your sex?

Male

Female

2. What is your highest academic qualification?

Standard ten

Bachelor's degree

Honour's degree

Master's degree

3. For how long have you occupied your present position:

One year

Between one and five years

Between five and ten years

Over ten years

4. How many pupils do you have in your school?

Less than 500

Between 500 and 1000

Over 1000

5. How would you classify your school?

A public school

A government school

SECTION B

6. Conflict is a natural characteristic of human interaction.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

7. Conflict should be accepted as inevitable in schools

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

8. Conflict cannot be completely removed from the school.

Strongly agree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

9. Conflict is disruptive of daily school routine.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

10. Conflict causes tension and lack of communication among people.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

11. Conflict produces hostility and antagonism in the school.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

12. Conflict is a vital ingredient to improve human relations in school.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

13. Conflict improves the quality of the service provided by the school.

Strongly agree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

14. Conflict improves communication skills of pupils and teachers in the school.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

15. When there is either too little or too much conflict the principal may expect poor performance in the school.

Strongly agree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

16. Moderate conflict increases the performance in the school.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

17. Conflict *per se* is neither good nor bad for the school. It depends on how it is managed.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

SECTION C

18. Conflict management means "stamping" conflict out, i.e. getting rid of it.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

19. The best school is the school that does not experience any conflict.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

20. A good principal is the one who does not allow conflict in his school.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

21. The only purpose of managing conflict is to remove as much conflict as possible from the school.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

22. When there is not conflict in the school, it is a sign that the principal is very effective and competent.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

23. *Managing conflict means keeping conflict minimal, that is at moderate or functional level.*

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

24. *When there is no conflict, the principal should create some.*

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

25. The "best" school is the school in which differences of opinion are encouraged but controlled.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Not sure

Agree

Strongly agree

SECTION D

26. In your school have you ever had any disturbances, e.g. stay away from classes by pupils or teachers.

Yes

No

27. If the answer to item number 26 is "yes", describe in short the nature of the disturbance.

28. In your opinion what caused the disturbance described above?

29. Explain how order was restored.

30. What were the effects of the disturbance on your school?

Explain briefly.

APPENDIX 2**SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' SCORES**

row	gender	qualification	experie.	enrolm.	scho.	fact. 1	fact. 2	Total
1	1	2	1	2	1	38	30	68
2	1	2	3	2	1	32	21	53
3	1	3	2	2	1	36	23	59
4	1	1	2	1	2	32	26	58
5	1	2	2	2	1	52	30	82
6	1	2	3	2	1	32	31	63
7	1	1	4	1	2	31	27	58

8	1	3	2	1	2	24	9	33
9	1	4	2	3	2	28	20	48
10	1	5	1	1	2	44	33	77
11	1	1	1	3	1	22	17	39
12	1	2	3	2	1	35	23	58
13	1	3	2	2	1	46	33	79
14	1	1	4	1	1	38	30	68
15	1	1	2	1	1	35	26	61
16	1	2	2	1	1	48	25	73
17	1	2	1	2	1	33	31	64
18	1	3	2	1	1	34	25	59
19	1	4	1	1	1	20	20	40
20	1	3	2	2	1	35	25	60
21	1	2	3	1	2	39	23	62

22	1	2	2	2	1	32	20	52
23	1	2	4	3	1	37	30	67
24	1	2	2	3	1	35	25	60
25	1	3	1	2	1	39	28	67
26	1	2	4	3	1	26	17	43
27	1	2	2	2	1	36	29	65
28	1	2	3	2	1	34	27	61
29	1	2	3	2	1	34	23	57
30	1	4	1	2	2	28	31	59
31	2	2	2	1	3	39	22	61
32	2	2	1	1	3	30	24	54
33	1	2	0	2	1	33	23	56
34	1	3	2	2	2	35	36	71
35	1	2	1	1	1	29	25	54
36	1	2	0	1	1	28	22	50

37	1	2	1	1	1	36	25	61
38	1	2	2	4	1	33	23	56
39	1	1	4	2	0	28	16	44
40	1	3	2	2	1	33	19	52
41	1	3	3	2	2	27	19	46
42	1	3	2	2	2	42	24	66
43	1	2	2	2	1	33	23	46
44	1	3	2	2	2	37	29	66
45	1	2	2	2	2	35	28	63
46	2	4	2	0	2	37	28	65
47	2	4	1	1	1	38	28	66
48	1	2	1	2	1	38	32	70
49	2	1	2	3	1	30	27	57
50	1	3	4	2	1	40	31	71
51	1	1	1	1	1	30	22	52

52	1	4	4	1	2	42	31	73
53	2	3	2	1	1	36	20	56
54	1	3	1	1	2	37	26	63
55	1	3	1	1	2	37	26	63
56	1	3	1	1	2	37	26	63
57	1	2	1	2	1	35	16	51
58	1	2	2	1	1	44	35	79
59	1	3	3	3	1	48	31	79
60	1	2	2	2	1	30	14	44
61	1	3	2	2	1	28	20	48
62	1	2	2	2	1	28	21	49
63	1	3	2	2	1	50	34	84
64	1	2	2	2	2	46	27	73
65	1	3	2	2	1	27	13	40
66	2	3	1	2	1	30	13	43

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67	1	2	2	2	1	48	27	75
68	1	3	2	3	1	28	17	45

APPENDIX 3

A Summary of the computations of the χ^2 analysis for hypothesis one

Formula : $\chi^2 = \frac{(O - e)^2}{e}$

Hypothesis	χ^2	D.F.	Significance Level :005
1. Secondary school principal in the Natal Region of the DET perceive conflict as an undesirable element in the school that brings about chaos.	1.5	1	0.2 = Not significant
(a) Qualification and the perception of conflict	24.1	4	7.4E-5 = Significant
(b) Experience and the perception of conflict	2.7	3	0.4 = Not Significant
(c) Enrolment and the perception of conflict	12.5	2	1.9E-3 = Significant
(d) Type of school and the perception of conflict	3.7	2	0.1 = Not Significant

APPENDIX 4**A Summary of the computation of the χ^2 analysis for hypothesis two**

Formula : $\chi^2 = \frac{(O - e)}{e}$

Hypothesis	χ^2	D.F.	Significance Level: 0.05
2. Secondary school principals in the Natal Region of the DET perceive conflict management as synonymous to conflict resolution	0.2	1	0.6 = Not Significant
(a) Qualification and the perception of conflict management	25.2	4	3.9E-5 = Significant
(b) Experience and the perception of conflict management	3.6	3	0.3 = Not Significant
(c) Enrolment and the perception of conflict management	10.4	2	5.5E-3 = Significant
(d) Type of school and the perception of conflict management	6.9	2	0.03 = Significant

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Fax (0351) 93130 (Rectorial)
Fax (0351) 93571 (Library)

Ref./Verw

18 January 1993

The Principal

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Dear Sir/Madam

I kindly request you to assist me by completing this questionnaire to enable me to complete a research project for a Master of Education degree. Permission has been obtained from the Chief Regional Director (See enclosed copy).

The topic of the research is:

"CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE NATAL REGION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING".

All the information collected will be treated as confidential and your identity is not necessary.

Please use the enclosed self addressed envelope to post the questionnaire to me.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

S T E MLAMBO

DEPARTEMENT VAN
ONDERWYS EN OPLEIDING



DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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6/16/2

Mr S.T.E. Mlambo
University of Zululand
P/Bag X1001
KWA-DLANGEZWA
3886

19 October 1992

Dear Mr Mlambo

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

Your request to do research in the Natal schools has been approved, and you are therefore advised to liaise with and work through the relevant Area Managers. Their addresses and telephone numbers are as follows :

Area Manager
Education and Training

Durban	P/Bag X54303	031-3019394
P.M. Burg	P/Bag X9021	0331-458265
Glencoe	P/Bag 8	0341-31994
Vryheid	P/Bag X9318	0381-809010

It is trusted that you will be kind enough to present this office with a copy of your thesis for our library.

Signature
1 REGIONAL CHIEF DIRECTOR : EDUCATION AND TRAINING

/lp



20 April 1993

The Principal

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

Dear Sir/Madam

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

It is with regret that a substantial number of questionnaires I mailed to all secondary school principals in the Natal Region in January have not been returned to me.

If you did not receive the questionnaire or if you could not get time to fill it in, it is always my pleasure to send you another one for your kind attention. Would you kindly fill it in to enable me to complete this research project.

If you have already posted it to me please accept my appreciation.

I trust you will be able to assist me as your kind co-operation is always appreciated.

I thank you.

Yours sincerely

S T E MLAMBO