

**THE NATURE OF TEACHER CONFLICT AND CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT IN SIXTEEN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LESOTHO**

by

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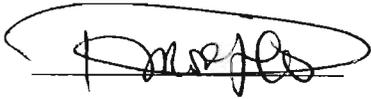
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SUPERVISORS' STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with/ without our approval

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

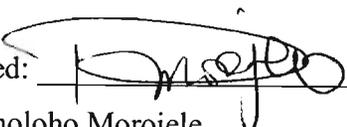
I, **Marabele Alphoncina Makibi**, hereby declare that this dissertation is my work and does not contain any materials which have been submitted before for any degree in any institution. Use of any published material has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management strategies employed by teachers in sixteen selected primary schools in the Pitseng region, Lesotho. The study was informed by the micro-political and organizational theories of Ball (1987), the two-dimensional model of conflict management proposed by Rahim (1983), and the model of oppression conceptualised by Young (2000). The study utilized a mixed methods approach. The sample included 16 schools and 163 teachers. The data collection techniques included a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

The findings revealed that teachers experienced institutional, cultural and personal conflicts within the micro-politics of the school settings. The complexity of teacher conflict becomes evident in the intersection of factors such as educational policy, religion, cultural norms and beliefs, ideologies and social groupings within schools. It is argued that embedded in teacher conflict are forms of oppression and domination and related power struggles. Four cross cutting issues exacerbate teacher conflict in the study schools, and these are: poor communication or lack of dialogue, inadequate conflict management skills, ineffective school leadership, and teacher stress within schools.

The study revealed that teachers used strategies that were located mainly in three conflict management domains: integrating, obliging and compromising. Power dynamics within schools, religious and cultural ideologies, norms and beliefs, and lack of support were viewed as barriers to effective conflict management. Lack of support from the school management was cited as a major problem in addressing teacher conflict in these schools.

The study has important implications for policy implementation at school and national levels, teacher development and school leadership training. The focus of conflict management training should be on getting teachers to analyse conflict and situations that trigger conflict through a social justice lens. A key aim would be to build socially just and inclusive school cultures located in a rights discourse, and grounded in the principles of participation, accountability, social inclusion, non-discrimination and linkages to human rights standards.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my late father **Thabo** and my husband **Ramosoatsi**.
I wish you could have been around to see my dreams come true.

May your souls rest in peace! Amen

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the background to the study. It also discusses the context of the study, rationale, key research questions, and the structure of the dissertation.

1.2 Background to the Study

Conflict has become a matter of concern worldwide as it has devastating effects on national stability and growth. Conflict may result in armed violence which has a negative impact on human development (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2006). Armed violence destroys people's lives and promotes fear. It may kill thousands of people and injure countless more, often resulting in lifelong disabilities each year. Adebayo (2009) states that in certain contexts students and teachers have lost their lives in violence. Situations of conflict impose enormous costs on different institutions such as families, communities, schools and states. It destroys families, schools and other institutions and markets (UNHCR, 2006). Awosusi's (2005) study identified conflict in Nigerian universities in the form of staff-management conflict, student-management conflict, staff-government conflict, student-student conflict and staff-staff conflict.

Research worldwide indicates that school conflict is a common phenomenon. Scholars have isolated factors that are associated with conflict in different institutions, including schools (Chadwick, 1995; Jones, 2005; Squelch & Lemmer, 1994; Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). Chadwick (1995) identifies five factors associated with conflict: change, power, scarcity, diversity and civility. Mullins (1999) also identified factors such as individual differences, limited resources, departmentalisation and specialisations in schools, inequitable treatment of staff, and violation of territory, environmental changes and communication. Studies have shown that the drive for the acquisition of power often causes conflict in schools. According to Bennett, Crawford and Cartwright (2003, p. 145), power is a crucial resource in different organizations because "individuals compete for jobs, titles and prestige". Hord and Sommers (2008) further explain that power

differentials often cause conflict in schools because those in power may push for more attention and struggle for higher social positions. According to Chadwick (1995), scarce resources, such as funding, staffing and time may also cause conflict in school contexts. Ngcobo (2003); van Deventer and Kruger (2003) and Mullins (1999) indicate that limited resources often cause conflict in schools because teachers have to fight for a share.

Diversity in the school community may result in conflict. Hord & Sommers (2008) suggest that a lack of understanding amongst different social groups may lead to conflict amongst teachers, and may strengthen cultural stereotyping based on gender, ethnicity, race and disabilities. Individual differences usually cause conflict among teachers because they do not accept their differences in respect of socioeconomic background, attitudes, personalities, values and expectations (Mullins, 1999). Differences in cultural practices may also cause conflict among teachers.

A lack of civility often causes conflict among staff members in schools. If individuals are not treated with respect, equality and dignity, conflict may arise through a lack of participation by all staff members in decision making (Hord & Sommers, 2008). For these authors, if meetings are not managed properly, the one who is assertive may often make decisions that could lead to conflict. Mullins (1999) further explains that inequitable treatment in school practices such as allocation of reward and punishment often cause conflict among teachers. According to van Deventer and Kruger (2003) and Mullins (1999), the implementation of personnel policies and practices may lead to conflict.

Mullins (1999) found that departmentalization and specialisation in schools can lead to conflict. Different departments often differ in the manner in which they undertake their activities. Conflict arises when departments have to cooperate with one another because each department is focussed on achieving its own goals and vision (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003).

Violation of territory often increases conflict in schools. For instance, van Deventer & Kruger (2003, p. 31) found that teachers “become attached to their own classrooms, their own chairs in the staff rooms, and their own parking spaces.” School changes can also cause conflict. According to Wynn and Guditus (1984), change in

schools may cause conflict amongst teachers if the process is not adequately planned, implemented and evaluated.

Communication is one of the major causes of conflict. People communicate differently. Sometimes they use negative body language which may cause conflict amongst people in different institutions, including schools (Van Deventer and Kruger, 2003). In addition, a message can be intentionally or unintentionally distorted by the sender or the receiver, and lead to conflict (Naicker, 2003).

In the past, different societal institutions, including home, school, church viewed conflict traditionally. That is, people viewed conflict as a bad thing (Naicker, 2003). Thus, conflicts between members of institutions were not discussed and addressed but silenced. Nowadays researchers view conflict as not necessarily bad if managed effectively. Many scholars argue that organizational conflict has both functional and dysfunctional outcomes in different institutions (Rahim, 2000; Wall & Callister, 1995). In support, Cetin and Hacifazlioglu (2004, p. 155) indicate that,

Throughout the centuries, “conflict” has been observed as a major problem in educational organizations. With the coming of the 21st century “conflict” became one of the most important tools in the development of organizations when it is carefully managed”.

Nations globally, including sub-Saharan African countries, are embarking on finding peaceful strategies for managing, resolving and transforming conflict (Spangler, 2003). Many scholars and researchers believe that conflict is inevitable and that it can be beneficial (Bennett, Crawford & Cartwright, 2003; Jones, 2005; Naicker, 2003; Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002; Wynn & Guditus, 1984). According to Rahim (2000, p.5), researchers have designed effective strategies “to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and maximize the constructive functions of conflict, and enhance good relationship and communication in schools”.

There are researchers and educationists who have designed conflict management programmes to address conflict in different institutions, including schools (Barsky, 2007;

Bendeman, 2007; Girard, 2008; Kortze, 2002; Sharp, 2003; Steve, 2001). Conflict management scholars propose conflict management strategies which can be used to manage different types of conflicts (Amason, 1996; Hall, 1969; Jehn, Neale & Northcraft, 1999; Pruitt and Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983; Rahim, 2000; Thomas, 1988).

In the context of the above debates, the present study explored the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management in sixteen selected primary schools in Lesotho.

1.3 The Geographic, Social and Educational Context of the Study

This section begins with a description of the research setting and the Lesotho education system during pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial era. Lives do not happen in isolation. Lives and context are intertwined. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007) researchers aim at capturing reality or in-depth information about participants' lived experiences in real-world context. Motalingoane-Khau (2007, p. 7) claims that "context is a reference point and essential backdrop that helps to understand an individual's life experiences." This study aimed at capturing the reality of teachers' lived experiences and thoughts about the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management in a real life context.

1.3.1 The Research Setting

This study was conducted in the Pitseng region in Lesotho. Pitseng is a small town which is located roughly 27 kilometres from the Hlotse town (the capital town of the Leribe district). Leribe district is the second most densely populated district of the ten districts in Lesotho after the capital Maseru. Pitseng region is situated right at the foothills on the intersection between the Maluti and Machache mountain ranges on the way to Katse Dam. Most of the schools in this region are co-educational schools. I am a teacher at one of these schools. Most teachers and learners are Sesotho¹ first language speakers. Many schools are owned by the churches and very few are owned by the government.

¹ Sesotho is the language of the Lesotho people.

Figure 1: Pitseng Region, Lesotho (extracted from Flickr, 2009)



In recent years the schools have been experiencing problems related to the implementation of the policy of Free Primary Education (FPE) where all children are allowed free educational access (Morojele, 2004). From my experience, this has resulted in lack of resources due to overcrowded classrooms, discipline problems and a high rate of conflict among teachers. Schools in Lesotho could be described as “feminized institutions” (Skeleton and Francis, 2003) because there are more female than male teachers.

Historically, Lesotho is known as a peace-loving country. But of late it is turning into a violent nation. Shale, Ntabeni, Mofuoa, and Molapo (2006, p. i) confirm that Lesotho was once a peaceful state:

[Traditionally,] Basotho have been known as a peaceful nation, famed for love and embracing peace and living in accordance with ideals of peaceful co-existing with other nations. This characteristic of the Basotho as a peace-loving nation is usually linked to the life Principles of its founder, King Moshoeshoe I (1786-1870) the first. For him peace was a way of life, a foundation of success in all aspects of human existence and basis of great statesmanship. He thus called peace his sister, a philosophy adopted by his nation and because of which Lesotho has been unique compared to other countries in this region.

Nowadays, there are eruptions of conflict in Lesotho villages. The media often reports on incidents of conflict at different places, including Pitseng, Ha Mofoka, Likolobeng and Mafeteng (Shale et al. 2006). There have been violent conflicts and deaths related to stock theft and political difference suggesting that Basotho² are no more a peaceful nation. The Pitseng region is considered a very violent area as the community uses violent measures when resolving conflicts. For example, different villages always fight for pastures. The Pitseng region is still practising traditional Sesotho education through informal initiation schools. The emphasis is on the inculcation of moral and cultural values and an awareness of individual responsibilities which makes boys to feel superior to women in the society (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). Boys are taught to be “future husbands and heads of families” (Makoa, 1997, p.7). It has been found that often village conflicts involve initiation school graduates. For example, during initiation ceremonies youth often practise fighting and use dangerous weapons.

Pitseng is a very poor community. Most of the people are illiterate and earn their living by engaging in low paying jobs. Morojele (2004) confirms that 80 per cent of people in this region are not working. According to Morojele (2004), some people depend on the low salaries earned by their husbands who are working in the mines in South Africa. Most of Basotho men have been retrenched from the mines. As a result, they earn their living by farming and gathering wild vegetables (Morojele, 2004).

² People of Lesotho.

1.3.2 The Lesotho Education System

During the colonial and post colonial era, education was developed through the partnership between the churches and the government (Ministry of Education and Training, 2008). The churches, including a Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC), a Roman Catholic Church (RCC) as well as a Lesotho Anglican Church (LAC) were responsible for building and maintaining schools, while the government employed and paid teachers.

During the colonial era, the missionaries introduced formal education which replaced the traditional way of learning around 1833 (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). They provided Lesotho citizens with colonial education which was seen as irrelevant to the needs of Basotho people. The missionaries were concerned about the spread of Christianity. Their focus was on acquisition of literacy, the study of the bible and European culture and behaviours (Ministry of Education, 1982). The colonial government supported missionary education and provided churches with grants.

The government developed policies in terms of changing schools and to address conflicts and provide security to all members of different institutions. According to Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana (2002), the Ministry of Education restructured the education system during the post colonial era. The changes were made to provide a different kind of education to provide knowledge and skills which address Basotho needs. The government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2000 in order to promote Education for All.

According to Mturi (2003), the churches own 95 per cent of schools in Lesotho. The Lesotho government is responsible for paying teachers, while the churches are responsible for the management of schools (de Wet, 2007). At present, the school governance is made up of School Governing Bodies (SGBs), which comprise a School Management Committee (SMC) and an Advisory School Committee (ASC) in primary schools. The School Management Committee comprises eight members selected from Advisory School Committees of schools under one proprietor. The School Management Committee includes two members representing the proprietor (one who acts as a chairperson), three members representing parents (one is vice-chairman), one teacher representative, one principal representative who is a secretary, and one representative for chiefs. The Advisory School Committee comprises of nine members who include two representatives of the proprietor, one representative of teachers (who acts as a secretary),

four representatives of parents of pupils admitted in that school, one representative of chiefs of the area where the school is situated, and the principal of the relevant school.

According to the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (1995), the School Management Committee is responsible for: school supervision, proper and efficient management and the running of the school. That is, it is responsible for discipline, managing or resolving conflicts, teacher appointments and transfers, and the dismissal of teachers from schools. The School Management Committee also advises the Education officer, and makes recommendations to the Educational Secretary or supervisor on matters such as the promotion or demotion of teachers. The main function of Advisory School Committee is to advise the School Management Committee on matters relating to education in the relevant school. The principal on behalf of the School Management Committee is responsible for school organization, discipline, and day-to-day running of the school under state authority.

Even though the government has stipulated policies and laws for security and protection of human rights (Ministry of Education and Training, 1995, Lesotho African Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, 2006), my experience is that there are many schools which experience conflicts. This shows that the teachers, principals and School Governing Bodies, including School Management Committee could be failing to deal with issues of teacher conflicts, or that the Advisory School Committee might not be reporting conflict issues to management, and hence problems escalate. Another reason might be that the roles are too demanding for School Management Committee members as they have to undertake their daily work besides managing schools. They have to prioritize and choose the serious matters as there are many schools with which they deal. These issues motivated me to engage in the present study with the hope that the findings may provide insight into school conflict and inform conflict management strategies.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

People from different communities form groups for various social reasons. They may align themselves to more than one group, and this could lead to a conflict of interests. Similarly, in schools as small communities, teachers form groups which serve

different purposes. This could result in a conflict of ideas or interests. Sometimes teachers gossip about other teachers. This could lead to negative consequences. I have experienced teachers at schools in Lesotho in which I have taught, engage in verbal abuse and even physical fights in the presence of their pupils. Such conflict may negatively impact the running of the school as teachers may end up not cooperating with one another or the principal. Such a situation could affect the teaching and learning culture in the school. Teachers who are seen as role models pass on the message to learners that the best way of managing conflict is by verbal and physical confrontation. Simiyu (2003) warns that this behaviour of teachers may promote violence in children leading to a cyclical reproduction of violence in schools as well as the community.

I envisaged that a study on teacher conflict would provide insights into conflict and conflict management strategies in the schooling context, and inform the development of programmes that could promote peaceful management of conflict. Therefore, the motive for undertaking the study is rooted in my experience as a teacher. I have more recently taught at a school that has had numerous instances of conflict amongst teachers. The term “teacher” in this study includes the principal and deputy principal.

I was also motivated to conduct this research during my studies for the ‘Peace Education and Conflict Resolution’ module in the Faculty of Education. I studied the literature on conflict and conflict management and became aware of experiences in schooling contexts internationally. To date I have not been able to locate literature that focuses on conflict management in Lesotho primary schools. I decided to conduct this research to make a small contribution to this gap in research in my country.

1.5 Key Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the following key questions:

What is the nature of teacher conflict?

What strategies do teachers use to manage conflicts in their schools?

How do teachers experience and interpret the effectiveness of their conflict management strategies?

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is made up of six chapters. Chapter one highlights the introduction and background to the study, the purpose, rationale of the study and the key research questions. Chapter two reviews the related literature on conflict and conflict management. Chapter three presents the research methodology and design choices I made. Chapter four presents the findings on the nature of teacher conflict in the selected primary schools. Chapter five discusses the findings in respect of conflict management by the teachers. Chapter six presents the conclusion and implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion of relevant literature on the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management regionally and internationally. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p.108) “A literature review is usually a critique of status of knowledge of a carefully defined topic”. Therefore, the aim of reviewing the literature is to build conceptual knowledge related to my research topic from existing literature.

This chapter begins by defining the concepts ‘conflict’ and ‘conflict management’ as these are key concepts underlying the study. The discussion of the two concepts will be followed by a discussion of interpersonal conflict within the school context, and empirical studies on teacher conflict and conflict management. Empirical studies that have investigated the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management in schools internationally, in developing countries and regionally have been examined. Finally, I will present the theoretical framework of the study.

2.2 Definition of Key Concepts

2.2.1 Perspectives on ‘conflict’ and ‘conflict management’

This section explains two concepts, namely ‘conflict’ and ‘conflict management’, and critically examines the interpretations of these terms by different researchers and scholars.

2.2.1.1 Defining ‘conflict’

Researchers and scholars define the term ‘conflict’ in different ways, referring to different contexts or forms of conflict including racial, religious, political, marital, personality, gender and conflict of values (Barki, Montréal & Hartwick, 2004). Some scholars define ‘conflict’ as disagreements or differences in opinion (Moore, 1998), while others view it as interfering or obstructing behaviours (Alper, Tjosvold & Laws, 2000). Still others see it as a combination of disagreement, negative emotions and interference (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001).

Okoho (2005) from Niger in Africa defines 'conflict' as contradictions arising from differences in interests and ideas. This disagreement may lead to contradictions inherent in the interactions of people within or outside an institution. These contradictions may "exist as an individual, group, institutional, regional, national and internationally" (Okoho, 2005, p. 92). Burton (1990) explains 'conflict' as arising from disagreement and confrontation between individuals or groups that lead to disruptive behaviours or contractive behaviours. Barki, Montréal & Hartwick (2004) view 'conflict' as a frequent occurrence in organizations affecting individuals and organizations, processes and outcomes.

Some authors argue that conflict is a fact of life, and not necessarily a bad thing (Bennett, Crawford & Cartwright, 2003; Jones, 2005; Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002; Wynn & Guditus, 1984). In other words, conflicts are often valuable in raising and addressing problems within institutions or organizations. For example, Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) in South Africa point out that conflict can make a school change the way it operates. Conflicts handled in a cooperative, problem-solving manner are more likely to have positive outcomes, and "balance power, improve communication and enhance organizational development, as well as facilitate the understanding of complex problems, broaden perspectives of organizational life and develop a foundation to manage differences" (Putnam, cited in Bennett, et al., 2003, p. 146). Engaging with conflict may generate solutions, promote insight and help individuals grow and strengthen emotionally.

Consensus thinkers (Amason, 1996; Burns, 1978; Burton, 1987a; 1987b; Burton, 2008c; DeDreu, 1997; Fraiser & Hipel, 1987; Jehn, 1995; Moore, 1987; Okoh & Ewhariemen, 2001; Turner & Pratkavis, 1994) and conflict thinkers (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Labich, 1988; Tjosvold, 1997) have different perspectives on the way they view conflict in schools. Consensus thinkers view schools as unified systems (Naicker, 2003). They view schools as a human body which has different parts that work together to perform different functions. Thus they view conflict as disruptive behaviour that needs to be solved (Naicker, 2003). The main objective of consensus thinkers is to remove the conflict. Thus, they talk of conflict resolution.

In contrast, conflict thinkers view schools as not unified systems, because people have different power relations and different interests and powerful groups dominate powerless people (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). They believe that schools are “organized in ways that suit the powerful” which leads to power struggles. Sometimes interests may clash due to competition and this can lead to power struggles. As a result the stakeholders, including educators, parents, learners, the School Governing Bodies, may clash and dominate one another.

Power relations have a great influence in perpetuating conflict (Naicker, 2003). For, example, teachers form professional groupings which exclude other teachers and affect relationships within the school. According to Naicker (2003), mathematics teachers in some schools may regard themselves as superior to other teachers and believe that their interests are more important than those of others. In this context, disagreements and conflicts may occur in the interaction process. Conflict thinkers assume that conflict is part of our lives. Therefore, they aim at finding ways to benefit from conflict. Thus, they talk of conflict management.

2.2.1.2 Types of conflicts

According to McNamara, 2008; Bennett et al., 2003, there are two types of conflicts, namely destructive or dysfunctional conflict and constructive or functional conflict. The distinction between the two is determined by the way conflict is managed. Labich (1988) and Johnson & Johnson (1994) argue that conflict is inevitable as it is viewed as a creative force for positive change if it is managed effectively.

Destructive conflict is viewed as negative because it hinders the progress of an organization. It interferes with achieving organizational goals (DeDreu, 1997). Dominant assertive behaviours become evident in which one party is coerced into accepting the opposing position and one party is perceived a threat. Literature indicates that dysfunctional conflict reduces performance in an organization whereas functional conflict enhances performance because it aims at achieving mutually satisfying outcomes (Amson, 1996; Dedreu, 1997; Jehn, 1995, Turner and Pratkavis, 1994).

Barge (1994) sees ***constructive conflict*** as functional because it can generate positive results in an organization. That is, constructive conflict may produce positive

results if handled in a creative and problem solving manner. As a result, it is more likely to generate better solutions and promote insight into issues and help individuals to grow (Tjosvold, 1997).

2.2.2 Defining 'conflict management'

Conflict management refers to reduction, elimination and control of conflict in order to make conflict more beneficial and less demanding to all parties (Spangler, 2003). Conflict management is valuable in making conflict more constructive and less destructive. Henkin, Cistone and Dee (2000) argue that a satisfactory outcome can be achieved through good communication. This would involve avoiding criticism, blaming and threatening one another during the conflict management process (Davidson & Wood, 2004).

2.3 Interpersonal Conflict

This section focuses on the factors associated with teacher interpersonal conflict highlighted in research from different contexts. My study examined interpersonal conflict in a schooling context. This section will start with a definition of interpersonal conflict. This will be followed by factors associated with interpersonal conflict.

Different researchers view interpersonal conflict in different ways due to the term 'conflict' being used in different ways. Conflict is associated with different contexts or there are various forms of conflict. Barki, Montreal and Hartwick (2004), Dyer and Song (1997), Barki and Hartwick (2001); Jameson (1999) view interpersonal conflict as a single theme or the combination of two or three fundamental properties, namely disagreement, negative emotions and interference between individuals or groups in an organization. Dyer and Song (1997, p. 476) define interpersonal conflict as:

Task related disagreements arising whenever the goals of a person or group are perceived to be incompatible with those of another person or group, and when one person or group interferes with the other person or group with the express intention of denying the other's goal.

Jameson (1999) views interpersonal conflict as occurring when two or more people in an organization see differences in beliefs, values, or goals as barriers which impact their ability to work together. Barki and Hartwick (2001) see interpersonal conflict as a phenomenon that occurs between interdependent parties when negative emotional reactions arise as a result of perceived interference with the attainment of their goals. Naicker (2003) sees interpersonal conflict as a conflict between two parties, including wife and husband, parents and children, neighbours, employer and employee, customer and supplier, fellow teachers, educators and learners.

Thus, different scholars identify different sources of conflict in school contexts. Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) indicate that interpersonal conflict is often influenced by opposing priorities, power struggles, racial or religious conflicts, and dissatisfaction in schools in South Africa. In addition, Ngcobo (2003) points out that in the South African context, conflicts between teachers are often related to issues such as personal antagonism, lack of resources, incompatible goals, inequitable treatment, organizational size, lack of skills for managing conflicts, different beliefs and values, poor communication, gossip, violence, environmental change and stress.

In the context of my study, I agree with the above perspectives that interpersonal conflict may occur between two or more people working within the same institution, such as a school, and that it may be related to differences in goals, affiliations, norms and values, and goals, and to power struggles related to priorities and resources. It may involve conflict between teacher and teacher, teachers and pupils, or teachers and parents.

2.3.1 Interpersonal Conflict in School Context

This section provides a discussion on the nature of teacher conflict and types and potential causes of interpersonal conflict in schooling contexts.

Internationally, Blasé and Blasé (2004) explain that conflict among teachers is increasingly prevalent in many countries, including Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria and Australia. Prinsloo and Nesser (2007) and Blasé and Blasé (2004) found that teachers sometimes engage in “educator-on-educator” violence and conflict. The danger is that conflict among teachers can lead to unsettling working conditions for all.

Teachers deal with different types of conflicts in school context. According to Steyn and van Niekerk (2002), Looock (2003) and Kartz and Lawyer (1993), there are categories of school conflicts, for example, interpersonal conflict, intrapersonal conflict, individual-institutional conflict and inter-group conflict. My study focused on interpersonal conflict as it is viewed as the most visible type of conflict in schools (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). According to Looock (2003) interpersonal conflict can occur between teachers and pupils, teachers and principals, and teachers and parents.

According to Barki et al. (2004), numerous studies point out different types of conflict such as task, process and relationship conflict (Jehn 1997; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). Task conflict occurs when conflicting parties disagree on how the work should be performed. Amason (1996); Amason and Schweiger (1994) view cognitive and affective conflicts as other types of interpersonal conflict. Johnson (1994) suggests six types of conflict, for example, affective, cognitive, goal and substantive conflict as well as conflict of interest and conflict of values and beliefs. I shall now explain these different types of conflict.

Affective conflict occurs when two parties are aware that their feelings and emotions are incompatible. Aggression, tolerance and domination can affect the way in which a person deals with affective conflict (Johnson, 1994, p. 712). For Johnson (1994) autocratic leadership in a school can cause affective conflict because autocratic leaders may antagonize their colleagues highlighting trivial differences. As a result, staff with low esteem may feel threatened and overreact (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994). Personality clashes and antagonism often cause conflicts among teachers. People with opposing personalities, for example, the extroverts and the introverts; the pessimistic and optimistic; and the impulsive and the level-headed often have opposing attitudes and engage in conflicts because they annoy each other (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002).

Cognitive conflict occurs when conflicting parties are aware that “their thought processes or perceptions are incongruent” (Johnson, 1994, p. 712). For example, two groups may have differences in the implementation of a new curriculum or a new school policy (Squelch & Lemmer, 1994). Teachers may have different perceptions on how school fees are spent on resources. Some staff members would prefer to have more

money spent on educational resources while others may prefer to have more money spent on entertainment.

Goal conflict usually occurs when teachers differ in preferred outcomes (Johnson, 1994). Incompatible goals can cause conflict in educational organizations. According to Ngcobo (2003) conflict often results from incompatible goals in education. For example, there are teachers who believe that extra-mural activities in schools make learners strong and that they enhance the ability to learn. Such teachers may want to allocate more time to sporting activities (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Others believe that sporting activities are using up academic learning time.

Substantive conflict is a type of conflict that occurs when two parties disagree with each other on task content (Johnson, 1994). According to Squelch and Lemmer (1994), this may arise when one teacher believes that the main task in sports competitions is to build team spirit, while another teacher coaches the team to win the league.

Conflict of interest is often caused by limited resources. It occurs where two parties compete for scarce of resources (Johnson, 1994). This is confirmed by Ngcobo (2003) when pointing out the issue of limited resources as one of the common causes of conflicts in schools. In addition, Kydd, Anderson and Newton (2005) add that common problems that schools face are related to inadequate resources. For example, English teachers may need more dictionaries, while Mathematics teachers may require more calculators in their departments as found in a study by van Deventer and Kruger (2003).

Conflict of values and beliefs usually occurs when two parties differ in their values and beliefs (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). Jones (2005) indicates that conflict may arise when one party fails to accept the fact that others regard something as a value rather than a preference. Thus, different beliefs and values teachers cherish may cause conflict. For example, a principal may believe that written reports are important while teachers may view extra paper work as unnecessary (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994). Furthermore, the nature of commitment often causes conflict in schools. Some teachers may be committed to the discipline of their classes, and prefer to be in their classrooms to maintain order and discipline. Teachers who care less about their class discipline may leave their classes and disturb those teachers who are in their classes. Sometimes teachers believe that school days should be occupied with formal teaching and others

often use class time for sporting practices in preparation for competitions (Ngcobo, 2003). Thus, differences in beliefs may lead to teacher interpersonal conflict (Steyn and van Niekerk, 2002).

Structural factors may influence conflicts in schools. Differences between staff members in terms of authority may act as a source of conflict between teachers. For example, the dissatisfaction in roles played by different staff members usually causes conflict in schools. In larger schools there may be an increase in specializations and more supervisory levels. For example, if one teacher is promoted to principal or deputy principal, other teachers may not accept his or her new role (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002).

Ineffective leadership may be associated with structural conflict. Squelch and Lemmer (1994) show that people in authority cause school conflict by being biased when handling school processes, such as the promotion process. For example, teachers with fewer years of experience may be promoted to higher positions while teachers with many years of experience are ignored. Failure to obtain promotion often results in a clash between teachers and administrators. Inequitable treatment related to the implementation of policies, rules, regulations, rewards, and punishment systems are generally sources of conflicts in schools.

Organizational size often causes conflicts in schools. It has been found that conflict is greater in larger organizations. Dipaola (2003) and Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) in their studies found that conflict is usually visible in large institutions because there are more diverse groups among members, resulting in differences in goals, perceptions, preferences and beliefs. In addition differences between authorities often cause conflicts in schools (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Large schools may increase opportunities for distorted information being passed on which leads to communication break down and disagreements among teachers.

Behari's (1997) study on managing conflicts in multicultural secondary schools in the Newlands West Area, province of KwaZulu-Natal, suggests that conflict in schools often escalate because of **lack of skills for managing conflicts**. Personal skills, abilities and characteristics may have a great influence on the quality and nature of interpersonal relations in schools (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002), and conflict management skills.

Conflict in schools may be caused by *poor communication* (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Neher (1997) defines communication as the process of two or more people engaging in mutual awareness, and the sharing of facts, feelings and intentions through the use of verbal or non-verbal signs. In schools teachers engage in verbal and non-verbal communication. Sometimes this results in communication break-down. The communication process can result in conflict if other teachers misinterpret the message (Jones, 2005; Van, Deventer & Kruger, 2003). That is, the interpretation may be different from what the sender had intended. Misunderstanding becomes part of the root causes of conflict in the school context, according to Naicker (2003). The message can be distorted by the sender or the recipient. For example, the message can be distorted as it travels via a number of people. Teachers may interpret circulars and policy guidelines in various ways when summarizing them.

Gossip is another source of conflict in the context of schools. Ngcobo (2003) found that sometimes teachers circulate rumours and critical comments around the school. According to Kurland and Pelled (2000), 'gossip' refers to informal and evaluative talk among few members of an organization about other members who are not present. Often this talk is about their work and personal lives. Barnhart and Barnhart (1994) further explain 'gossip' as idle talk about other people and their affairs which is not always true. Gouvela, Vuuren and Crafford (2005) define 'gossip' as a talk that takes place between employees about other people's persona and non-personal issues in a work place. That is, non-work related gossip focuses on personal issues, including marriage, divorce and illness, whereas work related gossip (non-personal issues) is the information that focuses on work life, such as job performance and career progression including promotions, being fired or transferred.

Gossip often has an impact on relationships in the work place. It may cause conflict and strain ethical values, such as trust, respect and caring. Burg and Palatnik (2003) compare gossip with a virus that affects morale and productivity, resulting in sick days, resignations and premature job searches, as victims of gossip feel alienated, hurt and embarrassed. For these researchers, this hurt and anger can make the institution lose important employees. They may suffer depression and lack self-esteem, which often

results in lack of motivation to perform the job. This may also lead to a divided workforce.

Violence usually escalates conflicts in different institutions. Bullying is one such type of violence. For de Wet (2005, p. 82) bullying refers to “the intentional use of aggression, unbalanced power between the bully and the victim, and the causing of physical pain and/or emotional misery”. According to Olweus (1994) there are numerous types of bullying, including physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual bullying. Physical bullying includes beating, knocking, kicking, pinching, pulling faces and making ugly signs. Verbal bullying includes verbal threat, threatening signs and offensive signs, insulting someone and calling someone names (Zeelie, 2002; Elliot, 1997). Spreading rumours and excluding someone intentionally from activities are regarded as emotional bullying.

Violence in schools may range from symbolic to physical forms of violence (Herr & Anderson, 2003). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) define symbolic violence as modes of cultural and social domination embedded in every-day social habits. In a school, structures of domination such as the management hierarchy, and gender hierarchies amongst teachers, can promote unequal power relations that often go unrecognized. Symbolic violence promotes superiority, authority and power, and succeeds in imposing dominant social norms. Many day-by-day institutional practices of schooling appear as neutral but they often have some characteristics of domination.

Resistance to change in schools may cause conflict among teachers. Numerous schools in Africa are currently experiencing enormous change due to developments in social, political and economic spheres (Squelch & Lemmer, 1994). There are changes to educational legislation, school polices, school management and the organizational arrangements. These present challenges and difficulties to teachers and principals. Teachers and principals are expected to implement change in schools which is often accompanied by conflict if not managed effectively. In addition, teachers may resist change for certain reasons. Sometimes change is imposed upon teachers and principals and often disrupts the educational processes. Some teachers resist change because it is difficult for them to learn new processes and adapt to new situations as this requires great effort and input (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994). Mestry (1999) asserts that change in

South African education including school population increases, diversity in school population, an increase in the cost of living, crime and its effects on learner behaviour, conditions of service, new rules and regulations of the Education Department, curriculum change, the new performance appraisal system and demands of unions may result in stress and strain among teachers.

Similarly, in Lesotho, the government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2000 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2000). The main purpose of FPE was to provide Basotho children with basic education and life skills that are relevant and useful within the context of Lesotho (Ministry of Education and Training, 2000). There are challenges and difficulties in the implementation of FPE which has resulted in conflict among teachers (Morojele, 2004). For example, there are huge learner enrolments and limited resources for which teachers have to compete.

Stress is one of the causes of teacher interpersonal conflict. Teachers at some stages in their working lives may experience pressure which may result in stress (Heaney, 2001). Heaney (2001) explains that conflict may arise from numerous conditions, including too much work and limited time to do it. However, it has been argued that stress sometimes has positive consequences. A degree of pressure is sometimes good in helping teachers to get things done (Heaney, 2001). Jones (2005) states that stress may result from a complex working environment, roles that need to be played, the workload, relationships among teachers and an inability to cope with changes. Jackson and Rothmann (2006) in their study found that teachers in the North West province in South Africa experience stress due to changes taking place in schools, such as curriculum changes and the introduction of new school management structures. Many teachers have left teaching since 1995 owing to Curriculum 2005 and its Outcome-Based Education (OBE) (Mills, 2001).

2.3.2 Empirical studies on teacher interpersonal conflict

This section presents the empirical studies on conflict and conflict management in different contexts. There is limited literature on teacher conflict and conflict management in primary schools in general. However, there are several studies dealing with conflict

and conflict management between teachers and students, teachers and parents and principals and subordinates.

Achinstein (2002) studied conflict in a collaborative professional community of teachers in San Francisco Bay. The main purpose of the study was to explore causes of conflict in these communities and how teachers approached conflict amongst themselves. Achinstein (2002) used the micro-political and organizational theory and adopted three concepts, namely, conflict, boarder line politics and ideologies in analyzing conflict between teachers. The study used a mixed methods approach which adopted the combination of qualitative and quantitative design. Achinstein (2002) used two methodologies, namely a case study and a survey to explore conflict in a collaborative community of teachers. The findings reflected that conflicts were associated with school politics and cultural ideologies. In this study teachers used collaborating and avoidance conflict management styles to address their conflicts (these styles are discussed in section 2.5).

Gatlin, Wysocki and Kepner (2002) focused on understanding the nature of conflict in the workplace. They identified eight causes of conflict in the work place, namely conflicting needs (resource conflict), conflicting working styles, conflicting perceptions, conflicting goals, conflicting pressure, conflicting roles, differences in personal values and unpredicted policies.

Behari's (1997) study which focused on managing conflicts in multicultural secondary schools in the Newlands West Area, province of KwaZulu-Natal, suggests that often conflicts are caused by lack of skills for managing conflicts. There is lack of support programmes for practicing teachers and teacher trainees that could prepare them for the complex nature of school environments.

A study by Balay (2006) focussed on conflict management strategies of administrators and teachers. Data was collected from a sample of 250 school teachers working in seventeen primary schools, public and private schools in Anatolia, Turkey. Three conflict management styles or patterns, including competing (dominating), avoiding and compromising were examined in terms of task and school type. The results show that administrators use more avoiding and compromising patterns than teachers in private schools. Primary school teachers tend to use more compromising, avoiding and

competing styles than colleagues at public schools. These conflict management styles are discussed in section 2.5.

Henkin, Cistone and Dee (2000) studied conflict management strategies of principals in site-based schools in United States of America (USA). The purpose of the study was to develop a profile of preferred conflict management behaviours and strategies of principals in a large urban school district. A Likert scale type questionnaire was used to collect data from 300 principals. The results reflect that principals preferred collaboration and there was limited use of controlling behaviours in managing conflict. This study enabled a comparison of teachers' conflict management styles with those of the principals.

Munduate, Ganaza, Peiro and Euwema's (1999) study conducted in Netherlands and Spain was based on patterns or styles in conflict management and their effectiveness. The results revealed that the use of multiple conflict handling styles is more effective than using one style in conflict management, such as dominating, avoiding, compromising, integrating, and obliging.

A study by Brewer, Mitchell and Webber (2002) conducted in Australia provided insights into relationships among gender roles, organizational status and conflict management behaviours of females and males. The participants were men and women holding upper and lower organizational positions. The findings indicated that males were highest on 'dominating' as conflict management styles while females were associated with an 'avoiding' pattern. Androgynous individuals were linked to an 'integrating' style which involves both parties in conflict management process and aims to search for solutions that are satisfactory to both parties. Men and women occupying higher status used an 'integrating' style whereas lower status individuals reported using 'avoiding' and 'obliging'.

Cetin and Hacifazlioglu (2004) attempted to explain how conflicts are handled by academic and administrative staff in the Universities of Istanbul in 2001-2002. The researchers used face-to-face interviews and a questionnaire to obtain data from two universities. The findings revealed that conflict experienced among academics related to faculty variables such as work experience, high and low power opponents. The study indicates that teachers as a professional group are more likely to avoid conflict and be

more accommodating. Drory and Ritov (1997) argue that conflict management can be explained in terms of title and experience and status of power variables. In the study conducted by Drory and Ritov (1997) assistant professors had positive relationships in that they used collaborating as a strategy more often than associate professors. Research assistants used the accommodating pattern more often than professors. The study suggests that research assistants have to be obedient to their superiors who have power over decisions to renew contracts once a year, revealing the role that power dynamics play in conflict management styles. It was evident that participants sometimes experienced conflicts in their faculty and solved them by talking. Drory and Ritove (1997) found the kind of strategies used related to work experience, and those academics with 11-20 years experience tended to accommodate more often than others with fewer years experience. Faculty members with 21 and above years of experience used the collaborative strategy when managing conflicts.

Different studies show the impact of gender on the nature of conflict management styles. The findings of the study by Cetin & Hacifazloglu (2004) in Turkey showed that male academics with 11-15 years of experience accommodate more than females. This result is interpreted in terms of position of women in the society. In Turkey, women and men have been accepted as equal, thus women may be trying to prove themselves against the traditional backdrop that constructed them as menial. The results from a study by Jehn, Shadwick & Thatcher (1997) indicated that visible forms of work group differences such as sex increase relationship conflict whereas differences regarding informational demographics such as education increase task conflicts. Antonioni's (1998) study reveals personality clashes have a great influence on interpersonal conflict. Based on his findings, Antonioni (1998) suggested that extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness are factors associated with an integrating style. Extraversion has a positive relationship with a dominating style. On the other hand, agreeableness and neuroticism have negative relationships with a dominating style. Extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness have a negative relationship with avoiding style, while agreeableness and neuroticism have a positive relationship with an avoiding style.

The above empirical studies provide a discussion of related literature on different variables related to interpersonal conflict and conflict management. The insights I have

gained informed my choice of conceptual and theoretical frameworks for understanding teacher conflict and conflict management styles, development of the questionnaire in my study, and my data analysis approach. Based on previous studies, I included certain key variables such as sex, job designation, and years of experience, religion and type of schools. I have also chosen to examine the types of management styles or patterns used by the teachers.

2.4 Conflict Management Patterns/Styles

There are different ways of dealing with conflicts. Various researchers have theorized about approaches to dealing with conflicts. Cohen (2005); Davies (2004); Hall (1969); Pruitt and Rubin (1986); Rahim (1983); Thomas (1988) argue that conflicts are a normal part of life. Looch (2003) argues that there is no single or particular strategy to resolve all conflicts because schools differ in challenges and difficulties they face. A critical point he makes is the situated nature of conflict. Deutch (2005) places more emphasis on the reduction of destructive conflicts and promotion of growth in the conflict management process to normalize events or situations. Hall (1969), Pruitt and Rubin (1986), Rahim (1983) and Thomas (1988) have isolated styles for managing conflict, namely dominating, integrating, compromising, avoiding and obliging.

The conflict management styles and strategies will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

2.5 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework for the Study

The conceptual framework focuses on the key concepts in the study that provided an understanding of interpersonal conflict including human agency, gender, power and culture. It also outlines three theories: the two-dimensional theory, symbolic violence theory and theory of oppression that guided this study.

2.5.1 A conceptual framework for understanding the nature of teacher interpersonal conflict

People differ in ways of dealing with conflicts. Situational differences combined with personal characteristics of conflicting parties influence conflict management

(Johnson, 1994; Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). Research suggests that issues of power, gender and culture may affect the way teachers respond to conflicts.

Hernandez and Iyenger (2001); Jenkins (1992); Swartz (1997) argue that there is a relationship between 'human agency' and 'social structure'. For these authors, Structures are the products of human actions. On the other hand, structures are produced and reproduced in what people do (Hernandez and Iyenger, 2001; Jenkins, 1992; Swartz, 1997. For example, social actors have a role in developing power structures. This study examined the intersection of human agency and social structures in the context of schools and teachers' lives, and its impact on teacher conflict.

Power is an important influence on conflict in schools. It also influences how conflict is managed (Jones, 2005). The study by Rahim, Antonioni and Psenicka (2001) showed how power can influence conflict management styles. They examined key variables critical to understanding differences in conflict and ways of handling conflicts. In other words, differences in the organizational status of men and women may account for the selection of styles for handling conflict.

Before we can understand the role of *gender* in conflict and conflict management in the Lesotho context, we have to understand the position of women in social structures. Unequal power relations that exist between men and women stem from cultural beliefs and practices in Lesotho. Women are viewed as subordinates in many African societies. This is confirmed by the Lesotho African Union Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2006, p. 1) which states:

The Basotho culture is based on a patriarchal ideology whereby one's identity is traced through one's paternal lineage and descent. Some aspects of this culture have been incorporated into customary law that places women under perpetual custody and protection of men. Numbers of customs and practices have evolved which give men more decision-making powers and the position of the heads of households.

The above quotation indicates that social practices exclude and marginalize women in decision-making. Lesotho as a patriarchal country promotes patriarchal patterns and gender discrimination and marginalization in its society. There is a pattern of male dominance of public positions and decision-making. Thus cultural beliefs and practices may contribute in the way that teachers in my study respond to conflicts. Bourdieu (1970) stresses that behind all cultures lie the arbitrary sanction of 'pure de facto power' which shows how culture reproduces social structures in our daily lives. Culture contributes to the socialization of individuals and the internalization of beliefs and values. Certain cultural practices are capable of perpetuating social exclusion which can result in the domination and marginalization of certain groups. In other words, culture may produce and reproduce social structures which perpetuate inequalities in different organizations, including schools. For instance, culture may socialize females to internalize oppression and be submissive. As a result, they may lack agency and fail to question the unjust status quo. Kanter (1977) argues that women more often occupy positions of little power, and as a result, they may typically behave in a way that reflects their lack of power in handling conflict.

2.5.2 A theoretical framework to understand the issue of 'conflict management'

The study was guided by four theories, namely the micro-political and organizational theory suggested by Ball (1987), the two-dimensional model of conflict management with associated conflict styles suggested by Rahim (1983), the Theory of Symbolic Violence suggested by Bourdieu (1970), and the Theory of Oppression proposed by Young (2000).

2.5.2.1 Micro-political and organizational theory

I used the micro-political and organizational theory suggested by Ball (1987) to explore the nature of conflict in Pitseng primary schools. A micro-political perspective emerges from organizational theory which sheds light on organizational life. It highlights the notion of clear organizational goals, values, and power relations. Micro-political and organizational theory highlights the interaction of individuals in an organizational setting. Hence, it casts light on the nature of organizations, its goals, conflicts and power

dynamics (Ball, 1987). I used three concepts from Ball (1987) namely conflict, border politics and ideology because they describe political activities of teachers as they interact with one another within the ethos and culture of the school. This theory shed light on the nature of teacher conflict in Lesotho primary schools.

Conflict: Conflict is viewed as a powerful source of group cohesion which highlights insider and outsider perspectives (Ball, 1987). Understanding the concept conflict helped me to draw a clear picture of the nature of conflict in selected schools. In the following quotation Ball (1987, p. 19) explained that schools are almost the same as other social organizations. He views schools:

to be arenas of struggle, to be driven with actual or potential conflict between members, to be poorly coordinated, to be ideologically diverse. I take it to be essential that if we are to understand the nature of schools as organizations, we must achieve some understanding of these conflicts.

This definition helped the study to identify how teachers or group of teachers interact with one another and how their identification of the nature of their differences, beliefs and actions may be perceived as incompatible, and thus resulting in conflicts.

Border politics: According to Ball (1987) border politics refers to micro-political process of negotiating the bounds of membership, groupness and beliefs of a professional community. The border politics draw walls which distinguish members from non-members of groups within the social community, including schools. This concept helped the study to identify how school practices and teacher's identities include or exclude other teachers. There are some organizations which seek to maintain oppressive norms and practices, and create boundaries which exclude certain members from particular groups, thereby controlling power and inflicting conflict.

Ideology: Ideology refers to norms, values and beliefs of an organization. For example, ideology is a practical process whereby individuals or organizations make meaning of their work through actions and feel the importance of organizational bonding around shared values and commitment to work (Ball, 1987). Teachers have their own

values that shape their practices which may be incompatible with others and cause conflict. Teacher ideology includes shared values about education, schooling, power relations, cultural beliefs and conflicts. Those values are often framed within and beyond the school setting. Ball (1987) argues that the relationship between the outside and inside ideologies may exacerbate or minimize conflict within the community, and ultimately shape how a community addresses conflict.

The conflict, borders and ideology are related to my study because they describe the processes of political activities of teachers as they negotiate differences amongst themselves and with the culture of the school. These concepts cast light on teachers' ideologies and how they deal with their conflicts and make meaning of their life experiences in conflict and conflict management in school context.

This theory is relevant to my study because it helped me to explore the nature of teacher conflict and its potential causes and their consequences in school setting. It enabled me to investigate how teachers make meanings of their practices. That is, how power influences their political activities as they interact with one another and how their practices could give rise to conflict in schools.

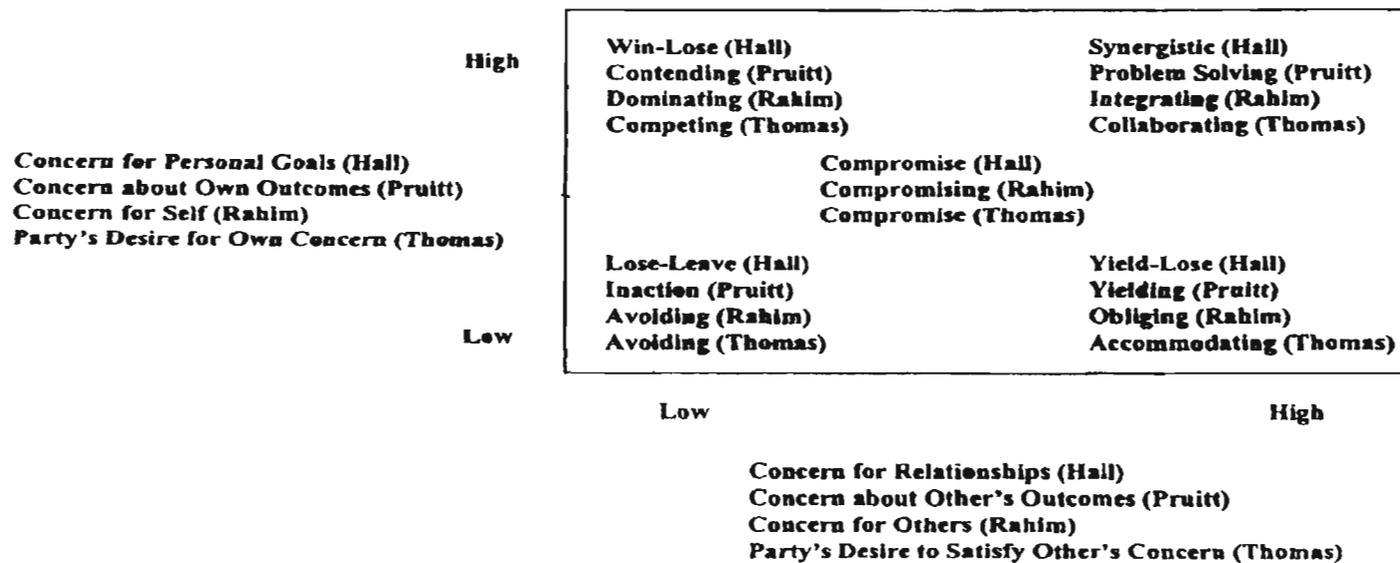
2.5.2.2 A two-dimensional model of conflict management styles

This study was also positioned within the two-dimensional model of conflict management styles proposed by Hall (1969), Pruitt and Rubin (1986), Rahim (1983) and Thomas (1988). For these scholars, conflict handling is based on two concerns, namely "*concern for self*" and "*concern for others*". Individuals use these concerns during conflict situations in framing how to respond to conflict. In other words, choice of conflict management styles is derived from attempting to satisfy one's own concerns or attempting to satisfy the others' concerns (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974; Rahim, 1983).

I decided to use Rahim's (1993) model of conflict management model. According to Rahim (1983) and Rahim (2001), the two-dimensional model is based on five conflict management patterns or styles, namely dominating, integrating, obliging, compromising and avoiding. I chose this model because it is widely used for studying interpersonal conflict (Blake & Moulton, 1964; Munduate, Ganaza, Peiro & Euwema, 1999).

Figure 2: Rahim's (1983) two-dimensional model with associated conflict styles (Sorenson, Morse & Savage, 1999, p.27)

**Composite of the Hall, Pruitt, Rahim, and Thomas
Two-Dimensional Models with Associated Conflict Styles**



This model has been used to explain styles of conflict management (Pruitt, 1983; Pruitt and Rubin, 1986; Rahim 1992; Thomas 1992). The above scholars analyse conflict management styles, such as dominating, integrating, compromising, avoiding and obliging, separately, while others combine them. Van de Vliert, Euwema and Huwismans (1995) and Van de Vliert (1997) suggest ‘conglomerated conflict behaviours’ where actors combine several behaviours when handling disagreement with conflicting parties. That is, individuals may adopt different styles rather than using them independently. According to Munduate et al. (1999), the use of a combination of styles may be influenced by relationship between conflicting parties.

The *dominating* (high concern for self and low concern for others) style is associated with a win-lose orientation, use of power and forcing behaviours to win one’s position (Rahim, Antonioni, Psenicka, 2001; Behari, 1997). According to Steyn and van Niekerk (2002), dominating involves force and control which includes the use of school authority, reward, bribery, punishment and physical force that may lead to an imposed solution in conflict management situation. For instance, school administrators, including principals or heads of department often use the dominating style in making decisions in their own interests or the interests of an institution by enforcing rules and regulations (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002).

A dominating style of managing conflict is more appropriate in the following circumstances: during emergencies, or if time is precious and a quick decision is needed. In addition, dominating can be used when matters are crucial to the benefits of an institution. However, the use of power to manage conflict may lead to a “forced or imposed solution” (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002, p. 79). This may escalate or recycle the conflict because the losers may retaliate.

A dominating style leads to oppression if not managed effectively. Oppression often leads to destructive conflict. According to Deutsch (2005) oppression is “the experience of repeated, widespread, systematic injustices”. Destructive conflict occurs as a competitive (dominating) process to determine who wins and who loses (Deutsch, 2005). As a result, the injustices occur between the conflicting parties. The disadvantaged group may experience oppression while the oppressor or advantaged group may seek to defend their advantages against the oppressed. When the oppressed develop

an active awareness of their oppression, they often have a desire for revenge against those they see as oppressors. Oppression may lead to destructive conflict because the oppressors may fear the humiliation (Deutsch, 2005).

An *integrating* (high concern for self and others) style has been identified with win-win, synergistic, problem-solving and collaborating. It is the most effective approach in conflict management, because it involves both parties in a conflict management situation (McNary, 2003; Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). This style aims to satisfy both conflicting parties' concerns through honest discussion. Integrating involves problem solving that entails openness, exchange of information and the examination of differences during conflict management situation (Rahim et al, 2001). Squelch and Lemmer (1994, p. 80) confirm that the main focus of integrating is "negotiating, looking for middle ground, and searching for solutions that are satisfactory or acceptable to both parties". That is, conflicting parties work cooperatively and collaboratively to find the solution that is acceptable to both parties. Ngcobo (2003), Behari (1997) and Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) point out that problem-solving is regarded as the most effective style of managing conflicts in school context. Problem-solving is good for crucial matters, such as major policy decisions.

Integrating is useful where there is a high level of trust and where people are willing to change. Integrating can be used when more information is found and new options are suggested. Moreover, it is useful when you do not want to have full responsibility and want others to give their solutions. Integrating is also useful in working through animosity and hard feelings. However, an integrating strategy is time consuming. It needs time for lengthy negotiations. The process of the discussion of selecting the best solution or combination of solutions that may be acceptable to both parties may take a long time.

Obliging (low concern for self and high concern for others) style is associated with lose-win, yield- lose, yielding and accommodating. The obliging style involves working towards a common purpose to protect the relationships among the conflicting parties. Thus, it aims to satisfy the concern of the other party. Rahim et al (2001) states that the obliging style manages conflict by allowing the other party to win in order to avoid conflict.

An obliging style has merits and demerits. It is valuable when the issue is important to the other party. Obliging is used when an individual is aware that he or she is wrong. In addition, obliging is useful when individuals are aware that they cannot win in conflict management (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). It is also used when harmony and stability are extremely important. Contrarily, the obliging style is lose-win in nature and may exclude one's own ideas. Thus, credibility and influence can be lost. In the end, "if conflicts are not resolved, the weaker party may feel defensive, resentful, and may retaliate one day" (Naicker, 2003, p. 35).

A *compromising* (intermediate in a concern for self and others) style involves give-and-take, or win some-lose some. It is useful for dealing with important issues. In compromising, conflicting parties lose something in order to get something. Both parties may sacrifice by sharing outcomes to avoid conflict. That is, both parties "give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision" (Rahim et al, 2001, p.196). Compromising is often viewed as the most common outcome of negotiation because both parties win part of what they want and lose part of what they want, especially when both parties wield some power. Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) explain that compromising is a long term objective, thus it is used to save time by reaching intermediate settlements on complex issues. In addition, it is often used when there is a balance of power, that is, when people of equal status are equally committed to goals. Furthermore people working in the same institution may manage their interpersonal conflict through compromising when there is a lack of resources and the resources have to be shared among individuals. Compromising can be a backup if collaboration as a first choice fails to solve the problem.

According to Squelch and Lemmer (1994), a compromising style of managing conflict may have some drawbacks if parties are not convinced that compromise can be necessary for both parties. People may view it as weak and ineffective because it restricts their chances of achieving their goals. Thus, people may not be satisfied because "both parties end up with less than what they hoped for" (Squelch & Lemmer, 1994, p.80). A compromising style may promote cynicism, especially if there is no commitment to honour the compromise. Therefore, it may not work if initial demands are too great.

The **avoiding** (low concern for self and others) style involves lose-leave, inaction, withdrawal, buck-passing, or side-stepping situations with no loser-no winner (Rahim, 2001). With regard to avoidance, the conflicting parties may respond to conflict by neglecting or postponing it and not taking any action to address conflict with the hope that it will either go away or not cause any harm (Davies, 2004). People may run away if they find it difficult to fight. Sometimes problems do go away, but in most cases problems remain.

According to Squelch and Lemmer (1994) and Steyn and van Niekerk (2002), avoidance may address minor conflicts. Secondly, avoidance is used for situations where there is a clear advantage to waiting to manage the conflict or when a person is too emotional and needs time to 'cool off'. Thirdly, conflict can be avoided if the relationship between conflicting parties is more important. Lastly, conflict can be avoided when more information about the issue is needed. However, postponing of conflict may make matters worse which may result in important decisions being made by default.

The Two-Dimensional Model suggests that conflict management strategies are valuable when they take into account the nature of teacher conflict situation. That is, the best way of managing conflict is to match the strategy with the situation (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). For instance, people should first understand the conflict situation and adopt the conflict management style which best suits the situation. Thus, this model helped the study to analyse how teachers in my study experience and manage conflicts.

2.5.2.3 The Theory of Symbolic Violence

I used Bourdieu's (1970) theory of symbolic violence to understand power relations among teachers in conflict management situations. Bourdieu (1970) defines symbolic violence as unconscious modes of cultural or social domination occurring within different social structures in our every day life. Symbolic violence includes actions that have dominating and discriminatory meaning or implications such as gender domination or racism. It maintains its effects through misrecognition of power relations in an institution. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) state that the term symbolic violence is the process whereby in all societies, order and social restraint are produced by indirect

cultural mechanisms rather than by direct coercive social control. The main focus of Bourdieu (1970) is on how power inequality and social order are produced and reproduced in an institution. That is, how power promotes social order which can perpetuate inequality in social life. This theory stresses how the legitimacy of authority in a school system can promote social inequality in different agents.

Symbolic violence theory assisted me to examine the influence of power relations (Herr and Anderson, 2003) between teachers and its impact on conflict and managing conflicts among themselves. It helped the study to seek visible and invisible treatment of teachers that may be caused by social structures, and which may lead to oppression and inequality in school context, and thus wreak conflict.

2.6.2.4 Five faces of oppression

My study was also framed by the five faces of oppression proposed by Young (2000). Many theorists define oppression in different ways owing to the context and situations that exist in different institutions. Freire (1970, p.40) defines oppression as,

any state or situation where an individual or group objectifies and exploits another, by making decisions for the other, prescribing another's consciousness and perception and hindering the pursuit of self-affirmation as a possible person....such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with man's ontological and historical vocation to the more fully human.

Young (2000, p. 35) explains oppression as a “central category of political discourse” because it involves analysis and evaluation of social structures and practice which often dominate other groups. That is, oppression is systematically produced, reproduced and maintained in major economic, political and cultural institutions. According to Young, (2000, p.36) causes of oppression are “embedded on cultural stereotypes and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms.” For this author, oppression results from “unquestioning norms,

habits and symbols in assumptions underlying institutional rules and collective consequences of following those rules” (Young, 2000, p. 36). This means that oppression refers to all injustices that occur in different institutions, including schools.

For Young (1990) the above definitions would describe both the condition of oppression and the processes by which oppression operates. In addition, Young (2000) argues that to assess whether a group is oppressed depends on whether it is subject to one or more of the five conditions, namely exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence (Young, 2000).

Exploitation is a social process whereby the benefits are transferred from disadvantaged group to a privileged group (Young, 2000). McLaren (1998, p.18) agrees with Young (2000) as he explains exploitation as “a form of domination in which the labour of working class group is transferred to benefit the wealthy, reproducing and causing class division and relations of inequality”. The injustices of exploitation often perpetuate unequal distribution of resources in social institutions. Some people have great wealth while most people have little. For Young (2000, p. 39) “social rules about what work is, who does what for whom, how work is compensated, and the social processes by which the results of work are appropriated to enact relations of power and inequality”. These relations manifest from institutional practices, decision-making, division of labour, structural and cultural change, and are produced and reproduced to maintain power, status and wealth. For example, oppression may result in gender exploitation which leads to unequal freedom, status, power and self-realisation of men and women. The members of the oppressed groups are usually servants of those in privileged groups, for example, women who often work for someone on whom they are dependent (men). Women often fill servant jobs such as caring while men are engaged in decision-making (Young, 2000). In addition, exploitation is when a person or people in authority use their power to dominate by abusing the people who are less fortunate than them. According to McLaren (1998) education and cultural workers need to recognise the various manifestations of oppression as they affect the lives of millions. In other words, oppressions are systematically reproduced in major economic, political and cultural institutions and are part of the basic fabric of social life.

According to Young (2000) oppression can be in the form of '*marginalization*'. For this scholar, marginalization is viewed as the most dangerous form of oppression whereby some groups are expelled from useful participation in social life. McLaren (1998, p. 19) agrees with Young (2000) that "marginalization refers to groups who constitute the growing underclass of people and who suffer severe material deprivation and are confined to lives of unemployment and expelled from useful participation in social life." For example, in some contexts the marginalised (non-professional workers, black people, women, poor people, disabled people, and children) experience severe material deprivation. Marginalisation often ignores the right of all rational autonomous agents to equal citizenship. The goal of equal citizenship is usually hidden behind bureaucracies, regulations and policies. Marginalisation may result in lack of freedom, motivation, respect and dignity, as well as self-recognition (Young, 2000).

Another face of oppression is *powerlessness*. Powerlessness refers to people who lack power and authority. According to Young (2000), powerlessness perpetuates social class, and it reveals the structure of exploitation where some people have power and wealth from the labour of others. Dominant groups are privileged in relation to subordinate groups by virtue of their position in the division of labour and the status they hold. Dominant groups have power to formulate policies and impose them to the powerless to implement them (Young, 2000). Young explains that powerless people hold positions that allow them little or no opportunity to develop and exercise their skills, creativity or judgment, or to express themselves in their work or bureaucratic setting. Professionals typically receive more respectful treatment than non-professionals.

There is another face of oppression that theorists call *cultural imperialism* (Lugones & Spelman, 1983; Young, 2000). Cultural imperialism refers to a situation in which the experience and culture of the dominant and powerful groups within society are presented as the norm, for example, within the media, education, social welfare, and the legal system. To be subject to cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it as other. The other becomes reconstructed largely as deviance and inferiority. Young (2000) explains that the

dominant group entrenches its position and brings the other under the measure of its dominant norms.

Violence is another face of power that exists in different institutions. According to Young (2000) there are different forms of violence, such as physical, repressive and xenophobic violence at work places. Some groups are viewed as victims of violence, more especially the oppressed group. Vulnerable groups often experience systematic violence which is caused by unprovoked attacks on persons or their property. They also experience threats, teasing, intimidation or ridicule for the purpose of degrading, humiliating, and stigmatization at work places. Marable (1984) raises different forms of violence, such as severe beating, killing and rape. According to Young (2000), rulers often use repressive violence as a coercive tool to protect their power. Violations of rape, beating, killing and harassment are motivated by fear or hatred of vulnerable groups. Cultural imperialism also generates group violence to protect hegemonic power in different institutions. Unjust institutions and their practices perpetuate group violence; hence there is a need for addressing these unjust cultural practices. Young (2000) suggests that unjust practices can be changed through engaging with negative cultural images, stereotypes, and reproduction of relations of dominance.

This theory helped me to assess why teachers select different strategies when managing conflict and to assess whether the target group voices are heard or marginalized.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed key concepts that are pertinent to interpersonal conflict. I have also discussed both local and international literature on teacher interpersonal conflict and patterns of managing conflicts. I have discussed three theories, the two-dimensional model for understanding conflict, the theory of symbolic violence, and the theory of oppression that framed my study. This review of literature assisted me in developing a framework for data analysis.

The next chapter presents the research design and methodology that the study adopted, as well as the motivation for the design choices made.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

My study sought to examine the nature of teacher conflict and types of strategies for conflict management in selected primary schools in Lesotho. The previous chapter presented the literature on the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management strategies used to address conflicts, as well as the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study. This chapter presents the methodological and design choices used to explore the research questions of this study, as set out in chapter one. It discusses the sampling procedure, data collection methods, data analysis, limitations of the study, ethical issues and some reflections on the challenges encountered in carrying out this research project.

3.2 Research Paradigm and Design

My study is located along the continuum between interpretive and critical paradigms. Part of the study is located within the interpretive paradigm as I want to *understand* how teachers engage with conflicts in selected primary school contexts. In other words, the study sought to understand the social life, the social realities and the social action of teachers with regards to conflict and conflict management strategies in these schools. However, the analysis of data pushes the study into critical framework as it has implications for social change and social justice. The study is founded on the premises that the prevalence of destructive conflict compromises social justice in schools, and therefore proper and effective strategies of managing conflict have the potential to promote social justice. According to Cohen et al. (2007), critical research aims at changing the society and may involve the transformation of the society and individuals. It is concerned with emancipation which aims at setting people free from dominating and repressive structures of the society. Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004, p. 23), argue that:

Research using critical theory aims at promoting critical consciousness and breaking down the institutional structures and arrangements that reproduce oppressive ideologies, and the social inequalities that are produced, maintained and reproduced

by these social structures and ideologies... A critical theory examines the processes of gaining, maintaining and circulating existing power relationships.

For these authors, the main focus of critical paradigm is on “lived experiences and social relations that structure these experiences” (Henning et al., 2004, p. 23). In this study, I examined issues of unequal power relations, and social inequalities and how these may be produced, reproduced and maintained by means of conflict and conflict management strategies.

This study used a mixed methods approach. According to Creswell (2009); Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman and Hanson (2003); Fraenkel and Wallen (2008); Ivankova, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007); Mitchell & Jolley (2007) mixed methods refer to an approach which involves the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches within a study. Creswell (as cited in Ivankova, et al., 2007) further defines mixed methods research “as a procedure for collecting, analyzing and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of a research process within a single study to understand a research problem more completely”. In other words, mixed method builds on quantitative and qualitative approaches to complement one another.

A quantitative approach is used because it is appropriate for collecting numerical data from a large sample (Creswell, 2009; Maree & Pietersen, 2007; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The survey I used in the study provided me with descriptive and inferential information. According to Cohen et al. (2007) a survey allows the researcher to learn about people’s attitudes, beliefs, values opinions, desires and ideas. The study also had a qualitative component. The purpose of using a qualitative approach was to verify and increase subjectivity and balance regarding findings from the objective survey data.

The use of quantitative and qualitative methods helped triangulate the data in order to understand the nature of teacher conflict and how teachers manage their conflicts in selected primary schools in the Pitseng region. I collected both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time in order to compare and contrast the different findings so as to produce well validated findings (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman & Hanson,

2003). This helped me to see “the extent to which they do and do not agree with each other” (Ivankova et al., 2007) and to draw well-substantiated conclusions about the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management used by teachers when managing their conflicts.

In this study, I used both survey and case study designs. McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 602) define *survey* research as ‘the assessment of current status, opinions, beliefs and attitudes by questionnaires or interviews from a known population’. For these authors, survey data is valuable in describing and explaining the status of phenomena, to trace change and draw comparisons. I chose to use a survey design because it is convenient in collecting data on a large scale. This was appropriate in collecting information about teacher conflict and the effectiveness of their conflict management strategies from sixteen selected primary schools in Lesotho. On the other hand, a survey is concerned with answering “what is or what exists” questions (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 205), and this was particularly useful in eliciting data on ‘what is’ the nature of teacher conflict in the selected schools.

A case study was also incorporated into this research design to refine the findings from the survey. It was a case of eight schools, one participant from each school, four schools in a rural and four schools in a semi-rural location. A case study is used to provide in-depth information from a smaller number of participants (Cohen, et al., 2007; Henning et al., 2004, Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Slavin, 2007). A case study allows the researcher to be part of the study. Thus, it allowed me to collect in-depth detailed information on the notion of teacher conflict and conflict management used by teachers at their schools. Denzin and Lincoln (1994); Denzin and Lincoln (2002) suggest that a researcher must be actively involved in data production in natural setting where she or he acts as the instrument of data collection. Nieuwenhuis (2007) also states that a case study opens opportunities of giving voice to marginalized groups, like the powerless and the voiceless. For Marshall and Rossman (2006), a case study searches for a deeper understanding of the participants’ lived experiences, culture and communication in a real life context. Thus it provided me with deeper understandings of the dynamics of conflict and conflict management situations. The case study approach helped me to examine issues of teachers’ experiences of unequal power relations and social inequalities, and

how these may be produced, reproduced and maintained in conflict and conflict management situations.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample comprised teachers and school principals from sixteen schools out of the pool of 21 schools of Pitseng region. I decided to sample teachers and principals because they are the people who are involved in managing conflicts in the school context.

The Pitseng region was selected due to its accessibility and the fact that my school is part of this region. Random sampling was used to select sixteen primary schools in the rural and semi-rural areas of the Pitseng region in the district of Leribe. By definition, random sampling is a technique of selecting a sample whereby every member of the population has an equal and independent opportunity of being selected as part of the sample (Bobbie & Moulton, 2006; Singleton & Straits, 1999). Kimmel (2007) and Cohen et al. (2007) claim that those samples selected through random sampling are believed to be representative of the target group.

The total sample for the survey was approximately 171 participants. I decided to sample all teachers and principals because my population was not too large. Thus, I sampled all teachers for representative purposes and avoidance of bias. Cohen et al. (2007) recommend a size of 30 participants as the lowest acceptable if data is going to be analysed statistically. I chose to analyse my survey data statistically because my study comprised more than thirty participants.

According to Nieuwenhuis, (2007, p. 79), “qualitative research needs smaller sample sizes than quantitative research studies”. Thus, purposive sampling was used to select eight participants for part 2 of the study - the case study. I took into account characteristics that made them the holders of data needed for the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), that is, four teachers from rural schools and four teachers from semi-rural schools were selected. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing data for this part.

3.3.1 Profile of teachers in the study

Tables 3.1 to 3.7 provide a profile of teachers in the study. Figure 3 depicts the age range of teachers.

Table 3.1: Number of teachers by gender

Gender	Number of teachers
Male	40
Female	123
Total	163

Table 3.2: Number of teachers by qualification

Qualification	Number of teachers
Qualified	89
Student teachers (In-service teacher trainee)	37
Unqualified teachers	37
Total	163

Table 3.3 Number of teachers by years of teaching experience

Years of teaching experience	Number of teachers
0 -5 years	46
6 -10 years	45
11- 15 years	32
16 – 20 years	11
21 – 25 years	15
26 -30 years	4
30 + years	10

Table 3.4: Number of teacher by geographical location of schools at which they teach

School location	Number of teachers
Rural	91
Semi-rural	72
Total	163

Table 3.5 Number of teachers by school proprietor

School proprietor	Number of teachers
Church school	135
Government school	28
Total	163

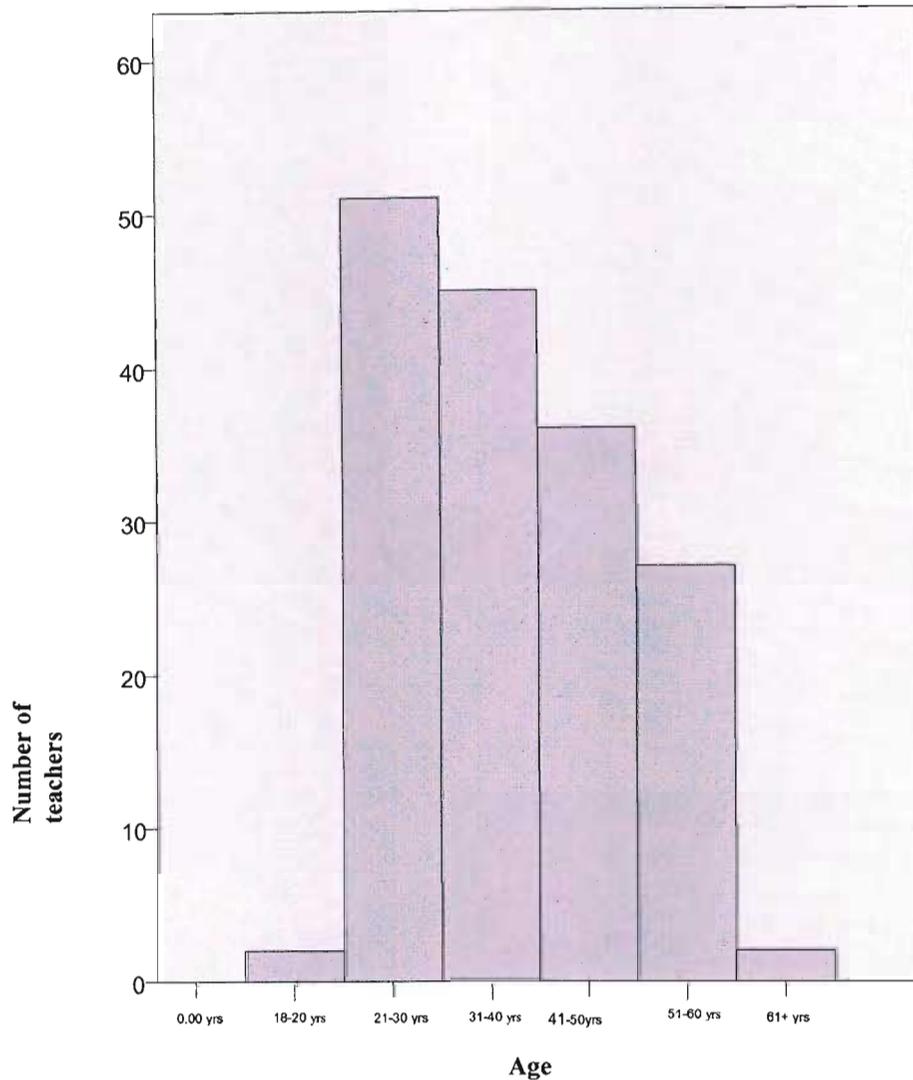
Table 3.6 Number of teachers by job designation

Job designation	Number of teachers
Principal	13
Teachers	142
Deputy principal	8
Total	163

Table 3.7 number of teachers by type of school

Types of school	Number of teachers
Church schools	135
Government schools	28
Community schools	0
Private schools	0
Total	163

Figure 3: Number of teachers by age



3.4 Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection methods in this study. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data in the absence of the researcher. The absence of the researcher during the completion of the questionnaire enabled the participants to complete the questionnaire in private during their spare time. This helped the study to avoid undue threat and pressure on participants (Cohen et al., 2007). One hundred and seventy one (171) questionnaires

were distributed to teachers. One hundred and sixty-seven (167) questionnaires were completed and returned. There was a 98% response rate. However, four questionnaires were returned with many incomplete sections, and this data had to be excluded from the study. Some questions for my questionnaire were adapted from conflict resolution questionnaires developed by other researchers (My Counselling Site, 2006; Academic.engr.arizona.edu, 2005).

The questionnaire was an appropriate tool for data collection in this study as it enabled me to collect data on a large scale within a short time (Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, the purpose of using a questionnaire was that it enabled the participants to respond to questions on their own rather than being interviewed by a person with whom they may not be familiar. It was felt that they would feel free to share their views. Questionnaires also have the benefit of “anonymity which is critical particularly where criticism of individuals or school structures may arise” (Middlewood, Coleman & Lumdy, 1999, p. 146). In my study, the questionnaire allowed teachers to have their voices heard whilst remaining anonymous.

The questionnaire involved both close-ended and open-ended questions. A five point Likert scale was used: ‘strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree’. Close-ended questions were included to provide participants with the range of items to respond to which were short, clear, and understandable and to the point (Maree & Pietersen, 2007; Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, close-ended questions allowed for easy responses, coding and analysis than word-based information. Moreover, closed ended questions allowed for statistical analyses of the numerical data (Pietersen and Maree, 2007; Henning et al., 2004). In addition, open-ended questions were included. These allowed participants to give more detailed information on ‘critical incidents’ of conflict that they had experienced. Both closed and open-ended questions were used to complement each other and to validate the findings.

The critical incident technique has been successfully used in research in organizations (Herr & Anderson, 2003; Kelchtermans & Vanenburghe, 1994; Fornasier, 2008). Analysis of critical incidents enables a probing into workplace norms that help construct institutional realities and can stimulate reflection on practices, exposing underlying motives and structures. It can be a way for studying the invisibility of the

phenomenon (Herr & Anderson, 2003). Critical incidents can document the every day workings of school as well as more highly-charged incidents. Questionnaires preceded semi-structured interviews. I viewed questionnaires as being explanatory. What I gathered from questionnaires helped me with designing the semi-structured interviews which aimed at exploring more in-depth data to clarify, explain and extend the information from questionnaires.

Data for this study was also produced through individual semi-structured interviews. I preferred to use the interview method to get a detailed picture and understanding of the perceptions, beliefs and experiences of teachers and principals on the nature of conflict and conflict management strategies that teachers use when managing their conflicts in primary schools in Lesotho. The one-on-one allows face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the respondent in order to facilitate access to the participants' life experiences as exposed in their own words (Cohen et al., 2007; Flick, 2006). Seidman (1998, p. 4) agrees with Cohen (2007) as he explains that, "interviewing provides access to the context of people's behaviour". I chose semi-structured interviews because they enabled me to get closer to participants as I wanted to know their perceptions, experiences and interpretations of interpersonal conflict and conflict management. The one-on-one semi-structured interview is a type of qualitative approach which allows for flexibility during the interview process (Henning et al., 2004). The use of open-ended questions helped me to explore and collect contextual and in-depth information (Adler & Clark, 2003; Patton, 2003; Flick, 2006) regarding teacher conflict and how teachers manage conflict among themselves in primary schooling. The purpose of using these open-ended questions was to have the participants reconstruct their perceptions or experiences and interpretations regarding the effectiveness of their conflict management strategies. The semi-structured interview allowed me to ask probing questions in order to get clarifications or elaboration of incomplete answers (Neuman, 2006). One-on-one interviews also allowed me to minimize misunderstandings during the interview.

Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that a tape recorder is the most appropriate way of recording data during interviews. As a result, I requested permission from my participants to use the audio-tape for capturing responses during the interviews.

3.4.1 The pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to test instruments with a small group of participants. The instruments piloted were the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. According to Cohen et al. (2007) participants need to understand the questionnaire and find it relevant to their knowledge, experience and expertise. For this author, a pilot study is compulsory in survey research and valuable in assessing whether participants have a clear understanding of questionnaire items and response categories provided for questions (Cohen et al. 2007). The main purpose of the pilot study was to test questions and to correct any ambiguities within questions. Questions for the study were piloted in one of the primary schools in Pitseng region in Lesotho. Before engaging in the pilot process, participants were given detailed information about the topic and the main purpose of piloting the questions. Some of close-ended questions were not clear to participants. As a result, I revised these questions. The final versions were used for the actual study.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Close-ended questions were analysed statistically. The survey as a type of quantitative approach uses descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis (Pietersen & Maree, 2007a; 2007b). In the present study, I used descriptive statistical analysis, and analysed data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). According to Neuendorf (2002), a researcher can yield the expected level of reliability of 80 percent by getting one or more coders during data analysis. Therefore, I obtained the services of one coder to code the data in order to assess reliability. I also obtain professional service of a statistician to analyse quantitative data.

Data from semi-structured interview and critical incidents were analysed qualitatively (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), qualitative data is analysed through an inductive process whereby research findings are allowed to emerge from frequent, dominant and significant events in raw data. Analysis in my study involved identifying broad categories of constructs across the data related to the nature of teacher conflict and conflict management e.g. nepotism, favouritism as experienced by

the teachers. This necessitated a line by line reading of the different data sets and searching for actions and assumptions.

In the second phase of data analysis, I identified theoretically and conceptually informed themes across these categories that made explicit themes emerge, for example, .insider-outs-outsider dynamics; culture and oppression. I did this by comparing and contrasting emerging themes and categories (Creswell, 2009; Grbich, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007;

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability refer to the trustworthiness of the results. Neuman (2006, p. 188) defines validity “as truthfulness or believable results”. According to Pietersen and Maree (2007, p. 216), validity of an instrument refers to “the extent to which the instrument covers what it is supposed to measure”. It addresses the question of how research matches with the constructs researchers use to understand it. Neuman (2006, p. 188) explains reliability as “the consistency of a research”. That is, when the research is repeated twice under similar conditions, context and situation, it should produce the same results.

In this study, validity was improved by analyzing other standard measurements that use the Likert scale to ascertain how they were structured. I also improved validity by reviewing related literature on the notion of ‘conflict’ and ‘conflict management’ by taking into account previous constructions of questionnaires by other researchers. This was done through an in-depth analysis of previous studies that have a similar focus to my study (Cohen et al, 2007). If there is conflict in defining a construct, I have explained and stipulated the interpretation that would be used in my study.

In my study, reliability also focused on the precision and accuracy of my research instrument. I improved reliability by engaging in a pilot study to test my questionnaire items and interview questions with a smaller group. Gay and Airaisian (2000) suggest that the test of a questionnaire can be repeated after a period of 2 to 6 weeks to check reliability. As a result, I used the test-retest procedure to improve stability of my questions. I administered the questionnaire to the same group of participants to check whether the items were understood and whether there were any ambiguities. I conducted

the pilot study in Pitseng Primary School. I had to also take account of reliability during the data analysis process. Neuendorf (2002) suggests that a researcher can improve reliability through inter-coder reliability in the data analysis. I improved validity by getting another coder during data analysis.

Triangulation is often used by different researchers to improve validity and reliability. For several authors, triangulation refers to the cross validation among data sources or the use of multiple data collection methods within a single study (Campbell, McNamara & Gilroy, 2004; Scott & Morrison, 2007; Picciano, 2004). I also improved validity through the use of a mixed methods approach, that is, a survey and a case study approach. The use of two data gathering instruments, namely the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews enabled me to establish validity through triangulation. Semi-structured interviews strengthened the reliability as it made possible the probing of responses and more in-depth data.

3.7 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues refer to moral principles or rules of behaviour which researchers have to take into consideration before conducting a research and during the research process, particularly with research in the social sciences (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Cohen, et al., 2007; Kimmel, 2007). These authors suggest that researchers have to obtain official permission from the stakeholders to conduct research. In line with this, ethical consideration in this study began by obtaining ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct my research. The ethical clearance number for my study is: HSS/0108/09M. Consent letters requesting permission to conduct the research were sent to Leribe Education office and principals of the selected schools. I obtained permission from the participants to participate in both the pilot and actual research study. The Senior Education Officer, principals, and teachers were requested to sign consent forms.

I built a good relationship with participants by clearly explaining the focus and aims of the study to them, and why their participation was important. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) inform researchers that participants should not be coerced to participate in research. To abide by this rule, the participants were made aware that they

were free to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished, or if they were not comfortable with answering certain questions.

Participants were further informed about how the information would be written up and published. They were also informed about their right to privacy, that is, confidentiality and anonymity were assured as this is of critical importance in social science research (Campbell, et al., 2004; Kimmel, 2007). Thus, the participants were told that the information that they provided would be treated confidentially and used only for the study and that their names and the names of their schools would be anonymous. As a result, participants were told not to write their names or append their signature on the questionnaire. Moreover, I negotiated with participants the most convenient time and venue for the completion of the survey questionnaire and interviews. My contact details and those of my supervisors were provided in case they might need further clarification on the study.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

This study had certain limitations in the sense that closed ended questions needed short responses. Thus, they did not allow the participants to give detailed responses which could yield interesting information (Maree and Pietersen, 2007). However, open-ended questions in questionnaire and interview enhanced the quality of the data. The study was very time consuming and the breadth of the data proved difficult to manage. The total of one hundred questionnaires was administered in sixteen schools. A mixed methods design of this study was a challenge for me, an emerging researcher. Integrating the data analysis and interpretation of findings across two methods was complex.

My intention was to cover a representative sample of all primary schools in Lesotho but I was limited by time and finances. I chose the Pitseng region due to its accessibility and the fact that my school is located in this region. However, the aim of this study was not to make generalisations but to contribute in a small way to current debates. My population was gender biased because primary schools in Lesotho have more female teachers. My participants comprised more female teachers than male teachers.

3.9 Reflection on the Research Processes

This section presents the challenges and difficulties that I experienced during data collection process in some schools. The principals welcomed me and introduced me to the participants. The problem that I encountered during field work is that I collected my data during a period of teacher workshops and examinations. Thus, some teachers complained that they had too much work to do, especially marking and filling assessment forms for their pupils. Some schools preferred to complete the questionnaire after the closing day of the term. Then we agreed to collect those questionnaires during the first week after the term's closing date. My intention was to use self-administered questionnaire with the presence of the researcher when collecting data so that any queries could be addressed by me. This was not possible due to the above contextual factors.

In addition, I encountered great problems when collecting questionnaires. We agreed on the dates and times and venue for collecting questionnaire, but some of the teachers did not come during our appointments. In some schools, principals apologized that I would not be able to interview or collect some questionnaires for the following reasons: teachers were in part-time study programmes at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and Lesotho College of Education (LCE); teachers were participating in orientation programmes. I had to often make changes to the process which proved stressful for me the researcher.

Some teachers preferred to be interviewed during lunch time or after school. We arranged the time and venue for interview, but teachers made some excuses to meet me on the particular days, and I had to reschedule. This meant that I ended up visiting schools for between 3-5 days. The other problem is that the children were too noisy during lunch time. Communication during the interviews proved difficult.

Another problem was interruptions during an interview process. In some schools, principals and deputy principals were interviewed in their offices. Teachers and pupils interrupted us by knocking at the door and asking for some resources from their principals or deputy principals. The tape recorder had to be switched on and off. I also experienced a problem of transport to the research sites. Lesotho is a mountainous area and its schools are a long distance from each other. I also experienced bad weather conditions, for example, heavy rains and snow which made the roads dangerous. These

factors made me reschedule visits and increased the cost of undertaking this research project.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented issues pertaining to the research methodology, design of the study as well as challenges and difficulties I experienced during data collection process. The study used a mixed method approach where both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed. The sampling processes have been discussed and teacher demographics presented. The chapter discussed the data collection methods, data analysis, issues of validity and reliability in research, and how these were applied in this study. The ethical issues and the limitation of the study have been addressed as well as reflections on the challenges encountered in carrying out this research project.

The next two chapters present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE NATURE OF TEACHER CONFLICT WITHIN THE MICRO-POLITICS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of teacher conflict at selected Lesotho primary schools. The previous chapter presented the methodologies used in this study. This chapter presents the findings of the study in relation to the nature of teacher conflict in schools.

4.2 Teacher Perceptions about Teacher Conflict within Schools

In analysing the quantitative data obtained through the survey questionnaire, I examined two issues: teacher perceptions of the types of conflict in their schools, and the causes of conflict in their schools. Table 4.1 presents teacher responses regarding the nature of conflict they experience in their schools. Table 4.2 presents teachers' perceptions about the causes of conflict amongst teachers at their school.

Table 4.1 The nature of teacher conflict in schools.

Types of conflicts	Resource conflict	Structural conflict	Conflict of values and beliefs	Work related conflict	Goal conflict
Number of teachers	162	129	49	61	73

This table indicates teacher responses about the nature of conflict they experience in their schools. Teachers could indicate more than one type of conflict. The most common type of conflict according to teachers in the study is “resource conflict”, followed by “structural conflict”. According to Jonson (1994); Squelch and Lemmer (1994), resource conflict refers to the conflict that is caused by inadequate resources. Structural conflict is a type of conflict that is caused by differences in terms of authority in school context, while conflict of values and beliefs refers to the conflict that occurs when the behaviour of two people differs and not acceptable to the other. That is, it is caused by cultural

differences. On the other hand, substantive conflict occurs when people disagree with each other on task content. Lastly, goal conflict is caused by incompatible goals. It mostly occurs when teachers differ in preferred outcomes.

Table 4.2 Teachers' perceptions of causes of conflict amongst teachers at their school.

Cases of conflict	Means and Standard Deviations
Stress	.69 (.47)
Clash of personalities	.66 (.48)
Lack of resources	.75 (.48)
Ineffective leadership	.48 (.50)
Promotion processes	.45 (.50)
Differences in cultural norms and beliefs	.12 (.32)
Gossip	.94 (.24)
Gender differences	.29 (.46)
Ethnic differences	.06 (.23)
Incompatible goals	.29 (.46)
Social class differences	.25 (.43)
Poor communication	.87 (.34)
Resistant to change in school polices	.35 (.48)
Violence - bulling	.28 (.45)
Lack of conflict management strategies	.71 (.45)

The results indicate that teachers cited gossip, poor communication and stress, clash of personalities, lack of resources, and lack of conflict management skills as the key causes of conflict in their schools. Gossip featured as a very high indicator of conflict. Gossip can be categorised as another form of conflict, that is, personal conflict which is often caused by personal factors.

A lack of resources and lack of conflict management skills were viewed as causes of conflict by the teachers. Teacher stress, clash of personalities and ineffective leadership as well as gender differences were also cited as important causes of teacher conflict in the study schools.

4.3 Teacher conflict – looking beyond the surface

The qualitative data enabled a more in-depth study of the issues highlighted by teachers in their response to the survey. The key themes that emerged from the analysis of the data are: insider-outsider dynamics; the dilemmas of school policies; conflict amid collaboration; the public/ private nature of teacher work. These will be discussed below.

4.3.1 Insider-outsider dynamics

In this section, I explore how being constructed as an insider or an outsider in a school by school leadership, policy, culture and ethos, and school practices can result in teacher involvement in institutional conflict, cultural conflict or personal conflict. Institutional conflict refers to conflict that is caused by institutional practices such as inappropriate institutional activities and cultures; accountability, capacity building and lack of resources (Lange, 2004; Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Research, 2009). Institutional conflict is associated with work related conflict which results from organizational processes, including authority over appointments, promotions, allocation of work (Steyn and van Niekerk, 2002; Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Research, 2009). Cultural conflict refers to behavioural conflict or conflict of values and beliefs which relate to conflicts arising from differences in values and norms of behaviours of people from different cultures (Williams, 1994). Culture plays a vital role in shaping beliefs, values, norms, perceptions, attitudes, behaviour and identity. Thus, cultural components, including our identities, ways of living, being and making meaning, clash with the behaviour of other people and cause conflict (LeBaron, 2003). In these forms of conflict teachers may experience physical, verbal, emotional difficulties as well as stigmatization. Personal conflict refers to conflict that is caused by personal factors, including multiple groupings, gossip, communication, qualifications, love affairs, stress, alcohol, as well as the borrowing and repayment of loans.

The findings revealed that within the micro-politics of Pitseng primary schools certain staff members were excluded or included in some school practises leading to personal conflict, institutional structural conflict and cultural conflict. Groupings, religion and cultural ideologies emerged as factors which played an important role in the inclusion

and exclusion of some teachers within school setting. The next subsection presents the tensions linked to the formation of groups.

4.3.1.1 Tensions linked to the formation of groups

The interview and questionnaire data revealed that conflict related to teacher groupings is a challenge for Pitseng primary school teachers. In the study, principals, deputy principals and teachers explained that teachers formed groups which served different purposes. They formed groups that were based on shared interests, friendships, gender, qualifications, religion, cultural beliefs, political affiliations and teacher unions. Those groups included and excluded certain staff members. Ball (1987, p.19) states that schools are “arenas of struggle” whereby individuals or groups clash with one another by negotiating the bounds of membership, beliefs and actions. According to Achinstein (2002), conflict is viewed as an important arena for “making border politics visible as members articulate insider and outsider status” (p. 426). According to Ball (1987) border politics refers to the micro-political process of negotiating the bounds of membership, groupings and beliefs of the professional community. The border politics draws walls which distinguish group members from non-members within a social community (Nodding, 1992). The present study revealed that the relationship between the outsider and insider ideologies escalated conflict within the teacher community in Pitseng Primary schools.

Teachers who were considered ‘the other’ were excluded from certain groups. To illustrate this, a teacher from a Roman Catholic Church school stated that,

Teachers experience teachers’ grouping which are caused by social class, education status, religion, sex, preferences, age, politics and work experience. The conflict resulted from this grouping because some teachers exclude other teachers. This results in poor relationships among teachers (Teacher 119, School M)

A Deputy Principal from a government school explained that,

In our school, teachers often group themselves according to their interests, age, gender, religious denominations, villages they come from and illness. In one incident some teachers excluded the teacher who was HIV positive from their group because they thought that they are going to be infected. They refused to sit close to the infected teacher in meetings. The fellow teacher felt isolated and depressed (Teacher 153, School L).

Another teacher stated that,

Where there are many people or workers, there is always division ... if there are two groups of people or more in the field, the more the troubles are going to be. In our school conflicts are often caused by unauthorized groups and gossip found within the school (Teacher 41, School I)

The findings revealed that border politics and ideologies influenced the nature of conflict as teachers both constructed and negotiated differences. It is evident that teacher groupings often resulted in a divided work force. Teachers tend to draw circles around groups to which they belong and those outside the circles in a disturbing manner. Thus some teachers were isolated from other teachers. This negatively impacts communication within the school. Achinstein (2002) explains that when individuals or groups clash divergent beliefs and actions are often exposed. Conflict is a social interaction process, whereby individuals or groups come to perceive themselves at odds with one another. It has been found that conflict is greater in larger organizations (Steyn and van Niekerk, 2002). School size may contribute to escalating conflict between teachers because they are able to align themselves to more than one group. The findings of this study are related to the findings of Dipaola (2003) and Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) who in their studies found conflict as being usually visible in large institutions because there are more diverse groups among members, resulting in differences in goals, perceptions, preferences and beliefs. Large schools may increase opportunities for distorted information being passed on which leads to communication break down and disagreements among teachers. In

these groups, teachers engage in verbal and non-verbal communication which results in communication breakdown due to misinterpretation of the messages. Sometimes teachers misinterpret circulars and other education documents in various ways causing teacher disagreement and conflict (Dipaola; 2003; Steyn and Van Niekerk, 2002).

The next subsection discusses the dynamics of promotion processes and teacher conflict in Pitseng primary schools.

4.3.1.2 The dynamics of promotion processes

Pitseng primary schools are bureaucratic in nature in that they are organized in a structural manner. The nature of the structural organization of these schools perpetuates inclusion and exclusion as well as forms of oppression through school practices, rules and policies. The study revealed that teachers experienced institutional structural conflict due to unfair treatment in the process of staff promotions. Conflict related to promotion processes is referred to here as a kind of structural conflict. Participants explained that promotion processes are influenced by nepotism, religious beliefs and cultural beliefs. Although these were hidden or invisible criteria, they had powerful influences on who was promoted. Participants explained that religious denomination had a great influence on the promotion process. In addition, teachers complained that members of School Management Committees often employed their friends and relatives to vacant posts. In the following incident a participant highlighted the influence of nepotism and religious beliefs on promotion outcomes.

The School Management Committee often does not follow rating scales when selecting teachers for vacant posts. They always use 'favouritism' in selection processes. The members of School Management Committee hire their relatives, friends and their concubines without good qualifications and expect qualified teachers to act as mentors to them. This causes conflict which leads to stress due to work overload (Teacher T 22, School D).

A teacher from the Anglican Church of Lesotho School explained the dissatisfaction with the promotion process in her school,

The School Management Committee often fails to comply with the policy regarding employment of teachers. The Lesotho Education Act, 10 of 1995, stipulates processes for selection criteria, such as looking at qualifications, expertise, skills, competence and teaching experience when selecting and appointing teachers...biasness in selection and appointment of teachers often generates conflict to those who feel the process is unfair. (Teacher T9, school E).

Participants also reported promotion processes were not fair as often parents in School Governing Bodies were passive owing to an imbalance of power relations. Parents felt they lacked knowledge and expertise and depended on the principals to make promotion decisions. This resulted in conflict among teachers as principals often employed their friends and relatives sometimes with lower qualifications. Teachers with higher qualifications developed negative attitudes towards teachers who were promoted through biased and unfair processes. A teacher from a government school complained,

Some members of School Management Committee, more especially the parents do not play their role because they are not educated. They are dominated by the principal during the selection process of teachers. The principal often select their friends during selection or promotion processes. As a result their friends and relatives get better salaries. (Teacher T2, School L).

A teacher from a church school added that,

The Education Act of 1995 contributes to teacher conflict in a sense that it gives more power to parents than teachers. This is visible in school governance. In committees such as the Advisory School Committee and School Management Committee the number of teachers are two, while the committee constitutes seven or six. Moreover, the chairpersons of the School Governing Bodies are the proprietors and the vice chairpersons are the

parents. These people are ignorant and know nothing about education (policy). They are illiterate and unable to read or interpret what is meant by the Act itself, but they are expected to make decisions on employment, teacher appraisal, promotion, as well as the dismissal of teachers. This is why all these processes are not fairly done and result in chaos because they are affected by school politics, favouritism, religious denomination, social class and bribery (Teacher T10, School J).

The findings revealed that teachers experienced structural conflict related to unfair selection and promotion processes. Similarly, Gumede (2003) found that the selection and appointments processes in schools are based on nepotism and patronage in the South African context. Adams and Waghid (2003) also found that the selection and appointment processes of teachers in schools in their study in South Africa were influenced by bad forms of corruption, including favouritism, nepotism and bribery. Often this is due to the fact that there are power dynamics within School Governing Bodies. Several researchers have found that School Governing Body members are not adequately trained for the recruitment processes (Gounden, 2000; Gumede, 2003; Mkhize, 2007; Ngcobo & Ngwenya, 2005; Adams and Waghid, 2003), as also illustrated in the data above. Parents on School Governing Body tend to act outside the laws governing the selection and promotion processes. Unfair processes in schools in the above studies have the institutional conflict between principals and teachers, and between teacher and teacher, as it was the case in the schools in this study.

4.3.1.3 Culture and oppression

This subsection presents the issue of culture and oppression and teacher conflict. The findings in the study suggest that institutional structural conflict in the schools is linked to cultural norms and beliefs. In all schools visited, teachers preferred a male principal. As a result, women's access to authority positions was hindered by gender discrimination and stereotyping which is rooted in socialization practices in Lesotho. According to Basotho culture men are considered the head of the families and the society

at large (Lesotho African Union Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, 2006). They make final decisions in the family or community.

Appointments to the post of principal in this region are influenced by Sesotho patriarchal ideologies that give men more power and place them at an advantage over women. The leadership positions are held by men, while women are lower in the school hierarchy, as deputy principals, for example. A woman is not allowed to head a school regardless of her qualifications. This situation results in structural conflict. The findings suggest that teachers have internalized these subtle forms of oppression and the dynamics of power in schools. To illustrate, Teacher 153 from government school in a rural area stated that,

Conflicts between teachers and school management were influenced by staff appraisal whereby a male teacher with lower qualifications was promoted to the principal's position. Female teachers who qualified for this position were denied this position because of gender differences and religious beliefs. Thus, they developed negative attitudes toward the new principal, and because of this position, they never spoke to him for some weeks. The problem was ignored (by the authorities) because the teacher was male (Deputy Principal, school D).

A teacher from a government school stated that,

According to our culture men are viewed as the head of families and communities. According to our custom "monna ke hlooho, masali ke molala" (man is viewed as the head while a woman is viewed as a neck). As a result, men are given more privilege in leadership positions because they are viewed as good in decision-making. (Teacher 21, School D).

The findings revealed that cultural conflict resulted from cultural ideologies that are taken as the norm in school context. The Lesotho African Union Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2006) explains that Lesotho is a patriarchal country that

promotes patriarchal patterns of gender discrimination and marginalization in its society, such as male dominance of public positions and decision-making. For instance, men are treated with respect in schools because they are viewed as good in decision-making. Measor and Sikes (1992) argue that the practice of granting men more power than women leads to powerful forms of inequality in society. Young (2000) argues that traditional beliefs can perpetuate dominant cultural norms and result in inequalities in the school system. These inequalities in turn lead to teacher conflict because the majority of men are promoted to leadership positions regardless of their qualifications.

4.3.1.4 Schools, religious denomination and oppression

In the study, teachers raised the issue of the influence of differences in religious denominations on the school policies and practices, and their experiences of exclusion in decision making and access to opportunities. Teachers complained that they experienced structural conflict due to a clash between their own religious beliefs and the religious ethos of schools at which they teach. According to church policies, the principal had to belong to the religious denomination under which the school operates. Participants highlighted incidents in which they were denied access to positions owing to difference in religious denominations. A principal from the Lesotho Evangelical church school explained that:

In our school, leadership positions are normally held by teachers who belong to church schools. Teachers who belong to other churches are not allowed to head this school even if they have good qualifications and experiences in leadership positions. (T9, School B).

One teacher from a Lesotho Evangelical Church school explained that,

At the beginning of this year we engaged in verbal fighting due to unfair treatment of promotion process. I am a male teacher. I am teaching in a church school. I was transferred from my school to fill a principal's position in one of the schools within the same parish. I qualified for this position because I was holding

Diploma in education by that time. Surprisingly, I was demoted from principal's position within a month and transferred back to my school where I was teaching because of my religious denomination. The chairperson – the representative of the proprietor complained that I would not be able to follow church procedures properly because I was not the member of their church. This caused a conflict among teachers who found that selection was unfair and those who belonged to Church's School and supported the process. (Teacher 119 interview, school M).

The findings revealed that teacher conflict was fuelled by the fact that teachers who belonged to the religious denomination that operated in the school, supported school policies even though they were deemed by other teachers as unfair and inequitable. As stated earlier, Ball (1987) explains that schools as small communities create border politics which determine the inclusion and exclusion of certain groups of teachers. For Young (2000); Hardiman and Jackson (1997), this kind of power imbalance in a school would be an example of oppression. Oppression is when people in authority use their power to dominate the subordinates.

4.3.2 The Dilemmas of School Policy and Conflict in Schools

Participants identified conflict dynamics over policy interpretation and practice. Policy involves a plan or statement of actions or ideas proposed and adopted by different institutions, including, schools, government or churches. According to Morojele (2004, p.16) policy refers to “a prescriptive statement of intent that has a bearing on what should or should not happen in schools”. Resistance to change in schools may cause conflict among teachers. Teachers and principals are expected to implement change in schools which often leads to conflict if not managed effectively. Similarly, in Lesotho as a developing country, schools are experiencing changes in formulation of new policies, for example, in respect of pregnancy and corporal punishment. Some teachers resist change for many reasons, including cultural norms and beliefs or religious ideologies.

This study found that discrepancies between the intentions of the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy and the church policies regarding pregnancy and corporal punishment were major causes of conflict in the schools. On the one hand, the FPE policy allows for the inclusion of all children in primary schools regardless of their differences, including teenage pregnancy (Morojele, 2004). On the other hand, the church policies which also apply in these schools, advocate for the exclusion of girls who become pregnant. In this study, the lack of congruence between the FPE policy and dominant expectations of the church has caused confusion and conflict within the schools.

The next section discusses the nature of conflict emanating from the politics of school policies.

4.3.2.1 Inequity in school policy and practices

The study revealed that often school policy and practice fuelled teacher conflict. School leaders were found to apply policies in an inequitable manner, and this was seen as a form of favouritism by teachers who were negatively affected by such practices. According to Rawls (1971) equity is seen as a moral issue, and its central concern is with ensuring fairness and social justice. It emphasizes equity in access, opportunities and choices. A question to ask is: is the school culture constructed to provide a fair and just work environment for all teachers?

The question of granting leave to teachers for emergencies such as the illness of a child and family crises was raised by participants. A teacher from a government school explained,

One day a certain teacher became too angry and engaged in exchange of harsh and impolite words with her headmaster because she allowed other teachers to take their children to the clinics. The teacher requested for leave on one day with valid and stipulated reasons in writing, but the principal questioned the request and indicated that this teacher couldn't be granted her request. This caused conflict among teachers since certain groups felt that they were not treated equally and fairly. (Teacher T96, School L).

This implies that there is biasness in granting emergency leave to teachers which resulted in conflict between some teachers and principals. According to Ministry of Education and Training(2002, p. 30-31), Teaching Service Regulations number 3, teachers are granted special leave for “the maximum period of 15 days, with full pay, in a year on compassionate grounds” (p. 31). Van Deventer and Kruger (2005) in the context of South Africa argue that people in authority can intensify conflict amongst teachers if school policy is not applied in a consistent and just manner.

4.3.2.2 Exclusion of teachers in policy making processes

The exclusion of certain staff members from decision-making emerged as a cause of teacher conflict in a church school. One teacher explained that,

The principal and her favourites often formulate the school policies without involving other teachers (Deputy principal, School C).

One teacher raised the issue of the school policy regarding English as a medium of instruction.

Our principal excludes some teachers from formulating policy regarding literacy. He told us to use English as a medium of instruction from class one to seven in order to improve the academic performance of the pupils. He also told us to set examination questions in English. He did not negotiate with us in the beginning of the year. According to the national (education) policy English should be used as a medium of instruction from class four to class seven. There was a lot of disagreement regarding the implementation of this policy (Teacher 163, School O)

The study revealed that some teachers felt that principals undermined and marginalised them when it came to the development and implementation of school

policy. Young (2000) views marginalization as the most dangerous form of oppression whereby some groups are excluded from useful participation in social life. This often results in lack of freedom, motivation, respect and dignity as well as self- recognition. In other words, “marginalization makes other people feel less important and less powerful” (Young, 2000, P. 42). Marginalisation is unjust because it blocks the opportunity to exercise teachers’ capacities in socially defined and recognised ways. Young (1990) explains that it excludes people from citizenship because they depend on bureaucratic institutions for support but are subject to patronising, demeaning, and arbitrary treatment by policies and the people in bureaucracies who exercise power. More critically, marginalisation of this nature in a school context can cause divisions and dissension amongst teachers which, in turn, could fuel conflict.

4.3.2.3 The tensions emanating from school policy regarding pregnancy

The study revealed that the tensions amongst teachers emanated from school policies regarding pregnancy and motherhood and the policy intentions of the FPE policy. Many teachers disagreed on the implementation of the FPE policy regarding pregnancy and motherhood in their schools. In Lesotho, FPE allows pregnant girls and mothers to continue with their studies before and after child-birth. However, many school policies and church policies exclude pregnant girls. In this study, teachers were of the opinion that the FPE policy has indirectly contributed to the high rate of teenage pregnancy in schools as students believe that falling pregnant is supported and is thus acceptable. Thus, many schools and churches decided to formulate their own policies. These school-based policies were highly gendered as only girls who became pregnant are expelled from school. Boys or male teachers who impregnated them are allowed to continue with their work and studies. The study revealed that conflict arises in schools between teachers who preferred to uphold the FPE policy and those teachers who are opposed to it. The Deputy Principal from one Roman Catholic Church school explained that,

Pregnant girls and mothers are often expelled from school due to school policies and church policies. The national policy allows girls and mothers to attend school before and after giving birth to their children. In contrast, our school policy and church policy always expels them from school because

some teachers and proprietor believe that this may spoil other pupils. Teachers disagreed with one another and ended up saying rude words to opposing parties (Deputy Principal, School I).

Whereas one teacher from Lesotho Evangelical school recounted an incident,

There was an incident whereby teachers engaged in disagreement about policy regarding pregnancy. There was a situation where a male learner impregnated the girl. The girl was expelled from school due to written and unwritten school policies and church policies, while the boy remained at school to continue with his studies... some teachers suggested that both of them should be expelled from school, while others preferred to expel the girl only (Teacher 26, School A).

The study found that although the Lesotho government has implemented the FPE policy to address gender inequalities and injustices in the primary schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 1995), some teachers continued to draw on their cultural beliefs and norms and church ideologies to inform their decisions regarding pregnant students. Cultural ideologies and formal school policies seemed to be incompatible and this resulted in conflict amongst teachers. This is related to Chilisa (2002) when indicating that policies regarding pregnancy are highly influenced by religious and traditional ideologies that are biased against girls and women in general. Chilisa (2002) reports that in sub-Saharan countries, pregnancy policies in schools are often influenced by values, norms and attitudes of the society toward pregnancy. According to Basotho culture, unmarried mothers and their children are not accepted in the family as well as the community. The stigma associated with having a child out of the wedlock within Basotho communities seems to inform certain teachers' decisions on teenage pregnancy at the schools. Makatjane's (2002) study conducted in Lesotho explains that in the Basotho nation, marriage plays an important role in determining an individual's standing within the hierarchy of a particular lineage. This means that married women and their children get a place within the lineage of their parents, while unmarried mothers and their children

do not. This study found that these dynamics within Basotho communities are mirrored in the relationships and expectations of teachers, and play a role in fuelling conflict in schools.

4.3.2.4 The politics of school policies regarding corporal punishment

In this study, many participants reported that they experienced conflict when implementing school discipline policies. Although the Lesotho Education Act of 1995 prohibits the use of corporal punishment in schools, many schools ignore this policy. In some schools, it was found that teachers ended up dividing themselves into groups, that is, the group that supported corporal punishment and the group that rejected the use of corporal punishment. Tensions between teachers was reported as the following excerpt illustrates,

In one incident I engaged in exchange of ugly words with my colleague in the presence of the children. One teacher pushed the door and got in my class without knocking or greeting or asking permission to get in my class. He lashed my pupils badly and injured one of my pupils. The conflict rose when I asked why he got in my class and lashed my pupils' severely without asking permission. He shouted at me and told me that I was the same as my pupils. Then I told him that he was lacking manners. (Teacher 34, School K).

The principal also explained that:

The conflict was between teachers. One teacher was (corporally) punishing pupils for late coming during the assembly. Other teachers complained about their children. They said that corporal punishment was abolished, but other teachers were violating the rights of their children (principal, school D).

Culturally, Basotho people sanction the use of corporal punishment in their homes as well as in the school context. Children should be disciplined with corporal punishment

because the Basotho believe in the following proverbs, “*Ngoana oa Mosotho o utloa ka letlalo*” (A burnt child dreads fire) and “*Thupa e otolloa esa le metsi* (children should be conditioned at the young age). According to Simiyu’s (2003) study in the Municipal Primary school in Kenya, corporal punishment is part of African traditions and religious beliefs. Most teachers, as children, would have been subjected to corporal punishment from their parents and teachers. Thus, in the case of certain teachers “there is a tendency of continuing with this type of discipline” (Morrell, 2001, p. 295). On the other hand, teachers with views located in a human rights framework oppose corporal punishment. The complex intersection between cultural norms and values and the enlightened FPE policy resulted in teacher conflict as was evident in many schools in this study.

4.3.2.5 Church demands and expectations on teachers

Teachers in the study reported institutional conflict due to the divergence between government policies and church policies. One teacher explained that,

We are expected to teach pupils for five days per week, sometimes churches have their own occasions during school hours. We are also forced to attend church ceremonies where we are expected to participate fully. These stress us because they waste our time. At the end of the year we were blamed when the children failed. This has caused conflict among teachers and the principal, because if we refuse to follow the church rules, we are accused of a misdemeanour (Teacher 72, School J).

The principal added that another contentious issue is the practice of church monetary subscriptions. He explained,

The church policy stipulates that all teachers have to pay church subscriptions regardless of their denominations. The principals force teachers to pay those church subscriptions annually. This is unfair because we who belong to different churches have to pay subscriptions at our own churches and at work place (Teacher 41, School A)

The study revealed that teachers clashed with one another due to disagreement regarding church policies. Teachers who are members of denomination which runs the school support church policies, and vigorously oppose teachers who criticise these policies. According to Young (2000) this is a form of oppression as dominant groups have power to formulate policies and impose those policies on powerless groups.

4.3.3 Conflict amid collaboration

Teachers are expected to work together as a team in the professional collaborative communities of schools. However, the findings revealed that often teachers experience conflict with their colleagues in these collaborative encounters. The study shed light on a key factor that escalated conflict in many of the schools involved in this study. I term this kind of conflict as institutional resource conflict, more specifically, conflict related to accessing teaching and learning resources. **Table 4.2** above shows that lack of resources was cited by a large number of teachers as being a cause of teacher conflict.

Participants reported scarce resources as one of the main causes of institutional conflict in their schools. My interview with one teacher below illustrates this,

I remember one incident whereby two female teachers engaged in physical fighting due to lack of classroom space. They were sharing one classroom. The other teacher often left their classroom in mess. When her colleague complained about this, she said, “U ka makala moo u ratang” (you can report me wherever you want). Then, they started insulting one another and ended up beating one another in the presence of children. (Teacher 8, school O).

A principal explained,

Teachers complained and engaged in hot debate about the resources such as Mathematics and Science equipment. The conflict had arisen when other teachers hid protractors, rulers

and compasses and some science equipments (Teacher 101, School J).

High enrolments in schools resulted from the implementation of the FPE policy since 2000. Lesotho as a developing country has been unable to supply adequate resources to meet the needs of a fast growing student population in schools. The findings revealed that tensions between teachers emanated from competing demands for resources such as classrooms, books, stationery and furniture. Morojele (2004) in his study also documented that the implementation of FPE caused lack of resources such as classrooms, well trained teachers, desks, books, teaching materials in Lesotho primary schools. Ngcobo (2003) and Kydd, Anderson and Newton (2005) stated that the issue of insufficient resources was one of the common causes of institutional resource conflict in South African schools

4.3.4 The Public and the Private aspects of Teacher Work

According to the results, there were conflicts involving individuals that could be called personal conflict. Such conflicts in the study were evident very strongly in the practice of gossip. The survey data in **Table 4.2** shows that gossip was cited as a key cause of teacher conflict.

The findings revealed that tensions between the personal and public aspects of teachers' lives were associated with teacher conflict. Teachers reported that gossip was one of the common sources of teacher conflict. Gossip emanated from groupings and is evident in practices such as idle talk and rumour mongering. Often poor communication exacerbates the situation. Ngcobo (2003) in his study found that teachers circulate rumours about each other in staffrooms and this leads to conflict. One of the principals reported,

In our school we have messengers who pass false information about other people's home life and work life. This often results in communication breakdown whereby messengers may misinterpret the information. This misinterpretation often differs from what the owner had intended to say. Thus, gossip usually affects relationship among teachers. It causes conflicts

and damages trust and respect amongst teachers and often results in poor relationships in our school. Some teachers feel hurt and embarrassed and this at times results in depression. Many teachers experience stress due to gossip (Principal, School L).

One teacher recounted her experience of gossip at her school,

One teacher gossiped about my family problems in her group. She said that I was divorced from my husband due to my laziness. One of the group members told me about the issue. One day I met with the gossiper behind block seven. The gossiper greeted me. Then, I responded by slapping the gossiper and said, “O no nts’o reng ka lebitso la ka?” (What were you saying about my reputation?). She became frightened and said “what did I say about you? The children reported the incident to the principal (Teacher 119, School M).

A deputy principal reported his experience,

A female teacher gossiped about my illness. She said I was losing weight because I was HIV positive and my husband died due to HIV and AIDS. I was so angry, embarrassed and humiliated when I heard that this lady said I am HIV positive. Thus, we engaged in verbal fighting by insulting one another. From that day I hated the lady. (Teacher 148, School I).

The study revealed that personal issues such as marriage, divorce, family relationships, job performance were made public through the practice of gossip. On occasions gossip led to physical violence, emotional trauma, and depression in a case of certain teachers. There were indications in the study that gossip negatively impacted teacher motivation. Burg and Platnik (2003) compared gossip with a virus that affects the morale and productivity of individuals and in the schools under study gossip was one of the key causes of teacher conflict.

4.4 Conclusion and Reflections

This chapter has discussed the findings regarding the nature of teacher conflict in school settings. The study revealed that teachers experienced different forms of conflict, including institutional, personal and cultural conflicts. The complexity of teacher conflict becomes evident in the intersection of factors such as educational policy, religion, cultural norms and beliefs, ideologies and social groupings within schools. It is argued that embedded in teacher conflict are forms of oppression and domination and related power struggles.

In reflecting on the findings discussed above, I argue that four cross cutting issues which exacerbate teacher conflict in the study schools are poor communication or lack of dialogue, inadequate conflict management skills, ineffective school leadership, and teacher stress within schools. These factors are evident in the quantitative data in Table 4.2 and were cited by teachers as important causes of teacher conflict.

The next chapter explores conflict management strategies used by teachers in the schools under study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS: TEACHER ENACTMENTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the findings of the study related to conflict management by teachers, that is, the strategies used by teachers when managing their conflict and how teachers interpret the effectiveness of their conflict management strategies. The previous chapter presented the findings on the nature of teacher conflict in selected primary schools. In analysing strategies for managing conflict, I used a two-dimensional model associated with five conflict management styles suggested by Rahim (1983). The model involves five conflict management domains, namely, integrating, dominating, obliging, compromising and avoiding. For Rahim (1983), the choice of conflict management is based on the “concern of self” and the “concern of others”.

5.2 What Strategies Do Teachers Use? A Quantitative picture

Table 5.1 provide a quantitative picture of conflict management strategies teachers in the study indicated they used. Table 5.2 provides an analysis according to the five broad domains: integrating, dominating, obliging, compromising and avoiding.

Table 5.1: Conflict management strategies utilised by teachers (n=163)

Conflict management strategies	Means	Standard Deviations
1. I look at issues with others to find solutions that meet the needs of everyone.	4.03	1.21
2. I try to negotiate and adopt a give-and-take approach to problem situations.	3.85	1.09
3. I try to meet the expectations of others.	3.50	1.21
4. When pursuing my priorities, I am usually firm and not swayed (moved) by others.	3.37	1.52
5. I am a decision-maker, but I make a point of listening to others to find best possible solutions.	3.76	1.45

Conflict management strategies	Means	Standard Deviations
6. When conflict occurs, I tend to back out of the situation and do something else.	2.10	1.46
7. I do not like to rock the boat, so I cooperate with others and accept instructions easily.	3.84	1.18
8. I prefer to compromise-lose something in order to get something (sacrifice by sharing something) when solving problems and just move on.	3.68	1.32
9. Once I have taken a position, I do not like to have others try to take me out of it.	2.69	1.56
10. When conflict arises, the best way to handle conflict is to avoid (neglect, withdraw) them.	2.74	1.64
11. I try to accommodate (allow other party to win) the wishes of other teachers.	3.24	1.43
12. I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right.	2.76	1.37
13. To break any deadlocks (failure to reach agreement or to settle argument), I am willing to give up a part of my goal in order to find common goal (middle ground solution).	3.21	1.31
14. Differences of opinions are not always worth worrying about, so, I usually avoid them.	3.06	1.34
15. I try to avoid people who have strong opinions	2.33	1.46
16. After I have made decisions, I strongly defend it.	3.25	1.52
17. I often keep to myself, because most of the things are not worth arguing about.	3.17	1.29
18. I am always willing to consider other people's opinions, but I make my own decisions.	3.77	1.35
19. During a conflict, I often sacrifice by sharing outcomes with conflicting party.	3..64	1.21
20. If people do not respect my opinion, I keep it to myself.	3.37	1.46
21. During conflict, I immediately work to get everyone's concern out in open.	3.90	1.16
22. When conflict arises, I am just willing to adjust my priorities to reach a solution.	3.92	1.18

Conflict management strategies	Means	Standard Deviations
23. When conflict occurs, I like to ask others for their opinions and try to find way to cooperate.	4.19	1.04
24. I often adopt lose some and win some when managing conflicts.	3.49	1.33
25. During conflict, I often try to adjust my priorities to accommodate other people's needs.	3.87	1.23

Table 5.2: Teacher conflict management in respect of five key domains

Key Domains	Survey Items	Means	Standard Deviations
Dominating	4	3.37	1.52
	9	2.69	1.56
	12	2.76	1.37
	16	3.25	1.52
	22	3.92	1.18
Total		3.2	1.43
Avoiding	6	2.10	1.46
	10	2.76	1.64
	14	3.06	1.34
	15	2.33	1.46
	17	3.17	1.29
Total		2.68	1.44
Compromising	2	3.85	1.09
	8	3.68	1.32
	13	3.21	3.31
	19	3.64	1.21
	24	3.49	1.33
Total		3.57	1.65
Obliging	3	3.50	1.21
	11	3.24	1.43
	20	3.37	1.46

Key Domains	Survey Items	Means	Standard Deviations
	23	4.19	1.04
	25	3.87	1.23
Total		3.63	1.27
Integrating	1	4.03	1.21
	5	3.76	1.45
	7	3.84	1.18
	18	3.77	1.35
	21	3.90	1.16
Total		3.86	1.27

The findings reflected in Table 5.1 suggest that teachers most often try to get the problem out into the open for debate and discussion; try to seek solutions that meet the needs of all their colleagues; try to negotiate, cooperate, and listen to others in problem situations, listen to others and consider the opinions of others to find the best solutions, adjust their priorities to meet the needs of others and reach a solution.

Table 5.2 indicates that teachers' strategies favour conflict management strategies that are located mainly in domains: compromising, obliging and integrating. Avoiding is the domain that is least evident in the study.

5.3 Conflict Management Strategies: Teacher Voices

It is evident that teachers employed different strategies basing themselves on two concerns, namely "the concern of self" and "concern of others" when handling their conflicts. In other words, their choice of conflict management was based on satisfying their own concerns or concerns of others. Qualitative and quantitative data revealed that teachers used all five strategies, including, integrating, dominating, obliging, compromising and avoiding when managing their conflicts in their schools.

5.3.1 Integrating

Qualitative data shows that teachers in Lesotho primary schools use integrating when managing their conflict. This is evident in the following incident. One principal reported,

I am the principal, a final decision maker, but I called the staff meeting to discuss the issue of gossiping. I asked teachers to come up with possible solutions. Then I compelled them to make one constructive suggestion, which would satisfy the needs of both conflicting parties (Principal, School A).

The Deputy Principal, School I, further explained,

I called the concerned parties; we sat together and diagnosed the problem as well as final solution that satisfied both conflicting parties (Teacher 148, School I).

This implies that there are teachers in Pitseng region who used the integrating strategy when managing conflict. In other words, teachers tried to find solutions that were acceptable to both conflicting parties in order to build good relationships among themselves. They managed their conflicts by focussing on both conflicting parties concerns. According to Rahim (1983) ‘integrating’ is highly concerned about the “concerns of self” and “concerns of others”. This approach is regarded as the most effective style of managing conflicts, because it is based on problem-solving which focuses on negotiating and searching for solutions that are satisfactory to both conflicting parties (Ngcobo, 2003, Steyn and van Niekerk, 2003). For Ngcobo (2003) ‘integrating’ is assertive and cooperative because the conflicting parties try to work towards the common outcomes.

5.3.2 Dominating

The findings revealed that some teachers use the dominating strategy when managing their conflict. Dominating involves high concern for self and low concern for

others (Rahim, 1983). It is evident that there are teachers in the schools who dominate other teachers to satisfy their own concerns. One teacher from a church school reported,

There was an incident whereby our colleague absents himself from school for ten months without asking permission from the authorities (Principal, Deputy Principals, and the School Management Committee) or without producing sick leave from the doctor. This caused a serious problem between the teachers and the principal. Then the principal used his power to manage this conflict and gave him warning by telling him that the action will be taken if he committed this action again. The teacher still continued to absent himself from school for several months. Then, the principal together with School Governing Body used school regulations and charged a teacher with breach of discipline. (Teacher 9, School E).

Another teacher added,

We engaged in a hot debate on the issue of improvement of class 7 results, but we failed to find the solution for addressing this problem. Then the principal used her authority and forced us to practice subject teaching from class 6-7 and submit daily preparations to him (Teacher 12, School N).

According to the findings, teachers in authority, including the principal and deputy principals used the dominating strategy, which is associated with high concern for self when managing teachers' conflicts. They use the dominating strategy for the benefit of the school as an institution. Ngcobo (2003) explains that dominating is competitive in nature, and characterized by high assertiveness but low cooperativeness. The dominating strategy could imply a power imbalance, and could lead to oppression and injustice if not managed in an appropriate manner (Rahim, 1983; Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). If the oppressed become aware that they are oppressed, they often have a desire for revenge against their oppressors.

One teacher explained that teachers at his school have raised the issue of influence of power in conflict management situations.

In one of the cases, I was on three days sick leave. On my arrival, my deputy reported that there was a teacher to be charged with misconduct, because she violated the rights of another teacher by beating her in the presence of the children and other teachers. She reported that she called a senior teacher to solve the problem and they reached an agreement. However, my deputy reported that it was her decision that the teacher should be charged with misconduct. Then, this showed that you undermined other teachers. (Principal, School A)

Thus, the deputy principal disregarded the agency of teachers who tried to solve the problem on their own. The deputy principal in fact imposed her solution without much consultation. Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) argue that the use of power and force to manage conflict may lead to forced or imposed solutions which may escalate the conflict. However, there are complexities. The above incident reflects serious misconduct by a teacher that arose from teacher conflict. In such situations school management should play an important part of the problem solving process.

5.3.3 Obliging

The obliging strategy is associated with low concern for self and high concern for others (Rahim, 1983). This kind of conflict management was evident in the schools in the study. Data reveal that there are teachers who prefer to use obliging if they are aware that owing to contextual factors they would not be able to win the case. This is evident in an incident in which a teacher felt that her views would not be accommodated by the principal because she was an unqualified teacher, and the teacher with whom she had a problem was a relative of the principal. The teacher explains,

Our principal works with her relatives. She normally uses favouritism and takes the side of their friends and relatives in conflict management situations. If we have the conflict with her

friend or relative we normally use the accommodating style to avoid conflict because we know we are not able to win the case (Teacher 7, School H).

According to the findings, some teachers accommodate their oppression in conflict management to avoid conflict and build good relationships with their conflicting parties. For Ngcobo (2003, 192), obliging means being “unassertive but co-operative”. The conflicting party neglects his or her own concern to satisfy the concerns of the opposing party in order to preserve a good relationship (Rahim, 2001). Naicker (2003) warns that this could lead to retaliatory and negative attitudes towards the opposing party. The obliging behaviour is not always a positive approach to addressing the conflict because it excludes the voice of one party.

5.3.4 Avoidance

There were participants in the study who used avoiding behaviours in managing their conflicts. Rahim (1983) explains that avoidance involves low concern for self and others. Davies (2004) states that in such situations conflicting parties may respond to conflicts by neglecting, postponing or not taking action to address conflict. One teacher from a government school reported,

According to our culture, the youth are not allowed to engage in an argument with older people. This has got an impact in conflict management. As a result, young teachers avoid engaging in conflict with senior teachers to avoid being called the troublemaker (Teachers 21, School D)

Another teacher from church’s school added,

They avoid this conflict with the principal because they were afraid of questioning people in authority. But they develop negative attitude towards the principal (Teacher123, School I)

One principal from a church school raised the issue of the power of the church and its impact on conflict management. The following excerpt illustrates this,

In some cases you will find that ignoring is used to solve the conflict. This happened when there was a conflict between the teachers who belong to church school and the ones who do not. The ones, who belong to other churches quickly, surrender and withdraw from the situation because they are afraid that they may be expelled from the school (Principal 41, School A).

The above excerpts reflect that using the avoidance strategy often involves various power dynamics, and intersects with religious denomination, cultural norms and beliefs, and the hierarchical ethos of schools. This suggests a form of symbolic violence being played out in conflict management situations. This is in line with Bourdieu's (1970) view that people experience symbolic violence in societies whereby social structures produce, reproduce and maintain unequal power relations. Bourdieu (1970) explains that symbolic capital (e.g. social status, religious status, prestige, position) is the key source of power. The person who holds symbolic capital uses this power against an agent who holds less power and this agent can alter actions and situations. This is referred to as symbolic violence. In the schools under study, findings reflect a complex intersection of the avoidance strategy and symbolic violence.

Ngcobo (2003) argues that avoiding behaviour lacks both assertiveness and co-operation. Davies (2004) explains that this type of conflict management strategy is not effective because in most cases the problem remains unresolved and may make the conflict situation worse as inherent in it is poor communication.

5.3.5 Compromising

Participants also reported that they used the compromising strategy when addressing teacher conflict. This type of conflict management style involves losing something in order to gain something (Rahim, 1983). It is based on concern for self and

others. The conflicting parties work towards mutually acceptable solutions. Teachers reported,

The principal together with the teachers discussed this issue and agreed to compromise with one another and share resources equally (Teacher 29, School A)

Ngcobo (2003, 192) explains that compromising is “moderately assertive and moderately co-operative”, because it allows conflicting parties to arrive at a swift solution. Balay (2006) in his study in Anatolia, Australia also found that primary school teachers often used compromising when managing their conflict.

5.4 Support for Teachers in Dealing with Teacher Conflict

Qualitative data and quantitative data indicated that there is little or no effort available to assist teachers in developing appropriate conflict management strategies. One of the principal reported,

The School Management Committee organizes workshops and meetings once a year to assist teachers with strategies for dealing with conflicts in our school. Some speakers from the Ministry of Education and the police are invited at our school to provide teachers as well as pupils with skills for dealing with conflicts (Teacher 44, School C)

A principal from a Lesotho Evangelical Church school explained,

As a principal I often hold in-house workshops to provide teachers with conflict management strategies. I also hold refresher courses on reviewing school regulations (Teacher 41, School A).

The principal from Roman Catholic Church’s school reported that:

We get little support from our church. The priest often holds retreats for teachers in our parish to address conflict. The priest

often told us that God made us different but we are the same in front of God. Hence we should accept our individual differences. Therefore we have to work together regardless of our individual differences. (Teacher 114, school P).

A teacher from an Anglican Church school stated that there is no support for assisting teachers in conflict management.

There is no support offered by the school to assist teachers to manage their conflict in an appropriate manner, because there are no workshops to equip teachers with appropriate strategies for managing conflict (Teacher 9, School E)

One teacher from a government school explained,

There is no support from school management and colleagues, because there is no school policy for conflicts (Teacher127, School L)

According to the findings, teachers have little support from their schools and their management bodies in conflict management, and they indicated that they lack conflict management skills.

Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 below show that many teachers are not trained for managing conflicts and others have had limited training. This implies that they lack conflict management skills. Thus, there is a need for training teachers to equip them with appropriate conflict management strategies.

Table 5.3: Type of training for conflict management by number of teachers

Type of training	Number of teachers
None	59
Tertiary training	42
Workshops	58
Other	4
Total	163

Table 5.4: Number of workshops attended by number of teachers

Number of workshops attended	Number of teachers
None	59
One	24
Two	23
Three	18
Four	14
Five	7
More than five	18
Total	163

Table 5.5 indicates that 56 of the teachers in the study felt that the competence of school management at addressing teachers' conflict was inadequate. Seventy five rated the competence of management fair. Only 10 teachers felt that the competence of management was adequate. This implies that the large number of participants was dissatisfied with management's competency in dealing with teacher conflict. This again suggests an urgent need for management training focusing on how to address teacher conflict in their schools.

Table 5.5 Teacher ratings of the competence of school management at addressing teacher conflict by number of teachers.

Competence of school management at addressing conflict	Number of teachers
Very inadequate	33
Inadequate	23
Fair	75
Adequate	22
Very adequate	10
Total	163

Teachers had provided various suggestions on how teacher conflict may be addressed in schools. A teacher from government school suggested,

Schools should invite specialists in conflict management to assist teachers as well as SGBs to manage the conflicts effectively, because some of the teachers are unqualified and SGB members are illiterate, thus they lack skills for handling conflicts in an appropriate manner (Teacher 46, School L).

One teacher from a Roman Catholic Church stated,

Conflicts can be managed by holding retreats in schools, whereby the priests give us scriptures that will make us to be aware that we are children of God and we should accept and appreciate our differences (Teacher 155, School P).

A teacher from a Lesotho Evangelical School recommended,

Principal should hold in-house workshops for reviewing teaching regulations (Education Act of 1995) which is concerned about breach of discipline and punishment.. The government should provide each teacher with copies of manuals for conflict management. These modules may assist teachers with conflict management strategies (Principal 119 interview, School M).

One teacher reported that:

School governing bodies should organize workshops about conflict management. A resource person should be invited. During the workshops, there can be also film shows about conflict and conflict management. Workshops should be organized at centre level. I think teachers can learn more about conflict management strategies, because they can be free to talk with other teachers about conflicts and they can also provide appropriate resolutions for conflicts (Deputy Principal, School D)

5.5 Conclusion and Reflections

This chapter presented findings related to the conflict management strategies used by teachers when managing their conflict. The findings revealed that teacher strategies were located mainly in three domains: integrating, obliging and compromising (refer to Table 5.1 and 5.2). The two-dimensional model of conflict management suggests that conflict management should take into account the nature of conflict and match the situation (Steyn and van Niekerk, 2002). In this study, teachers' narratives reveal that their experiences of conflict and conflict management are complex. There are various power dynamics linked to the religious denominations of schools, the kind of leadership, cultural norms and beliefs, and the hierarchical ethos of schools. These factors have to be engaged with by teachers, school leaders, School Governing Bodies and other relevant stakeholders.

According to the literature, the most suitable type of conflict management strategies are integrating and compromising behaviours. Teachers in the study indicated that they use these two domains often. Integrating and compromising are both assertive and co-operative and provide the best solutions which are acceptable to both conflicting parties (Rahim, 1983; Ngcobo, 2003; Steyn and van Niekerk, 2003). Avoiding is least favoured by the teachers in the study. Since teacher responses indicated that they support strategies considered sound by scholars in the field, intervention programmes have a solid base to build on.

The next chapter focuses on conclusion and implications of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The aim of my study was to explore the nature of teacher conflict and the strategies teachers use when managing their conflicts in selected schools in Lesotho. This was a mixed method study. Data were collected through a survey and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that teachers experienced conflicts at an institutional, personal and cultural level. The following were cited as factors associated with teacher conflict: resistance to change in educational policy, religious denomination; cultural norms and beliefs, ideologies and social groupings. According to the findings, the relationship between government and churches were viewed by teachers as complex, and may be a factor that contributes to the perpetuation of teacher conflict in schools. Teachers experience competing and contradictory demands in having to deal with church policies and government policies at the same time.

In relation to conflict management, the quantitative and qualitative data show that teachers used strategies that were located mainly in three conflict management domains: integrating, obliging and compromising. Quantitative data showed that obliging was rated as the most useful strategy of addressing conflict, while qualitative data seemed to reflect that integrating is the most useful type of conflict management strategy in managing conflict in Pitseng primary schools. Power dynamics within schools, religious and cultural ideologies, norms and beliefs, and lack of support were viewed as barriers to effective conflict management. Lack of support from the school was cited as a major problem to addressing teacher conflict in these schools.

This study has important implications for teacher ongoing professional development, pre-service training, policy implementation at the national and school levels, and school leadership training programmes. The Lesotho Ministry of Education in collaboration with schools needs to engage with the incongruence between national policy and policy at school level. Furthermore, the impact of cultural norms, values and beliefs and religious ideologies on policy implementation needs to be examined. For example, the differential treatment of teachers in schools based on religious affiliation is a violation of the rights of teachers, and an issue that fuels teacher conflict.

In addition, pre-service teacher training institutions in Lesotho should offer conflict management modules to assist teachers to employ sound strategies for managing their conflicts. Offering conflict management as a specialisation subject in pre-service training would build a body of teachers with expertise and who can provide leadership in schools. Moreover, teachers who are already in the field should be trained through in-service programs to provide them with ongoing support for conflict management.

The focus of conflict management training should be on getting teachers to analyse conflict and situations that trigger conflict through a social justice lens. A key aim would be to build socially just and inclusive school cultures located in a rights discourse. A human rights based approach to conflict management would be founded on the principles: of participation, accountability, social inclusion, non-discrimination and linkages to human rights standards (Tomasevski, 2006). A rights approach aims to ensure that each individual has an equal right to freedom, dignity, non-discrimination and protection against abuse of these rights (Muthukrishna & Schlüter, forthcoming). The findings of the study suggest that teacher conflict in the study schools are fueled by the abuse of teacher rights.

There is also a need for developing a critical consciousness in teachers, school leaders, SGB members. This means interrogating one's own norms, beliefs and values and one's relationship to others (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Gay and Kirkland (2003) argues that this is a complex exercise that involves self-reflection and self-scrutiny. This means that leaders and teacher educators have to foster a critical consciousness in their teachers, students and other school personnel, that is, train them to examine and challenge existing inequities, exclusions and injustices in school policies and practices that could trigger teacher conflict. The aim of social justice is participation of all groups in an institution in decision making (Young, 2000). Thus, schools should promote the inclusion and equitable participation of all staff members in decision-making.

Chiu & Walker (2007) call for a transformative leadership in schools that would foreground and engage with issues of equity, diversity, social justice, inclusion and oppression. Schools should be moral communities (Sergiovanni, 1996). Leaders should inspire teachers to meet the goals of social justice and themselves become socially just citizens. For example, school leaders and school governing bodies should cultivate civic

virtue, and focus on bringing people together rather than creating divisions. School leaders and teachers at all levels have to be both ethical and accountable. They should create safe, caring and respectful school environments. In the present study the majority of teachers were of the opinion that school leaders were not effective in dealing with the situated nature of teacher conflict.

Finally, this study has highlighted that teacher conflict is contextual and situated in nature. However, it can be argued that a limitation in this study is that it tends to pathologise and construct as dysfunctional the micro-political processes in schools within which teacher conflict is embedded. In response, I draw from Achinstein's (2002, p. 450) research who points out that we need "to reframe notions of conflict amid community." She puts forward for debate the idea that conflict may be natural, inevitable and a fruitful part of teacher professional development. Thus, making conflict overt, and doing 'conflict talk' may not be unprofessional or dysfunctional (Achinstein, 2002). It may be a constructive beginning to the process of dealing with conflict as teachers learn to navigate conflict and conflict management in more overt ways, and openly discuss the kinds of school communities they want to create. The current study has value to this end. There is, therefore, a need for further research in other regions of Lesotho, both rural and urban, to provide insights into the complex and multi-faceted nature of teacher conflict and conflict management in various contexts, and to make overt the micro and macro political ideologies that foster conflict. Such insights could inform teacher professional development programmes within the context of Lesotho and beyond.

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APPENDIX ONE

EHTHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 - 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

17 APRIL 2009

MRS. MA MAKIBI (207524860)
EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dear Mrs. Makibi

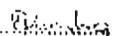
ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0108/09M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project

"The nature of teacher conflict and conflict management in sixteen selected primary schools in Lesotho"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully


MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc. Supervisor (Prof. N Mchunika) ;
cc. Mr. J Bucier



Founding Campus Pietermaritzburg Howard College Medical Science Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX TWO

LETTER TO EDUCATION OFFICE REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X03

Ashwood

3605

01 September 2008

Senior Education Officer

Leribe Education Office

P. O. Box 410

Leribe

300

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct a research

I am presently studying for Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am in the process of conducting my research on the strategies for managing conflict in Lesotho primary schools. I request permission to conduct research in primary schools at Pitseng region, including:

Pitseng Primary School

Tsepe Government School

Pontmain Primary School

Litooaneng Government School

Raphoka Primary School

St. Michael Primary School

Somololo Primary School
Mahobong Primary School
Holy Trinity Primary School
Senyokotho Primary School
Bolahlala Primary School
Tsoinyane Government Primary School
Pontseng Primary School
Matlameng Primary School
Mokhachane (AC L) Primary School
Quardian Engiel Primary School

My topic is **“The Nature of teacher conflict and conflict management in sixteen selected primary schools in Lesotho”**.

Teachers will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. Teachers will be requested to complete questionnaire about the strategies for managing conflict. The information will be treated confidentially and it will not be used for other purposes other than this study. At no stage would the name of the teacher or the school be mentioned in my study.

I hope that the results from this study will benefit teachers and School Governing Bodies (SGBs), as well as the education officers in assisting teachers to manage their conflicts effectively.

My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in case you might need further clarification on the study.

CONSENT FORM

I understand the nature of the study. I understand that teachers will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. I am also aware that the information will be treated confidentially and the real names of teachers and schools will not be stated in the study. I understand that the results will be of great benefit to teachers, SGBs and education

officers. I therefore give you permission to conduct a research in primary schools at Pitseng Region.

Name: _____ Date _____

Sign: _____

Yours faithfully

Marabele Alphoncina Makibi (Mrs.)

0739657635 or (00266) 58084423

marabelealphoncinamakibi@yahoo.com

Professor Nithi Mthukrishna

0314644255

muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX THREE

LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood
3605
01 September 2008

The Principal
----- Primary School

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct a research

I am presently studying for Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am in the process of conducting my research on teachers' strategies for managing conflict in Lesotho primary schools. I request for permission to conduct research in your school. Teachers will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Teachers will be requested to complete questionnaire about the strategies for managing conflicts. All information will be treated with confidentiality. At no stage would the name of the teacher or the school be mentioned in my study.

I hope that the results from this study will benefit teachers and School Governing Bodies (SGBs), as well as the education officers in assisting teachers to manage their conflicts effectively.

My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in the case you might need further clarification on the study.

CONSENT FORM

I understand the nature of the study. I understand that teachers will have freedom of withdrawal from the study at any time. I also understand that anonymity and confidentiality will be assured. I therefore give you permission to conduct a research at my school.

Names: _____ Date _____

Sign: _____

Yours faithfully

Marabele Alphoncina Makibi (Mrs.)

0739657635 or (00266) 58084423

marabelealphoncinamakibi@yahoo.com

Professor Nithi Mthukrishna

0314644255

muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX FOUR

LETTER TO PARTICIPANT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN MY STUDY

Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X03

Ashwood

3605

01 September 2008

Dear participant

Re: Request for participant to participate in my study

I am presently studying for Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am in the process of conducting my research on the strategies for managing conflict in Lesotho primary schools. I request your participation in answering questionnaire in relation to my study.

The information that you provide will be treated confidentially and used only for this study. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you are willing to participate in my study, please fill in the attached consent form

My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in the case you might need further clarification on the study.

CONSENT FORM

I understand the nature and purpose of the study. I also understand that I have an opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time that my information will be confidential and will not be disclosed for other purposes other than the study. I therefore give my consent to participate.

Names: _____ Date _____

Sign: _____

Yours Faithfully

Marabele Alphoncina Makibi (Mrs.)

0739657635 or (00266) 58084423

marabelealphoncinamakibi@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Professor Nithi

Mthukrishna

0314644255 or 0842459096

muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX FIVE

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1.1 Gender

Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√]

Male	
Female	

1.2 Age

Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√]

18 – 20 years	
21 – 30 years	
31 – 40 years	
41 – 50 years	
51 – 60 years	
61 + years	

1.3 Place a tick in an appropriate box

qualified	Student teacher	Unqualified

1.4 Job Designation

Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√]

Principal	
Teacher	
Deputy principal	

1.5 Teaching Experience

Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√]

0 – 5 years	
6 – 10 years	

11 – 15 years	
16 – 20 years	
21 – 25 years	
26 – 30 years	
30 + years	

1.6 School Information

1.6.1 Geographical location

Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√]

School Location	
Rural	
Semi-rural	

1.7.2 Type of school

Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√]

School Proprietor	
Church school	
Government school	
Community school	
Private schools	

SECTION 2: CONFLICT IN YOUR SCHOOL

2.1 Use the categories in the box to identify what you perceive to be the types of conflicts you have experienced amongst teachers at YOUR school. Place a tick in the appropriate column [√]. You can tick more than one item.

Types of conflict	
Resource conflict	
Structural conflict	
Conflict of values and beliefs	

Work related conflict	
Goal conflict	

2.2 Use the following categories to list what you perceive to be the causes of conflict amongst teachers at YOUR school – from your experience. Place a tick in an appropriate column [√]. You can tick more than one item..

Causes of conflicts amongst teachers	
1. Stress	
2. Clash of personalities	
3. lack of resources	
4. Ineffective leadership	
5. Promotion's processes	
6. Cultural differences	
7. Gossip	
8. Gender differences	
9. ethnic differences	
10. Incompatible goals	
11. Social class	
13. Poor communication	
14. Change	
15. Violence	
16. Lack of conflict management skills	

SECTION 3: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT

3.1 How competent is your school management in dealing with conflict at your school? Place a tick in an appropriate column [√].

Very inadequate	
inadequate	

fair	
Adequate	
Very adequate	

SECTION 4: TEACHERS' MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

4.1 For each statement below, check the appropriate box as it applies to your actual behaviour in conflict management at your school. Place a tick (✓) in the column which best describes your preferred style for handling conflict between yourself and other teachers.

SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree, N – Neutral, A – Agree, SA - Strongly Agree

Behaviour in conflict management	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I look at issues with others to find solutions that meet the needs of everyone.					
2. I try to negotiate and adopt a give-and-take approach to problem situations.					
3. I try to meet the expectations of others.					
4. When pursuing my priorities, I am usually firm and not swayed (moved) by others.					
5. I am a decision-maker, but I make a point of listening to others to find best possible solutions.					
6. When conflict occurs, I tend to back out the situation and do something else.					
7. I do not like to rock the boat, so I cooperate with others and accept instructions easily.					
8. I prefer to compromise-lose something in order to get something (sacrifice by sharing some thing) when solving problems and just move on.					
9. Once I have taken a position, I do not like to have others try to take me out of it.					
10. When conflict arises, The best way to					

handle conflict is to avoid (neglect, withdraw) them.					
11. I try to accommodate (allow other party to win) the wishes of other teachers.					
12. I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right.					
13. To break any deadlocks (failure to reach agreement or to settle argument), I am willing to give up a part of my goal in order to find common goal (middle ground solution).					
14. Differences of opinions are not always worth worrying about, so, I usually avoid them.					
15. I try to avoid people who have strong opinions					
16. After I have made decisions, I strongly defend it.					
17. I often keep to myself, because most of the things are not worth arguing about.					
18. I am always willing to consider other people's opinions, but I make my own decisions.					
19. During a conflict, I often sacrifice by sharing outcomes with conflicting party.					
20. If people do not respect my opinion, I keep it to myself.					
21. During conflict, I immediately work to get everyone's concern out in open.					
22. When conflict arises, I am just willing to adjust my priorities to reach a solution.					
23. When conflict occurs, I like to ask others for their opinions and try to find way to cooperate.					
24. I often adopt lose some and win some when					

managing conflicts.					
25. During conflict, I often try to adjust my priorities to accommodate other people's needs.					

4.2 Training I have received on managing conflicts. Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√]

None	
Tertiary training	
Workshops	
Other	

4.3 Number of workshops attended on conflict management during your career as a teacher. Please place a tick in the appropriate block [√].

one	
two	
three	
four	
five	
More than five	

SECTION 5

If you are running short of space provided, continue at the back of the page - insert the correct question number.

5.1 Describe at least 2 incidents of conflict that have arisen from teachers' interactions in your school.

Conflict

1. What problems do teachers experience in your school?
2. Do teachers engage in conflicts? Elaborate.
3. Have participants had any conflict with the principal?
4. What are the main sources of conflicts among teachers in your school?
5. Describe incidents of conflict that have arisen from teacher interactions in your school.

Conflict management

5. How did you manage those conflicts?
6. Do teachers' conflict management strategies vary by individual differences (sex, age, status, work experiences and religion, status, ethnicity, and social class)? Explain.

School policy

7. According to your knowledge, have you ever heard about any national policies in Lesotho regarding conflict and conflict management?
8. Do you know about the teaching Service Education Act of 1995 regarding conflict?
9. What does it say about conflict?
10. Do you have your own policy in the school? Tell me about it.
11. Do you follow the national policy? Tell me about it.

The steps which the school takes to address the problem

11. What support, if any, does your school provide in order to assist teachers to manage their conflicts?

1. What challenges do your teachers at your school experience?
2. Have your teachers engaged in conflicts? Elaborate.
4. What factors do you think contribute to teacher conflict?
5. Is there any conflict situation that you experienced with teachers that stands out in your mind?

Conflict management

6. How did you manage those conflicts?
7. Does teachers' conflict management vary by individual differences (sex, age, status, work experiences and religion, status, ethnicity and social class)? Explain

School policy

8. According to your knowledge, have you ever heard about a national policy regarding conflict and conflict management? Tell me about it.
9. Do you know about the Teaching Service Education Act of 1995 regarding conflict? Tell me about it.
10. What does it say about conflict?
11. Do you have your own policy in the school? Elaborate.
12. Do you follow the national policy? Elaborate on the policy.

The steps which the school takes to address the problem

12. What support, if any, does your school provide in order to assist teachers to manage their conflicts?

13. How successful do you think your programme is?